

## At my Consecration

*East Window, May 1993*

How do you respond to change? Do you grasp its opportunities gratefully or crawl into a corner and hope it will pass you by?

We seemed to be nicely settled in Birmingham. We had lived there for twenty years after leaving London University. First, I worked as a Curate on a huge housing estate, and then ten years spent as Vicar at Spaghetti Junction. Then seven more years living in Handsworth. Despite the much publicised riots, we were warmly welcomed by the community. Our daughters were happy at school and I was enthralled with my national Church job, preparing students for their theological studies prior to ordination. We were all nicely settled when turmoil hit the Green family.

We were invited to a parish in the East End of London. I was reluctant to return to the scene of my childhood. 'It wouldn't be the same' 'You should never minister in your own back yard' such was the advice. But uproot we did. Such a wrench for my wife, Vicki too. By now she was well established in her career, working with families in restricted circumstances. But we were London bound. But such a joy it turned out to be! Vicki developed her work in Bethnal Green. Rebecca and Hannah joined exciting courses, and my ministry at Poplar (high rise flats and Canary Wharf tower) was richly rewarding.

All seemed settled again when a letter dropped onto the mat. It was a letter from the Bishop of Chelmsford. And the rest of the story you know.

Changes are hard to take. They unsettle us tremendously. But in retrospect, what wisdom and sense they sometimes make. I'm lucky. Here I am back where I began, in the Diocese of Chelmsford. It all makes sense and I'm so very happy that God has brought me here.

If we could read the future when change confronts us, it would feel safer. But life could not then be the great adventure God wants it to be for us.

The Church experiences change. Britain experiences change. Our lives experience change. But let's learn from it, grow with it. Fight the wrong in it, be blessed by the good in it. Above all, let's use its God given challenges, for as Cardinal Newman said, "To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often."

+ *Bishop Laurie*

*(Written on 20th February 1993, Laurie Green was consecrated Bishop on 23rd February 1993, the Feast of St Polycarp.)*