

# St. Paul's Forum Public Debates 2011

Here is a list of the public debates which are to be held at St. Paul's Cathedral in October and November. Members of the Holy Cross congregation may wish to form a group and go together?



---

## The People's Bible: Lovers, Poets, Sinners, Pilgrims

In debates about some of the most famous and controversial people in the Bible, we'll hear from the worlds of Biblical scholarship, psychotherapy, contrasting theologies, cultural studies and fiction. The debates will be chaired by The Reverend Dr **Giles Fraser**, Canon Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral. All the debates take place from **6.30-8pm** in St Paul's Cathedral and are free and unticketed. All welcome.

### 1) Eve: temptress, feminist, exile (Tuesday 4 October)

Woman is created from man's rib and causes the fall of humanity. Much of society's treatment of women stems from the belief that the first pages of the Bible tell us that women are dangerous sexual temptresses and inferior to men. But Eve was made as Adam's helper and partner, and how come the serpent is in the garden anyway? What is this story really about, and what does it tell us about God and humanity?

Speakers:

**The Revd Dr John Muddiman** teaches Biblical theology at the University of Oxford and is co-editor of the Oxford Bible Commentary. **The Revd Dr Rosalyn Murphy** is a priest in the north of England, a research fellow at the University of Birmingham, a member of the Archbishops' Council and adviser on diversity for the Church of England.

### 2) Moses: liberator, lawyer, stammerer (Tuesday 11 October)

Moses is the great prophet, leader, liberator; the man who sees God face to face and lives. Above all, he is the one to whom God entrusts the Law, the foundation of the sacred covenant between God and humanity. But he is also the abandoned baby, the stammerer, the founder of the nation who never sets foot in the promised land. What can we learn of our pilgrimage as the people of God from this towering figure?

Speakers:

**Rabbi Laura Janner-Klausner** serves at Alyth Synagogue London. After studying Christianity at Cambridge, she spent fifteen years living in Jerusalem working in Jewish education, with Christian visitors to Israel, and in Palestinian-Israeli dialogue. **The Revd David Shosanya** is the Regional Minister for the London Baptist Association, co-founder of the Street Pastors Initiative and host of The State of Black Britain Symposium, an annual forum for conversations across African and Caribbean communities in the UK..

### 3) Job: rebel, victim, visionary (Tuesday 18 October)

Job's is one of the most uncomfortable stories in the Bible. God puts Job through terrible suffering, apparently to prove a point with Satan. His friends insist his suffering must be punishment for his sin while Job rails against the apparently meaningless injustice of God. Many regard it as one of the great mystical books of the Bible which takes our understanding of suffering to a whole new level, but does it really offer a coherent understanding of the relationship between God's love and human suffering?

Speakers:

**Canon Dr Andrew Shanks** is Canon Theologian of Manchester Cathedral, having previously been an inner city parish priest, an academic theologian, and lived in Ethiopia and Upper Egypt. His books include *God and Modernity* and *Faith in Honesty*. **Salley Vickers** is the best selling author of the novels *Miss Garnet's Angel*, *Mr Golightly's Holiday* (which includes a running reference to Job), *The Other Side of You* and *Dancing Backwards*. She has worked as a university teacher of literature and a Jungian analyst but now writes full time.

### 4) Mary: teenage mother, virgin, prophet (Tuesday 25 October)

Mother of God and perpetual virgin, object of huge devotion and source of deep theological controversy: few figures in the Church's history have divided opinion so starkly or so passionately. Is there a way for us to see Mary in her historic context, as a courageous woman with her own voice to whom God entrusts so much, and for which she suffers so greatly? And what does the story of this, the first apostle, say to us of our own faith?



Speakers:

**Professor Marina Warner** is a writer of fiction, criticism and history and the author of *Alone of All Her Sex: the Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary*. Her many other books include novels and short stories as well as studies of art, myths, symbols, and fairytales. **Dr Jane Williams** is a Tutor in Theology at St Mellitus College and Visiting Lecturer at King's College London. Her many books include *Bread, Wine and Women*, *Perfect Freedom*, *Approaching Christmas* and *Faces of Christ*.

### 5) Judas: disciple, traitor, suicide (Monday 31 October)

Is there anything good to say about Judas? He was, after all, one of Jesus' chosen disciples and closest followers. Was his betrayal of Jesus predestined, a part of the divine plan from the beginning, or is this just a very human story of a disappointed man? Should we feel any compassion for him, or was he just a traitor who got what he deserved? And in the darkness of this story, are there lessons for us today?

Speakers:

**Canon Mark Oakley** is Treasurer of St Paul's Cathedral and the author of *The Collage of God*. He speaks and publishes widely in the area of faith, poetry and literature.

**Adam Phillips** is a psychoanalyst, philosopher, broadcaster and author of numerous books including *On Kissing*, *On Tickling* and *On Being Bored*, *Houdini's Box: the Art of Escape*, *The Beast in the Nursery* and *On Kindness*.

### 6) Jesus: king, criminal, God (Tuesday 8 November)

The story of Jesus' brief and explosive public life is so familiar that we can forget both how revolutionary and how mysterious it is. How can it be that God lived on earth in a human body; spoke, breathed, slept, cried? And what of the revolution he preached? Even non-believers now think him a good man, but in his day he was thought so dangerous that he could only be silenced by death. What on earth does this story mean?

Speakers:

**Dr Robert Beckford** is an educator who is currently a Visiting Fellow at Warwick University. A prolific documentary-maker, broadcaster and author, his books include *God and the Gangs* and his films for Channel 4 and the BBC include *God is Black* and *Decoding the Nativity*. **The Revd Lucy Winkett** is Rector of St James's Piccadilly. She writes, speaks and debates on a wide range of issues reflecting on culture, gender and religion and her books include *Our Sound is our Wound*, the Archbishop of Canterbury's 2010 Lent Book.