"What are these wounds in thine hands? These are they with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."


In the annals of the late 20th century decline, and what must now be regarded as the early 21st century fall, of the once venerable Episcopal Church, certain watershed events stand out as 'stations' along the way of this particular expression of our Lord's via dolorosa.

Those events which predated 2009 are given a blow by blow account in our friend William Murchison's book *Mortal Follies* (available at the St. Andrew's Bookshop) -- ranging from the Special General Convention of 1969 through the publication of the incipiently revisionist 1979 Prayer Book to the elections in 2003 and 2006 respectively of Gene Robinson as Bishop of New Hampshire and Katharine Jefferts Schori as Presiding Bishop of the denomination.

More recently, the withdrawal from General Convention by the Diocese of Fort Worth in 2008 and by the Diocese of South Carolina this past November represented major ecclesial transitions for the Anglican Communion as a whole.

But perhaps two of the most significant dates so far can now be identified as April 23, 2012, and March 8, 2013.

On the former date, nine bishops still active within the Episcopal Church submitted an *amicus curiae* brief to the Texas Supreme Court which argued that the Fort Worth trial court, in previously ruling against this Diocese, had violated the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States by siding with the Episcopal Church's misrepresentation of its own constitution in opposing the Diocese's right to withdraw from the denomination.

On the latter date, having agreed in good faith to seek 'conciliation' with the Episcopal Church -- in order to avoid an ecclesiastical trial over their putative disloyalty! -- the same nine bishops were in effect reprimanded, not to say humiliated, by the publication by the Presiding Bishop of an 'Accord' the terms of which give the impression of a recantation of their action last April (see http://cariocaconfessions.blogspot.com/).

God knows -- and, having served as Dean under both Bishop Lawrence and his predecessor, I can personally testify -- that, despite slanderous accusations to the contrary, both the XIII and the XIV Bishops of South Carolina went out of their way for many years to keep the Diocese "intact and in TEC" -- and faced much diocesan-wide impatience for doing so.

A wound has now been inflicted on the Body of Christ by the seeming capitulation to the Presiding Bishop's hegemony on the part of the authors of last April's *amicus curiae* brief, including, alas, Bishop Lawrence's predecessor. Grateful though I remain to have served as his Dean for eleven years, I can now only grieve over the way in which the tables have been turned on him and the other 'Respondents' in this deviously manipulated travesty — they have been duped!

For some time I have been mystified by the willingness of a number of otherwise orthodox Episcopalians to 'go along to get along' with the flagrant apostasy of the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church herself. But the sheer oppression nakedly displayed by the terms of this 'Accord' reveals an ecclesiastical institution entirely unworthy of being called a church at all.

I thank God that the current Bishop and leadership of the Diocese of South Carolina have wiped the dust from their feet and moved on. Whether in South Carolina or Fort Worth, whether recognized by Lambeth Palace and the Anglican Communion Office in London or not, it is for me a renewal in Christian obedience and Christian freedom alike to serve under the faithful apostleship of both Bishop Mark Lawrence and Bishop Jack Iker. Of them it may truly be shouted aloud: 'Axios! Axios! Worthy indeed are they both!'