

## Letter to the editor

### BISHOPS: TOO MUCH POWER

I am grateful to Sion Jobbins and the writers of two letters (CAMBRIA September-October 2006) for their comments on the deplorable way that the Editor of Y Llan has been treated. I am also grateful to CAMBRIA for publishing these criticisms of the Church in Wales. Now that Y Llan has ceased to be published there is no Church publication where such things can be said - not that such publications were of much use. Whenever I sent anything to the editors of Welsh - or English - publications they were invariably rejected if they said anything mildly critical of the bishops or of the way that the affairs of the Church were conducted.

At the root of many of the worst problems and weaknesses of the Church in Wales is the fact that bishops have far too much power. The conduct of the bishop over the March 2006 issue of Y Llan was not unusual. I have seen such Episcopal bullying for more than fifty years.

Every priest has to make an oath of canonical obedience to the bishop when he is ordained and when he moves to a new benefice. The bishops claim that this is a promise to obey the bishops at all times. Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger - now Pope Benedict XVI - has written:

'Over the Pope as the expression of the binding claim of ecclesiastical authority there stands one's own conscience, which must be obeyed above all else, even if necessary against the requirements of ecclesiastical authority.'

It appears that the Anglican bishops in Wales are more authoritarian than the Pope. They do not seem to realise that the time is past when respect was shown to people because of their office or status. Today what matters is the person inside the cloth, and bishops, like everybody else, will earn respect &mdash; or contempt &mdash; as a result of what they say and do.

F.M.Jones  
Llangefni  
Ynys Mon