

**Advent Lecture – ‘Risk, the Gospel and Culture’**  
**Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009 at 7.30 pm – St Andrew**

We have been asked to have the lecture in the evening in order that those who work during the day will be able to be there. I stress that lay people, as much as clergy, are welcome to come.

I would like to explore how far we have become a risk-averse culture; how far that has affected the ministry of the Church and what, if anything, the differences are between risk and foolhardiness. This all fits quite well for St. Andrew's Day, not least where Andrew takes the risk of bringing the boy's picnic to Jesus, even though he, like his colleagues, does not believe that Jesus will be able to do anything with it.

***John Packer***

**The Weddings Project**

Following presentations at the Diocesan Synod and Bishop's Staff, we have agreed that the Diocese will be one of the fourteen to take part in the next stage of this exciting Project. The Weddings Project has involved an extensive consultation with both couples and clergy which has resulted in the production of an excellent range of advice, resources and materials. One aim is to increase the number of marriages in church in the face of a consistent decline in recent years. The evidence so far is that the aim is readily achievable!

Invitations will be coming out before long, but we wanted to give advance notice that there will be an "Intensive Wedding Course" for the clergy who conduct the greatest number of marriages on 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2010, and a one day course for all other clergy on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2010.

***John Packer and James Bell***