

SAINT
Barnabas
CLARKSFIELD



July 2021

medlockhead.co.uk

Services at St Barnabas' Church

Sunday	9:30 am	Parish Worship
Monday	2:30 pm	Prayers in the vestry
Tuesday	10:00 am	Holy Communion (said)

First Tuesday of each month: Service of Holy Communion at Moor Haven Nursing Home on Ripponden Road, starting at 2:00 pm.

Baptisms and marriages by arrangement with the Vicar.

Please submit items for the August magazine by 15 July. Please e-mail files to paulmonk111@gmail.com

People at St Barnabas' Church

Vicar

The Revd Dr Paul Monk
St Barnabas' Vicarage, Arundel Street, Clarksfield, Oldham OL4 1NL
Tel: (0161) 624 7708

Assistant Curates

The Revd Denise Owen (and Vicar of St Thomas' Church Moorside)

Tel: (0161) 652 0292 and E: therevd.dowen@yahoo.co.uk

The Revd Jane Hyde

Tel: (07734) 886 893 and E: janehyde10@hotmail.com

Lay Reader

and Warden

Mr Peter Haslam	(0161) 345 0215
Mrs Nicola Williams	(07549) 630 943

Administrator	Miss Sarah Gura	(07708) 714 813
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Treasurer	Mrs Vicky Heaton	(07468) 463 753
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Parish Hall bookings	The Vicar	(0161) 624 7708
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Letter from the Vicar

As I write, the sunshine outside is brilliant and warm. Its intense light enhances everything: the colours and shapes before me look sharper and distinct. The strong shadows help distinguish between the objects on my desk. Then, a moment later, the sun hides behind a cloud and everything looks drab. The colours and shapes merge together and collapse in on themselves. If we lost even more light (for example at an eclipse) then we could see even less clearly. We all need light.

In Scripture, Jesus describes himself as 'the light of the world.' In effect, he's saying that he irradiates the world with his supernatural presence and thereby helps us see when using our 'eyes of faith'. We see spiritual truths more clearly when we allow Jesus into our lives. We learn to see things the way He does, which is why our spiritual decisions are more likely to please God.

But God often feels far away, sometimes completely absent, which inhibits our spiritual sight. We can make mistakes when God feels faraway, which can be painful or even catastrophic. As Proverbs says, 'Without vision the people perish' (Pr 29:18).

When a person starts losing their sight, they must learn how to feel their way forward. They must learn how to use other senses differently. They will learn to live and move in different ways.

Living in a time of Covid can feel pretty dark. God can feel very far away; our spiritual vision seems feeble. We may feel unsafe and maybe even experience a feeling almost like bereavement. But we don't need to worry. All Christians from all ages experience this sense of God being absent. The reasons can vary. Sometimes there is no real reason. But just as the sun will surely shine on my desk again, so our vision of God will return when we pray, if we watch and wait.

Wishing everyone the blessings of living in Jesus

PAUL

Annual Gift Day

A massive 'thank you' to everyone who contributed. To date, the total about donated is £763.

From the Parish Registers

Christian Baptism

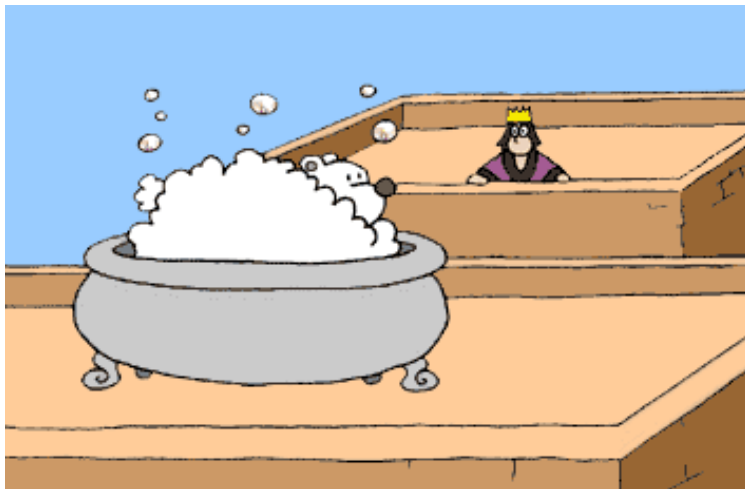
Sunday 13 June Summer-Rae Newton-Hampson

Christian funerals

Friday 4 June Vera Olive
Tuesday 8 June John Bradshaw
All funeral services occurred in Oldham Crematorium.

Burial of ashes

Monday 14 June Emma Gleave
at Waterhead Church.



King David spots bath-sheepa
(with apologies to 2 Samuel 13)

Bible readings for July

Sunday 27 June

Trinity 4

First: Wisdom 1:13–15; 2:23–24
Epistle: 2 Corinthians 8:7–15
Gospel: Mark 5:21–43

Sunday 11 July

Trinity 6

First: Amos 7:7–15
Epistle: Ephesians 1:3–14
Gospel: Mark 6:14–29

Sunday 25 July

St James the Apostle

First: Jeremiah 45:1–5
Epistle: Acts 11:27–12:2
Gospel: Mark 20:20–28

Sunday 4 July

Trinity 5

First: Ezekiel 2:1–5
Epistle: 2 Corinthians 12:2–10
Gospel: Mark 6:1–13

Sunday 18 July

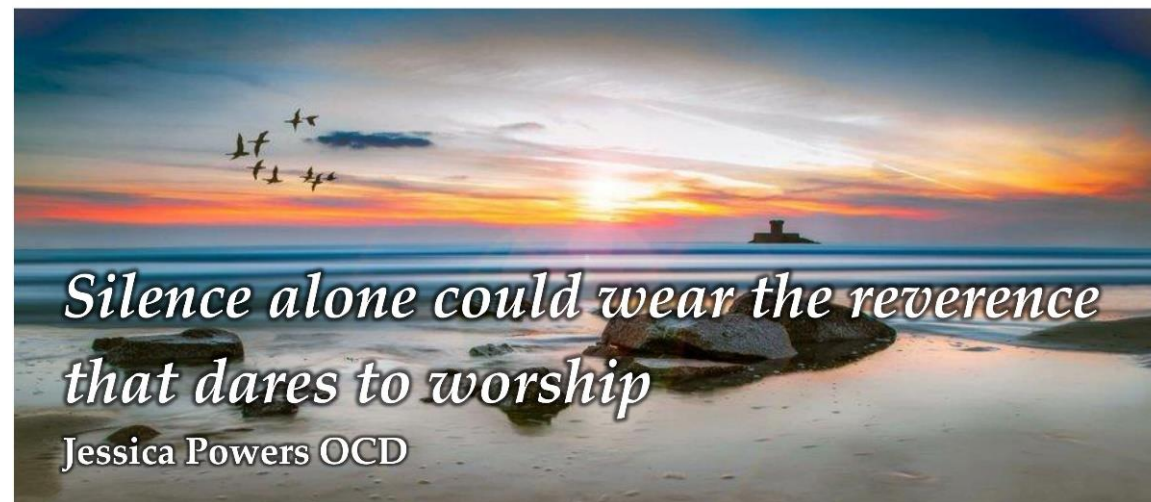
Trinity 7

First: Jeremiah 23:1–6
Epistle: Ephesians 2:11–end
Gospel: Mark 6:30–34, 53–end

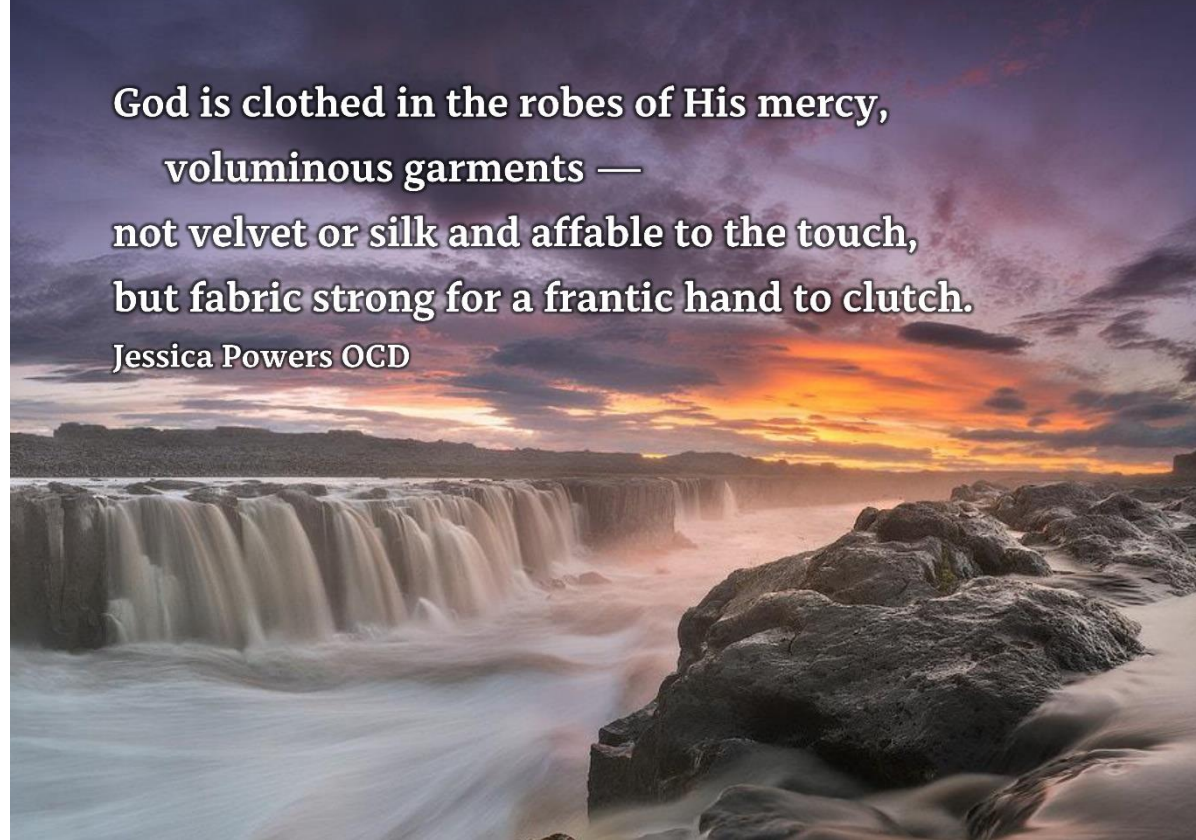
Sunday 1 August

Trinity 9

First: Exodus 16:2–4, 9–15
Epistle: Ephesians 4:1–16
Gospel: John 6:24–35



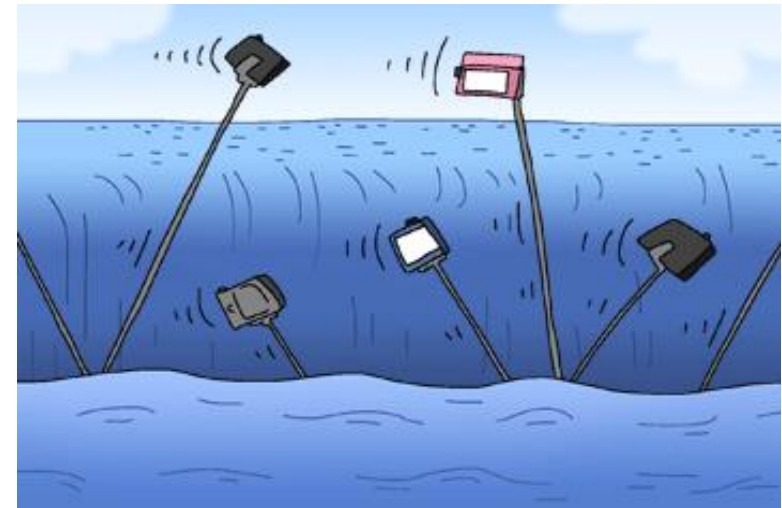
God is clothed in the robes of His mercy,
voluminous garments —
not velvet or silk and affable to the touch,
but fabric strong for a frantic hand to clutch.
Jessica Powers OCD



The View from the Window

Like a painting it is set before one,
But less brittle, ageless; these colours
Are renewed daily with variations
Of light and distance that no painter
Achieves or suggests.
Then there is movement,
Change, as slowly the cloud bruises
Are healed by sunlight, or snow caps
A black mood; but gold at evening
To cheer the heart. All through history
The great brush has not rested,
Nor the paint dried; yet what eye,
Looking coolly, or, as we now,
through the tears' lenses, ever saw
This work and it was not finished?

R S Thomas



There were so many selfie sticks at the crossing of
the Red Sea that it was nearly classified as another plague.
(with apologies to Numbers 14)

Curate's corner

Well ... it was a bit like being at the Oscars ceremony. I opened the envelope containing the letter (informing me whether or not I had 'successfully met the required learning outcomes' in order to be signed-off from my curacy) live at a Zoom PCC meeting. And, yes, I was able to announce to my on-line audience that it was good news!

Studying for the priesthood and ordination itself (I'm sure Paul will confirm) is just the start of a continuing journey, but to complete this particular staging post on the way, I had to attend a series of 'tutorials' on various aspects of ministry and share case studies reflecting on experiences 'on the job' with a small group of fellow curates.

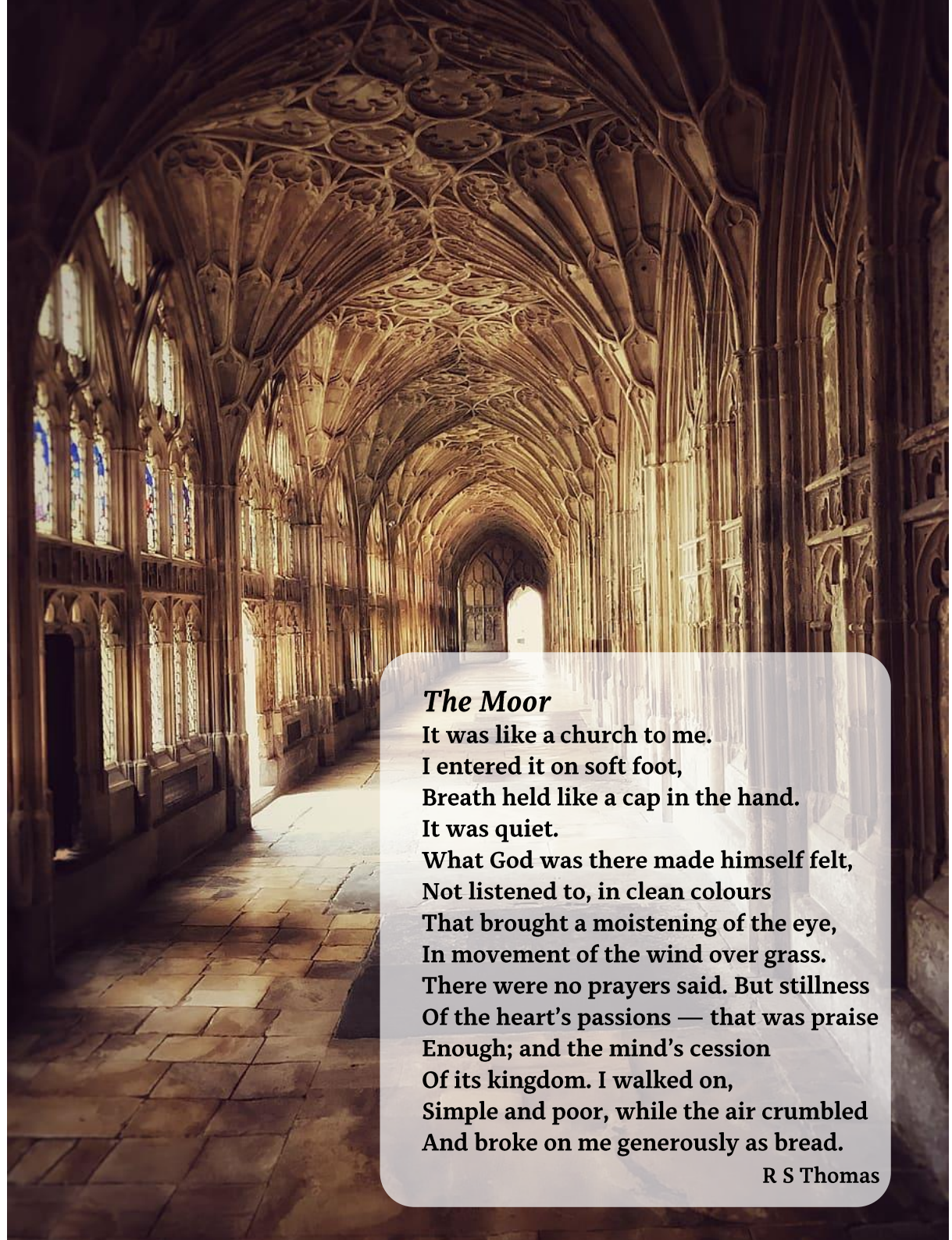
The final decision (resting with Bishop David) was based on my submission of a 'Curacy File'. This file contained eight reports (from various sources) on my development as a minister and, in addition, self-appraisals for every year of my curacy. I also had to include my 'case studies'—on topics such as 'Preaching', 'Mission of the Local Church', 'Adult Faith Development' and 'Leadership', along with the feedback received from my tutor. Finally, there were 'references' from people with whom I had worked, including some from members of our congregation.

As I say, exercising a priestly calling is a journey which, throughout its course, always provides more to experience and learn. I am very thankful to have been placed at St Barnabas and Holy Trinity as I have learned a lot from Paul (to use his official title—my 'Training Incumbent') and, most importantly, from you all.

Your welcome, friendship and prayers have certainly helped and encouraged me over the past three years ... despite the obvious challenges owing to Covid restrictions. I am immensely grateful for all the support you have given me.

The future? I suppose it's in God's hands (and perhaps the Bishop's!). As a 'Non-Stipendiary Minister', I can be deployed anywhere and I anticipate that I might be let loose in one of the many new 'Mission Communities' where help is needed. For the time being there is nothing on the horizon so I think you'll have to put up with me for, at least, the foreseeable future ... which is certainly OK by me!

Revd Jane



The Moor

It was like a church to me.

I entered it on soft foot,

Breath held like a cap in the hand.

It was quiet.

What God was there made himself felt,

Not listened to, in clean colours

That brought a moistening of the eye,

In movement of the wind over grass.

There were no prayers said. But stillness

Of the heart's passions — that was praise

Enough; and the mind's cession

Of its kingdom. I walked on,

Simple and poor, while the air crumbled

And broke on me generously as bread.

R S Thomas

Being an eco-Church in July

- When cutting the grass or pruning bushes and plants, compost the cuttings rather than throwing them away.
- Take your own water bottle on trips from home. Plastic bottles are one of the largest causes of pollution.
- When shopping, see where the food comes from: consider the 'air miles' needed to bring the food to the UK.

Did you know?

St Paul said, '12 For now we see in a mirror, darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. 13 Now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love' (1 Corinthians 13:12,13)

In the ancient world, mirrors were made of polished silver because it was impossible to make a sheet of glass optically flat.

To make a mirror, a piece of silver was cast as a circle, then beaten to create a thin disk. It was then polished repeatedly till it reflected the light perfectly. A good-quality mirror was therefore rare and highly expensive. A mirror became an heirloom and was treasured.

Metallic silver is relatively reactive and forms a grey-black tarnish. A tarnished mirror was less effective because it could reflect less light. A viewer's reflection was distorted and became progressively dim as the layer of tarnish grew thicker and more obscuring. A dark mirror could not reflect well: anyone using such a mirror had to look this way and that, adjusting the angle of their gaze until (hopefully) they could see—like looking at a wide landscape through a hole in a fence.

So looking at yourself in a tarnished mirror was quite a common experience because anyone owning a mirror would not polish it often: polishing could scratch and damage its surface. Polishing was risky, specialist work and could prove expensive.

Our English word 'glass' comes ultimately from a word meaning 'to shine.' So a new mirror looked like glass and a tarnished mirror was 'dark glass.'

In this passage, then, St Paul is saying that looking for God can be hard work. We need to look in different ways and in different directions. It's as hard as looking in a tarnished mirror. The only way of seeing God in a realistic way occurs after death. It removes the distortions of everyday living.

Verse 13 explores other ways of looking for God, such as faith or hope. But he decides that God is best seen using the lens of love.



The Letter of St Paul to Philemon is usually known simply as 'Philemon'.

Most scholars agree this brief letter was written by St Paul. It is also the shortest of his letters that we have, consisting of only 445 words and 25 verses. Nowhere in the letter does Paul authoritatively identify himself as an apostle, but as 'a prisoner of Jesus Christ'. He calls his co-author Timothy 'our brother', and addresses Philemon as a 'fellow labourer' and 'brother.'

Philemon was a Christian who allowed a small church to meet in his house in Colossae (**Philemon 1:1-2** and **Colossians 4:9**). He possibly held a high position in this Colossian house-church in a manner akin to a modern bishop. It's likely that Philemon was wealthy by the standards of the early church since his house was big enough to house the group meeting there.

At the time of writing, Paul was a prisoner (in either Rome or Ephesus). He and his co-worker Timothy wrote to Philemon and two associates: a woman named Apphia, who may have been his wife, and a fellow worker named Archippus, who may be assumed to have been Philemon's son. Archippus also appears to have enjoyed special status in the group that met in Philemon's house (**Colossians 4:17**).

St Paul wrote on behalf of Onesimus, a former servant of Philemon who had left

him. Beyond that, it is not self-evident what occurred previously. The letter describes Onesimus as having 'departed' from Philemon: he had once been 'useless' to him (a pun on Onesimus' name, which means 'useful'), and had done him wrong. Perhaps he stole from his rich master. Most modern scholars think that Onesimus was a slave who had run away to become a Christian believer. Paul sent him back to face his aggrieved master, and used this letter as a way of seeking reconciliation between the two Christians.

We don't know how Onesimus came to be with Paul. We have various ideas: perhaps Onesimus was in prison with Paul; maybe Onesimus had been brought to Paul by others who wanted forgiveness and reconciliation; maybe Onesimus came to Paul by chance (or in the Christian view, by divine providence); or Onesimus had sought Paul, as a friend of his master and asked him to broker a reconciliation. Whatever the truth, he was told to return to Philemon with this letter, wherein Paul told Philemon to forgive him and receive him as a 'brother beloved'.

Although not explicit, the text could be saying that Paul did nothing to change Onesimus' legal position as a bonded servant or slave, and that he was complying with Roman law in returning him to Philemon. On the other hand, the text could also be interpreted as saying Paul was demanding Onesimus' legal freedom and, as an act of both trust and reconciliation, told Philemon he was accountable in the higher court of God to forgive Onesimus and set him free.

The Letter to Philemon

For more information, go to:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistle_to_Philemon

<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/philemon>

<https://www.biblestudytools.com/philemon>

Philemon: fact file

Author The letter starts by saying the letter's authors are Paul and St Timothy. But the use of the first person 'I' from verse 4 implies St Paul alone. Maybe Timothy was his scribe.

Date of writing Probably 62 AD. Paul may have written it at roughly the same time as he wrote Colossians and Ephesians (all three letters were sent to both Tychicus and Onesimus). If true, this date assumes that the imprisonment Paul referred to (e.g. vv. 1, 9, 10, 13, 23) was in Rome (c.f. Acts 27-28).

Purpose of writing The power of the Gospel to transform lives ('formerly he was useless but now he is useful' (v. 11).

A close-up photograph of several dandelion seed heads in a field. The seed heads are backlit by the warm, golden light of a setting or rising sun, creating a glowing effect. The background is a soft-focus field of more dandelions and green foliage under the same warm light.

Bread

Hunger was loneliness, betrayed
By the pitiless candour of the stars'
Talk, in an old byre he prayed

Not for food; to pray was to know
Waking from a dark dream to find
The white loaf on the white snow;
Not for warmth, warmth brought the rain's
Blurring of the essential point
Of ice probing his raw pain.

He prayed for love, love that would share
His rags' secret; rising he broke
Like sun crumbling the gold air

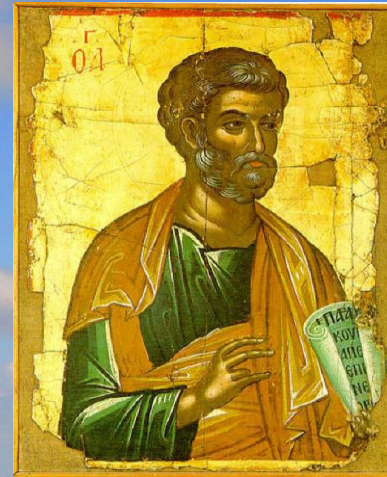
The live bread for the starved folk.

R S Thomas

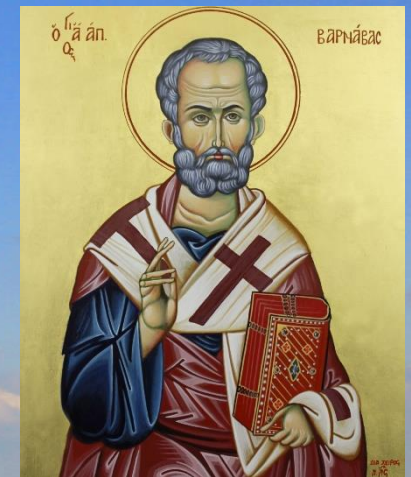
A nickname is a name given to someone instead of their real name. It may relate to their appearance, where they come from, or refer to their character and habits.

The Bible lists a great many nicknames.

- Some are based on the **place** where a person was born:
Mary Magdalene ('Mary of Magdala') and Simon of Cyrene (so he came from Northern Libya—see Mark 15:21).
- Some are based on a person's **character**:
James and John are the 'Sons of Thunder'—presumably they have a fearsome temper (Mark 3:17).
- Some are based on the leader they follow:
Acts 11:26 says the nickname 'Christian' was first used to describe **followers** of the Lord Jesus in Antioch.



Jesus gave his disciple Simon the nick name '**Peter**' because his character was rock-like.



The early Church gave its young leader the nickname 'Son of Encouragement' — in Hebrew, he was **Barnabas**.

What nickname(s) would you like people to apply to you?

Write a short prayer asking God to help perfect that character trait in you.

Nick names

Ronald Stuart Thomas was a Welsh poet and Anglican priest noted for his spirituality, and for his Welsh nationalism.

He was born in Cardiff in 1913, the only child of Margaret and Thomas Thomas. The family moved to Holyhead in 1918 owing to his father's work in the Merchant Navy.

He was ordained a priest in 1936 in the Anglican Church in Wales. He became the curate of Chirk in Denbighshire between 1936 and 1940. While there he met an English artist Mildred 'Elsi' Eldridge. He said 'We met under a shower of bird-notes.' He was soon curate-in charge of Tallarn Green, Flintshire.

He married Elsi in 1940. For much of their married life they lived in poverty, living on a tiny income and lacking the comforts of modern life, largely through their own choice.

From 1942 to 1954 Thomas was rector of St Michael's Church, Manafon in rural Montgomeryshire. He published three volumes of poetry while there. The breakthrough came in 1955 when he published his fourth book, *Song at the Year's Turning*. He wrote an ironic and revealing autobiography *Neb (Nobody)* and *Blwyddyn yn Llŷn (A Year in Llŷn)*.

From 1967 to 1978 he was vicar of the Norman St Hywyn's Church in Aberdaron at the western tip of the Llŷn Peninsula, where he wrote some of his most beautiful poetry.

He retired as a priest in 1978. He and his wife moved to Y Rhiw, into a tiny, unheated cottage in one of the most beautiful parts of Wales, where the temperature regularly dropped below freezing. The beauty and harshness of life in rural Wales are a major theme of his poetry. When free from church constraints, he became more political and active in campaigns that were important to him, becoming a fierce advocate of Welsh nationalism; the style of his poetry has been compared to the harsh and rugged terrain of Wales.

Much of his poetry addresses the deep and unanswered question, 'What is life for?' In fact, he answered that question himself, saying, 'What I'm after is to demonstrate that man is spiritual.' He was writing from his experience as a

man of devout faith who all his life experienced the elusiveness of God. Perhaps that's why he repeatedly dragged his readers' gaze from self back to God. As one poem says, 'It is to God that the mystery belongs ... and woe to man when he interferes with that mystery.' As one critic says, 'He pursued an elusive God and the general crises of faith; the de-humanising effect of the machine; the scientific world view and the challenges it poses to the poet.'

When asked if he felt a conflict between his vocations of priest and poet, he always replied that Jesus was a poet and that the New Testament was poetry.

His poetry won many honours, including a nomination for the 1996 Nobel Prize for Literature.

R S Thomas died on 25 September 2000. At his memorial service, the Archbishop of Wales encapsulated many aspects of his life, saying, '[He] continues to articulate through his poetry questions that are inscribed on the heart of most Christian pilgrims in their search for meaning and truth. We search for God and feel Him near at hand, only then to blink and find Him gone. This poetry persuades us that we are not alone in this experience of faith—the poet has been there before us.'

Thomas believed that one of the important functions of poetry is to embody religious truth. His principal legacy is the way he reinvented language to make it capable of doing just that.

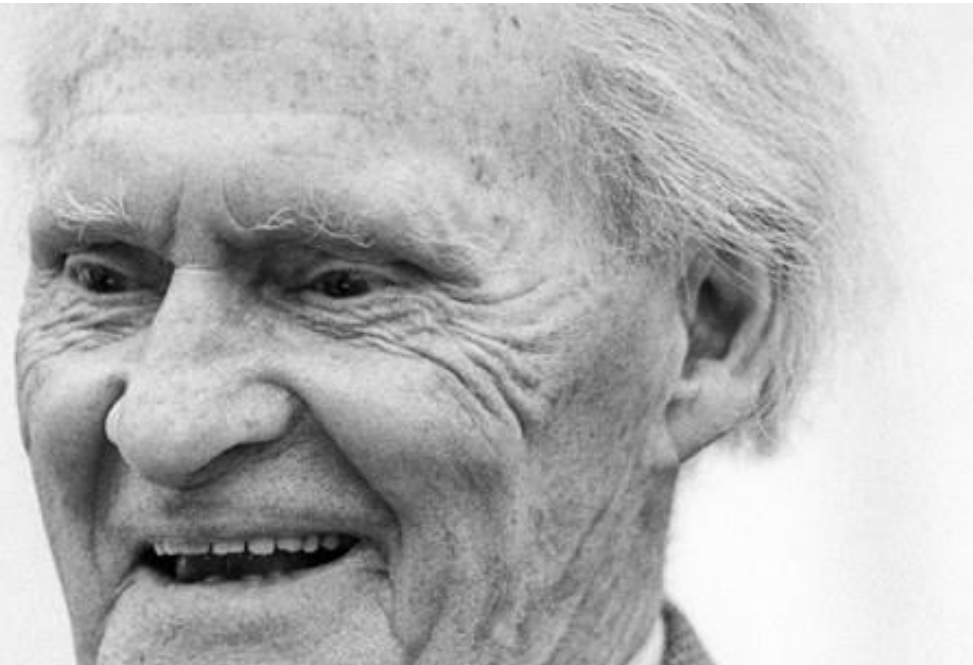
More information

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/r-s-thomas>

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/2000/sep/27/guardianobituaries.books>

<https://poetryarchive.org/poet/r-s-thomas>

R S Thomas



It's important we find a posture that works for us, when we pray. Why then, in the past, did so many people pray while kneeling down, with their hands together?

Medieval societies were highly organised in terms of social status, with the king at the top and slaves at the bottom. Everyone knew their place in such a society.

One of the ways in which this feudal society maintained this kind of pyramid was a simple display of status known as 'homage'. For example, a peasant should pay homage to a local baron; barons paid homage to their overlord; and a lord paid homage to the king at the top of this social pyramid.

The rite of homage was simple. The person of lower status knelt before the person of higher status. While kneeling, he placed his hands together in front of his face. His overlord stood or sat before him while placing his own hands over the hands of his underling. Prayers and promises then cemented the feudal bond.

In exactly the same way, when we come before God, we acknowledge that he is vastly greater than we are. In effect, we pay homage and renew our relationship. We do so kneeling before him, with our hands held together and outstretched before us and submit ourselves entirely to Him as Almighty God.

The Duke of Edinburgh pays homage to the Queen after her coronation in Westminster Abbey on 2 June 1953. All the classic elements can be seen here: bishops representing the Church stand either side of the Queen to oversee the ceremony. The Queen is flanked by all men of the rank of duke, who represent the top tier of society under her as Head of State.

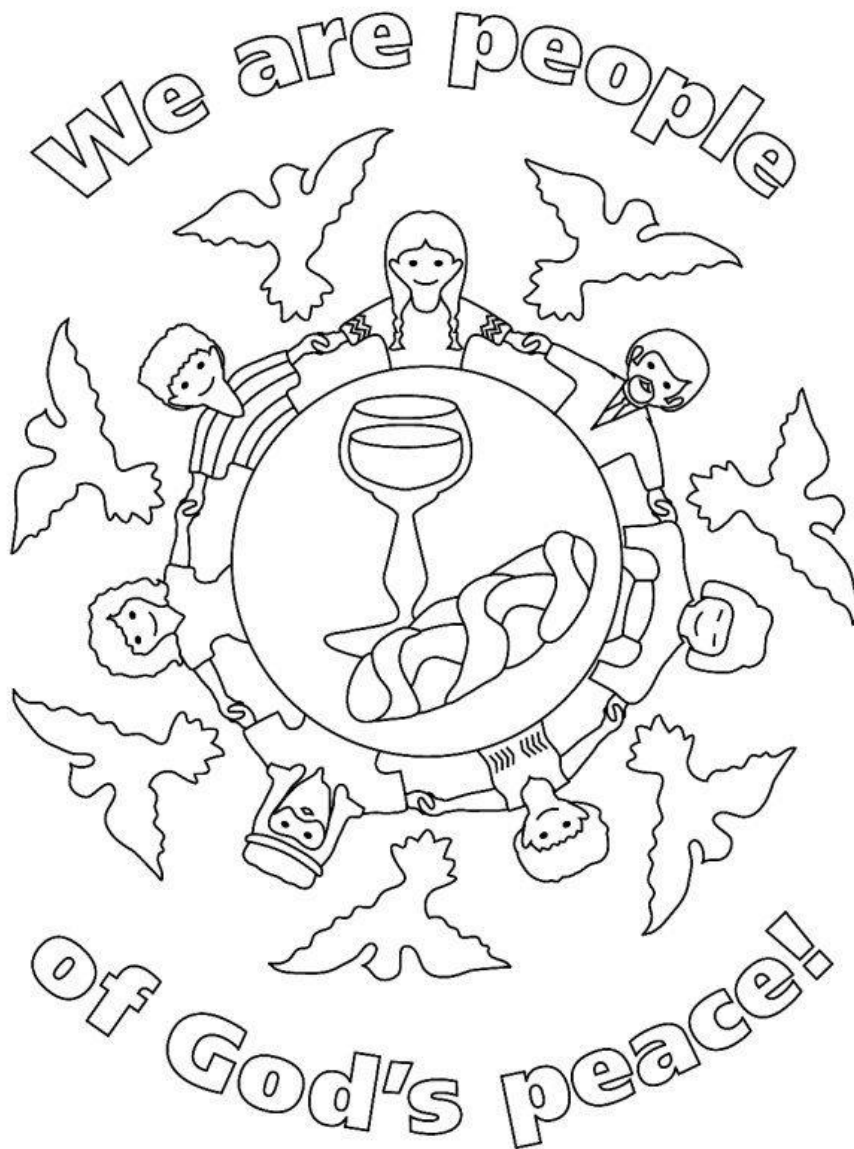
**Why do we pray
kneeling and with
our hands folded?**



Colour this page

Wordsearch

Saints and feast days in July



Directions: Search only for the parts of the saints names or feast days that are in **bold print**.

Junipero Serra
Elizabeth of Portugal
Maria Goretti
 Augustine **Zhao** Rong
Benedict
Henry

Kateri Tekakwitha
Bonaventure
 Our Lady of **Mount Carmel**
Apollinaris
Lawrence of Brindisi
 Mary **Magdalene**

Bridget
James
Joachim and **Anne**
Martha
Peter Chrysologus



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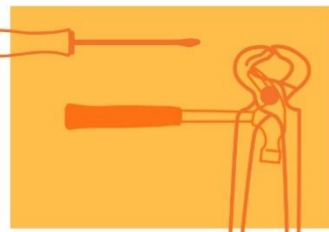
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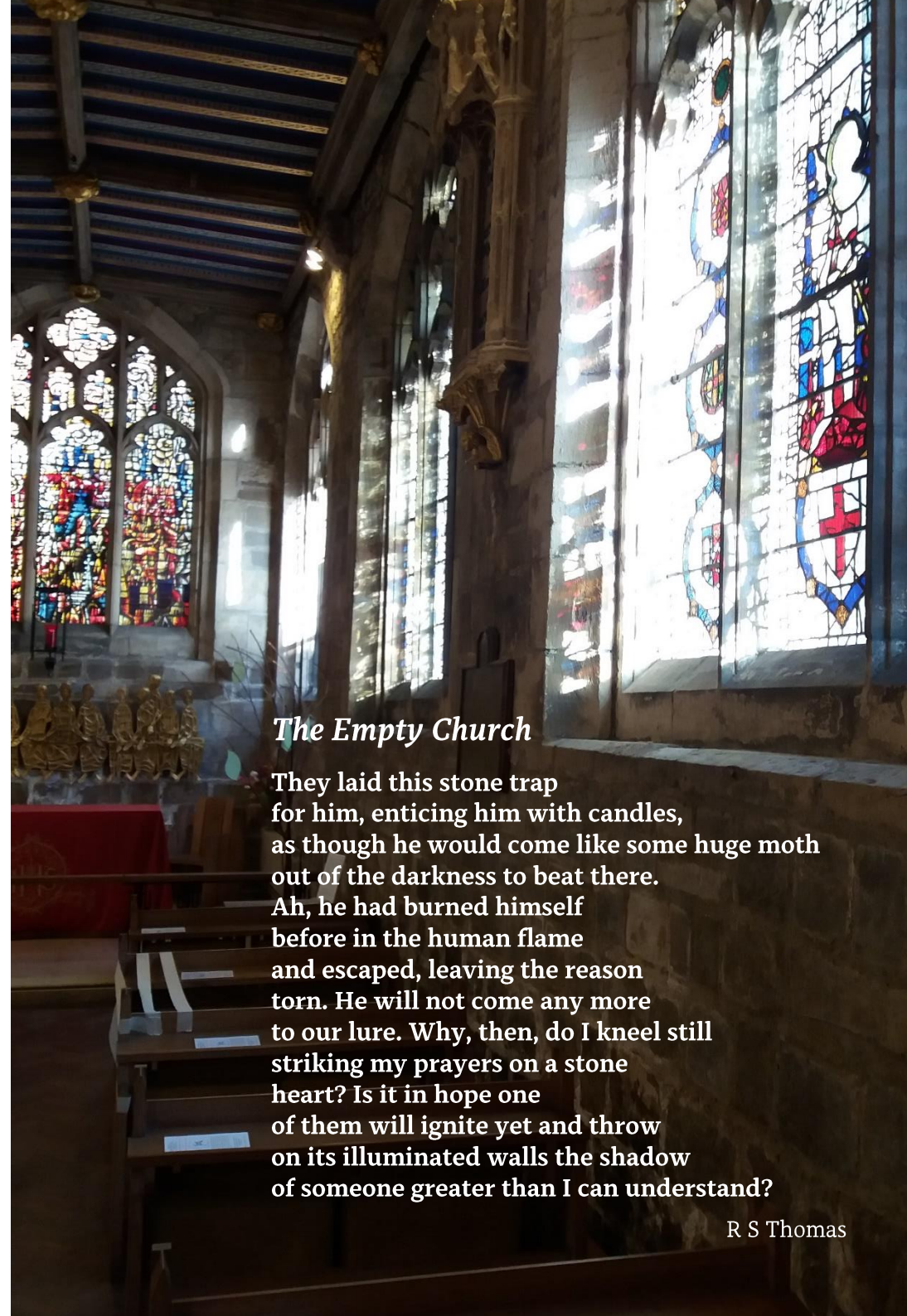
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The Empty Church

They laid this stone trap for him, enticing him with candles, as though he would come like some huge moth out of the darkness to beat there. Ah, he had burned himself before in the human flame and escaped, leaving the reason torn. He will not come any more to our lure. Why, then, do I kneel still striking my prayers on a stone heart? Is it in hope one of them will ignite yet and throw on its illuminated walls the shadow of someone greater than I can understand?

R S Thomas



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