

## EDITORIAL

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WILL ADAM

2020 has been a year dominated by the global Coronavirus pandemic. The effects of the virus have been devastating on lives around the world and the knock-on effects on the economic life of the world are yet to be fully appreciated. As with all such crises it is certain that those who will suffer most will be the world's most vulnerable—the poor, the sick and those caught up in war and conflict. Necessary delays to printing have caused delays to the distribution of the May and September issues, but online access remains. I apologise to readers, subscribers and members of the Ecclesiastical Law Society for these delays and hope that normal service will soon be renewed.

Kicking off this third issue of 2020 is an important article by the newly retired Dean of the Arches and Auditor, Charles George QC. Charles has made an outstanding contribution to the law of the Church of England over many years. In the *Journal's* Silver Jubilee volume in 2012 he contributed a significant article, 'The ecclesiastical common law: a quarter-century retrospective' (2012) 14 Ecc LJ 20–42, in which he charted the evolution of ecclesiastical law in the areas of freedom of religion, the constitution of the Church of England, listed buildings and worship. In this issue he returns to the question of the faculty jurisdiction, to which he has contributed so much as a chancellor, and subsequently as Dean and Auditor, with important proposals for reform. At the last sessions of the General Synod before Charles's retirement the Archbishop of Canterbury paid warm tribute to his contributions to the life of the Church and the law and to his ever-wise counsel. By the time of publication the baton of presidency in the provincial appeal courts will have been handed to Morag Ellis QC, whose appointment is warmly to be welcomed.

Also in this issue we are pleased to carry a further article on the topic of the work and ministry of archdeacons, following on from last year's article by Archdeacon Jane Steen ('Archdeacons and the law', (2019) 21 Ecc LJ 2–18). The role of archdeacon is one which has evolved over the years and continues to do so. However, they still occupy a crucial role in many of the subject areas treated by the *Journal*. Canon Boakes, formerly the Archdeacons' National Executive Officer, brings his experience to bear in noting the role of the archdeacon in developing and supporting the ministry of those who minister in his or her archdeaconry, despite their reputation as the bearer of the iron fist

of discipline. In a first published article, Raymond Baudon, a curate in the Diocese of Southwark, examines some of the issues raised in the implementation of the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003—in this case, the effect that proceedings have on respondents. It is good to note that Raymond's article, like so many before it, is the product of research carried out as part of the LLM in Canon Law at Cardiff University.

The broader field of law and religion is reflected in this issue, as always. Safeguarding remains an important topic in Church and society and Sr Helen Costigane examines the key apostolic letter of Pope Francis *Vox estis lux mundi* on the crisis and scandal of sexual abuse in the Roman Catholic Church. In the comments section, Wojciech Brzozowski brings a continental European perspective to the European case *Papageorgiou v Greece*. In a rather more speculative comment, Professor Russell Sandberg applies previous case law to the question of whether the National Health Service is a religion. Whether or not it is, the previous few months have shown how important the NHS is in the national consciousness of the United Kingdom.

As another volume draws to a close it is good to thank everyone within the Society's team and at Cambridge University Press who make the *Journal* appear, and continue to bring up-to-the-minute, incisive and important scholarship on law and religion into the public domain.