SAINT
Barnabas
CLARKSFIELD
April 2024
barnabas-oldham.co.uk

Services at St Barnabas' Church

Sunday 9:30 am Parish Worship
Wednesday 10:00 am Bible study
Thursday 10:00 am Holy Communion (said)

The first Wednesday of each month: Holy Communion at the Alexandra Nursing Home in Glodwick, at 11:15 am.

Baptisms and marriages by arrangement with the Vicar.

Please submit items for the May magazine by 15 May.
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

Lay Readers	**Peter Haslam**	**(0161) 345 0215**
	Lucie Reilly	**(07880) 861 751**
Wardens	**Peter Haslam**	**(0161) 345 0215**
	Lucie Reilly	**(07880) 861 751**
Administrator	**Sarah Gura**	**(07708) 714 813**
Community Worker	**MaryAnne Oduntan**	**(07908) 004 682**
Treasurer	**Mrs Vicky Heaton**	**(07468) 463 753**
Parish Hall bookings	**The Vicar**	**(0161) 624 7708**

Letter from the Vicar

As I write, the great feast of Easter lies ahead; but many folk will read my words after Easter—maybe a great many days afterward.

In a similar way, we all live in ways that look both toward Easter but also live in celebration of it as part of our spiritual heritage and, in that sense, the past. In fact, Christian faith is best lived in a sense of both past and 'not yet'. Let me explain:

Easter clearly remembers Jesus' death and resurrection, which occurred nearly 2000 years ago. Easter celebrates his victory over the powers of darkness and, as a direct result, our right to grow into a relationship with God, which explains why we offer thanks in worship. In fact, a growing sense of wonder and thankfulness are a useful 'litmus test' of whether we are growing into a fuller appreciation of Easter and its meaning. We could fill several lifetimes devising appropriate responses because these things are so precious.

Conversely, some aspects of Easter are not available yet, such as life after death with God and living in the unimpeded presence of God.

And some of the fruits of Easter are available but only in part such as a sense of spiritual worth which leads into praise and worship—to use St Paul's wonderful phrase, 'we see but in a glass darkly'.

As Christians, we contemplate Easter and its message. But we must remember how we all live bet*ween* the 'now' and 'not yet', so need to be aware there is a tension between extremes. For example, if we live too much in the 'now' of Easter, we can become complacent, consider eternal life to be a right, become proud, and fall into sin. But if we concentrate too much on the 'not yet', God can see unattainable and remote; there is no hope and we can tempted to become judgmental or dour, and can give up.

I hope your Easter was wonderful and a time of great joy, and many prayers as you grow to become more fully an 'Easter person'.

PAUL

News

Clocks change

A gentle reminder that the clocks go forward on Sunday 31 March. We all lose an hour's sleep.

Holiday club

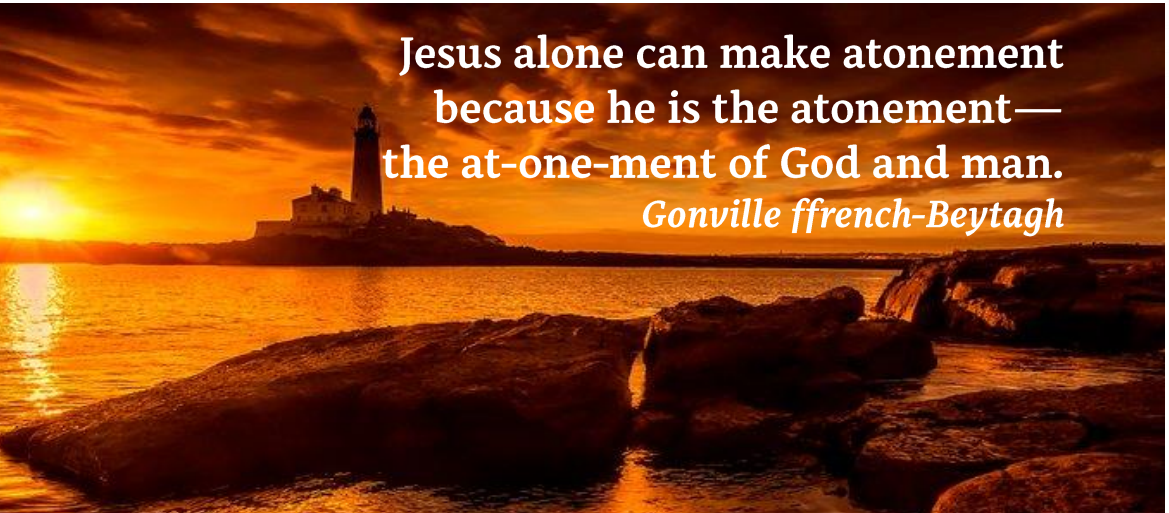
We aim to host a family activity club during the first week of April (which is the first week of the Easter school break). It's totally free: we have received funding from the Department for Education, as administered by Oldham Council.

We convene on Tuesday–Friday, 2–5 April, 10:00—2:00 pm and all are welcome, but we give priority to children in receipt of free school meals. All children should be accompanied by an adult, please.

Grants

We have received three grants this month:

- £4,500 from the Charles III Foundation 'Coronation Food Project' (£1,500 a year for three years) for our food pantry—one of only 33 awarded in the UK.
- £2,000 to fund the HAF club over the Easter break (from the Department of Education).
- £1,167 to purchase a defibrillator (from Oldham Council).



Bible readings for April

Sunday 31 March
Easter Day
First: Acts 10:34–43
Epistle: 1 Corinthians 15:1–11
Gospel: John 20:1–18

Sunday 7 April
Second Sunday of Easter
First: Acts 4:32–35
Epistle: 2 John 1:1 — 2:2
Gospel: John 20:19–end

Sunday 14 April
Third Sunday of Easter
First: Acts 3:12–19
Epistle: 1 John 3:1–7
Gospel: Luke 24:36b–48

Sunday 21 April
Fourth Sunday of Easter
First: Acts 4:5–12
Epistle: 1 John 3:16-end
Gospel: John 10:11–18

Sunday 28 April
Fifth Sunday of Easter
First: Acts 8:26–end
Epistle: 1 John 4:7–end
Gospel: John 15:1–8

From the parish registers

Holy Baptism
Sunday 31 March — Rosie Bartlett at Waterhead Church.

Christian funeral
Friday 15 March — Eric Lane in Greenacres Cemetery.

Church diary

Tues–Fri, 2–5 April 10:00—2:00: **Holiday activity club**, at St Barnabas.

Sunday 14 April — 10:45 am: **Annual Parochial Church Meeting**.
3:00 pm: **Swing Band Concert**
at Waterhead Parish Centre (see poster on page 27).

Saturday 25 May — 7:00 for 7:30 pm: **Quiz night** at Waterhead Parish Centre.

Sunday 16 June — Mid-afternoon: annual **Confirmation Service**.

Signing with the Cross

From ancient times, Christians have signed themselves with the cross during a service. The practice probably goes back as far as the end of the second century.

Sometimes it's only the forehead that is signed, in which case a finger may be dipped first into a stoop of holy water or use holy oil instead. More often, the sign of the cross involves the whole upper torso as well as the head. The sign starts by touching the forehead with the fingers of the right hand, bringing the hand down to the heart, touching the left shoulder and then bringing the hand across the chest to the right shoulder. This movement describes a cross shape. In the Orthodox Churches of the east, Christians also sign with the cross, but move the hand from the right shoulder to the left.

The positions of the four points of the cross are significant:

1. Behind the forehead lies the brain, the mind, from whence all thoughts derive. They need to be pure and clean. The mind therefore requires continual re-direction toward the cross: we must think more often of God.

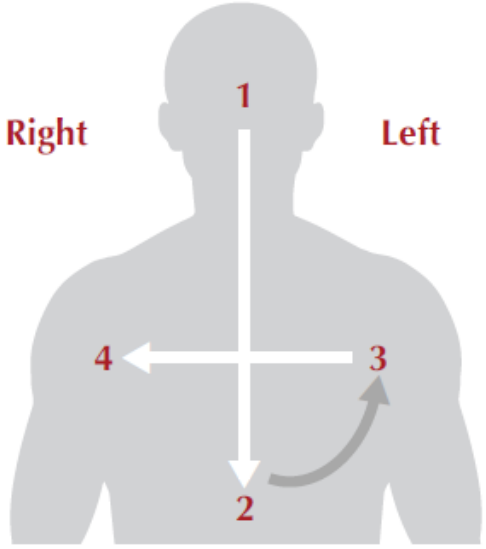
2. The heart is traditionally seen as the seat of the emotions. Therefore, the desires of our heart need continual irrigation in the love shown on the cross: we must direct our love back toward God.

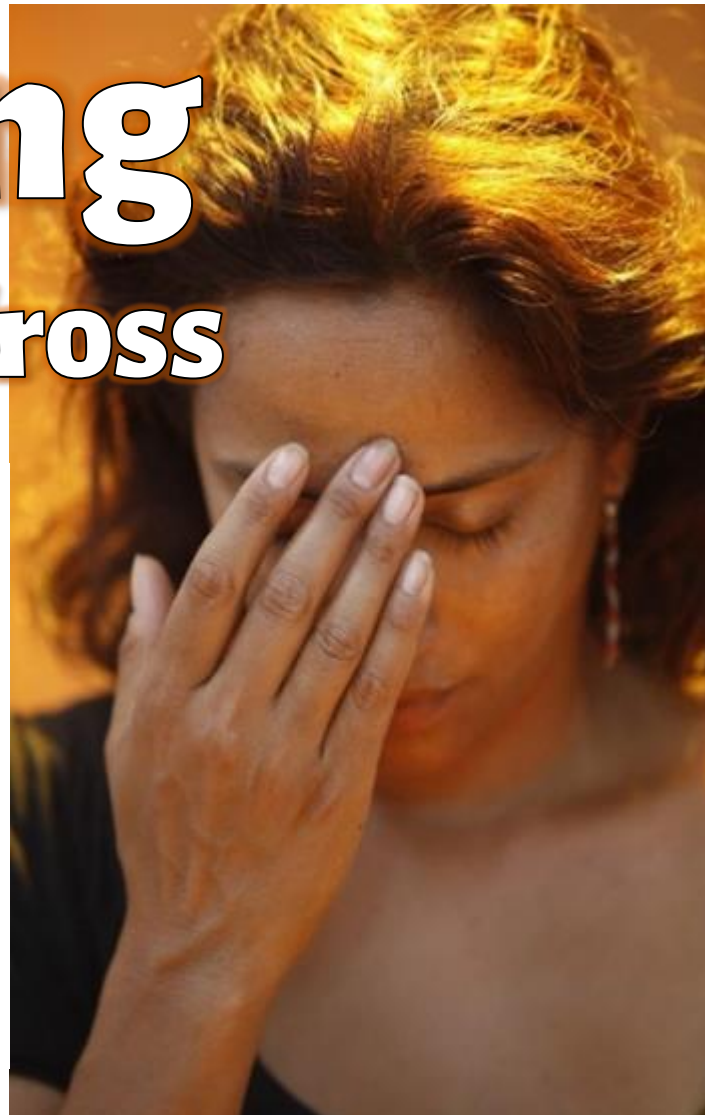
3-4. Until remarkably recently, the left-hand side of a person was thought to be inferior or more wicked than the right. For example, the Latin word for 'left handed' is 'sinister.' By contrast, the right-hand side was supposed to be good. When a Christian draws their hand from left to right, the action symbolises a movement from wickedness to goodness, from rebellion against God to compliance.

The triple signing of the forehead, lips and breast when reading the Gospel derives from the eleventh century at the earliest. Symbolically, it suggests cleansing by the cross of thought, word and deed.

While signing, many Christians says (aloud or silently) 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,' or another Trinitarian phrase. And in a church of more catholic persuasion, the cross is also signed at the sacraments, during a blessing, and as a sign of penance.

The frequency of signing oneself varies from church to church, but the number is certainly fewer than in years past: the Sarum Rite (from which much of the Book of Common Prayer, derives) required a worshipper to sign as many as twenty-six times during a Eucharistic service!





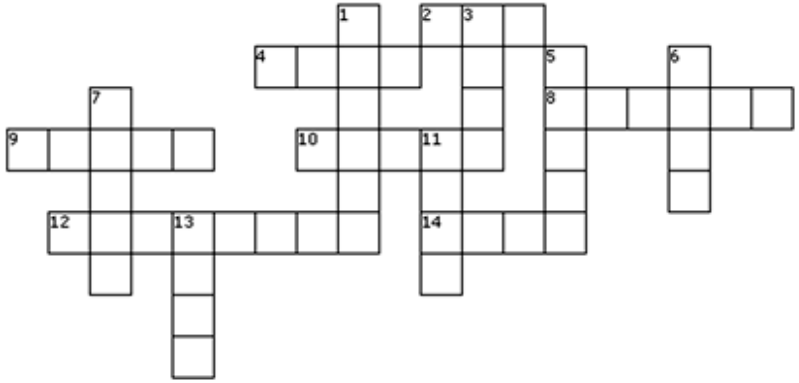
For more information, see:

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

https://orthodoxwiki.org/Sign_of_the_Cross

He is not here. He is risen!

All the answers appear in John 20:1–18 (NIV version)



ACROSS

2. To shed tears
4. The opposite of alive
8. A heavenly being
9. The thing that covered the entrance to Jesus'tomb
10. The color that is the opposite of black
12. A person who takes care of plants and flowers
14. The name of the woman who discovered Jesus' empty tomb

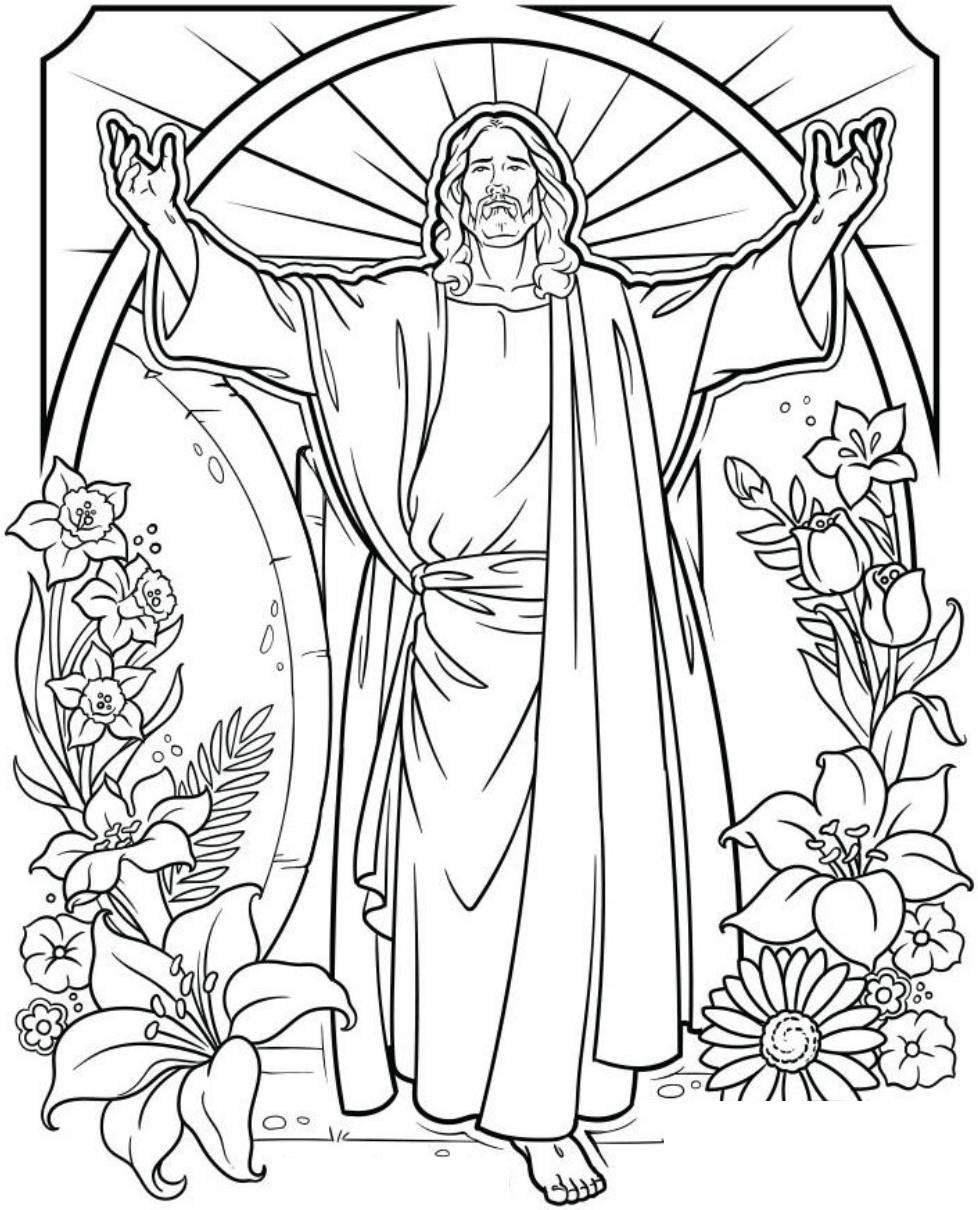
DOWN

1. The male parent
3. Return to an upright position after lying down; to return from the dead
5. The opposite of late
6. A period of seven days
7. An adult female person
11. A place where someone is buried; another name for grave
13. The opposite of light

Words Used

early	angels	gardener	rise
week	white	Mary	dead
dark	woman	tomb	
stone	cry	father	

Colour this page



What is intercessory prayer?

'Intercession' is the practice of asking God's help, requesting that He intervene in the world He created. We can say such prayers in public or in private. They occupy a central place in our weekly Eucharistic services. They appear between the Creed and the Peace.

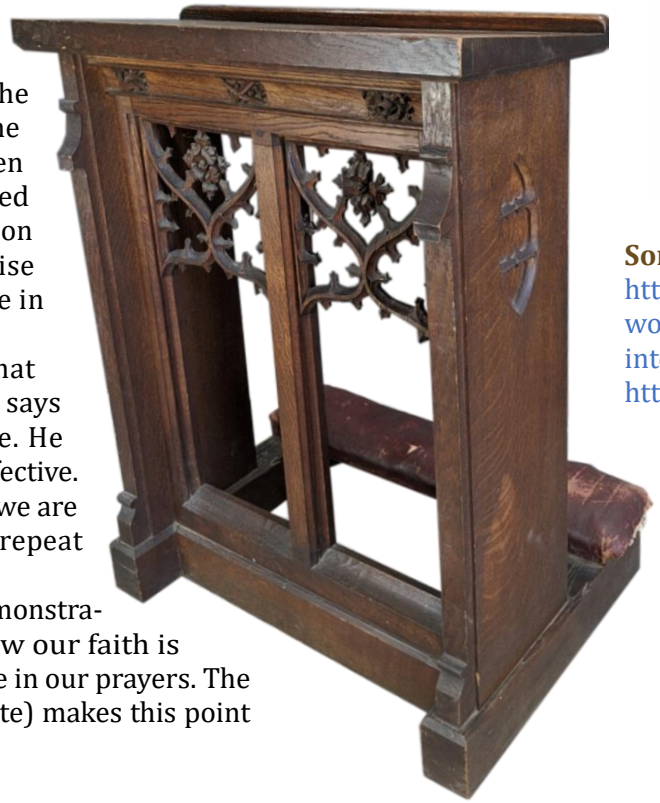
Public intercession can be difficult. Commonly, many such prayers are too specific: 'we pray for Joe Bloggs, son of John and Betty Bloggs, as he enters ward 12 of the St John's General Hospital for his operation on a heart value, at 10:15 on Friday 15th ....' Such prayers are unwise because:

- Prayers in this mode presuppose that God does not know what is happening in His world and needs to be reminded.
- All too frequently, broadcasting such excessive detail will breach the person's personal confidentiality.
- But perhaps the worst problem is the idea it sponsors, that the greater the number of words, the greater the likelihood of God answering. Jesus himself addressed this last view when he warned against 'babbling like the pagans' in prayer, with too many words (Matt 6:7).

A moment's thought reveals why the power behind intercessory prayer does not lie in the actual words used, or even the sincerity of the person praying. If it was the words alone, then such prayers should more properly be called 'incantations' or even 'spells'. This observation becomes even more obvious when we realise how most people's intercessory prayers are in fact silent—maybe even wordless.

All biblical references to prayer stress that faith is important: for example, James 5:15 says that prayers 'offered in faith' are effective. He implies that prayers without faith are not effective. Again, this idea is prone to misconceptions: we are not being asked to believe more fervently, repeat more often, or strain more violently.

Actually, effective prayers accompany demonstrations of our faith. And the best way to show our faith is always the way we live, not the words we use in our prayers. The poem *Emerging* by R.S. Thomas (link apposite) makes this point very well.



There are many ways of praying intercessions. Words alone are never sufficient, whether said silently or spoken aloud. The person praying should always seek first to enter the presence of God: they 'recollect'.

Once the person praying is recollected and in communion with God —and only then—they should gently allow their request(s) to come before God. Some people find it useful to actually picture in their mind's eye the person or thing being prayed for, and then visualising God's healing love flowing into that person or situation, much like light streaming from the sun into a gloomy room. Later, with practise, it gradually becomes possible to know for whom or for what God wants us to pray because His presence becomes more intense, more intimate as our requests thereby coincide with His will.

Exercises

First, consciously enter the presence of God. Then, in your imagination, picture the person or situation needing God's help. In your mind, gently raise the person or thing or situation into the presence of God, bathing them in His love and care.

Some of these links might be useful

https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/topical-prayers/leading-prayer-through-intercessions

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

https://au.thegospelcoalition.org/article/preparing-to-lead-intercessions-in-church

***Emerging* by R.S. Thomas**

http://www.cymru2008.com/rst/pemerging.html

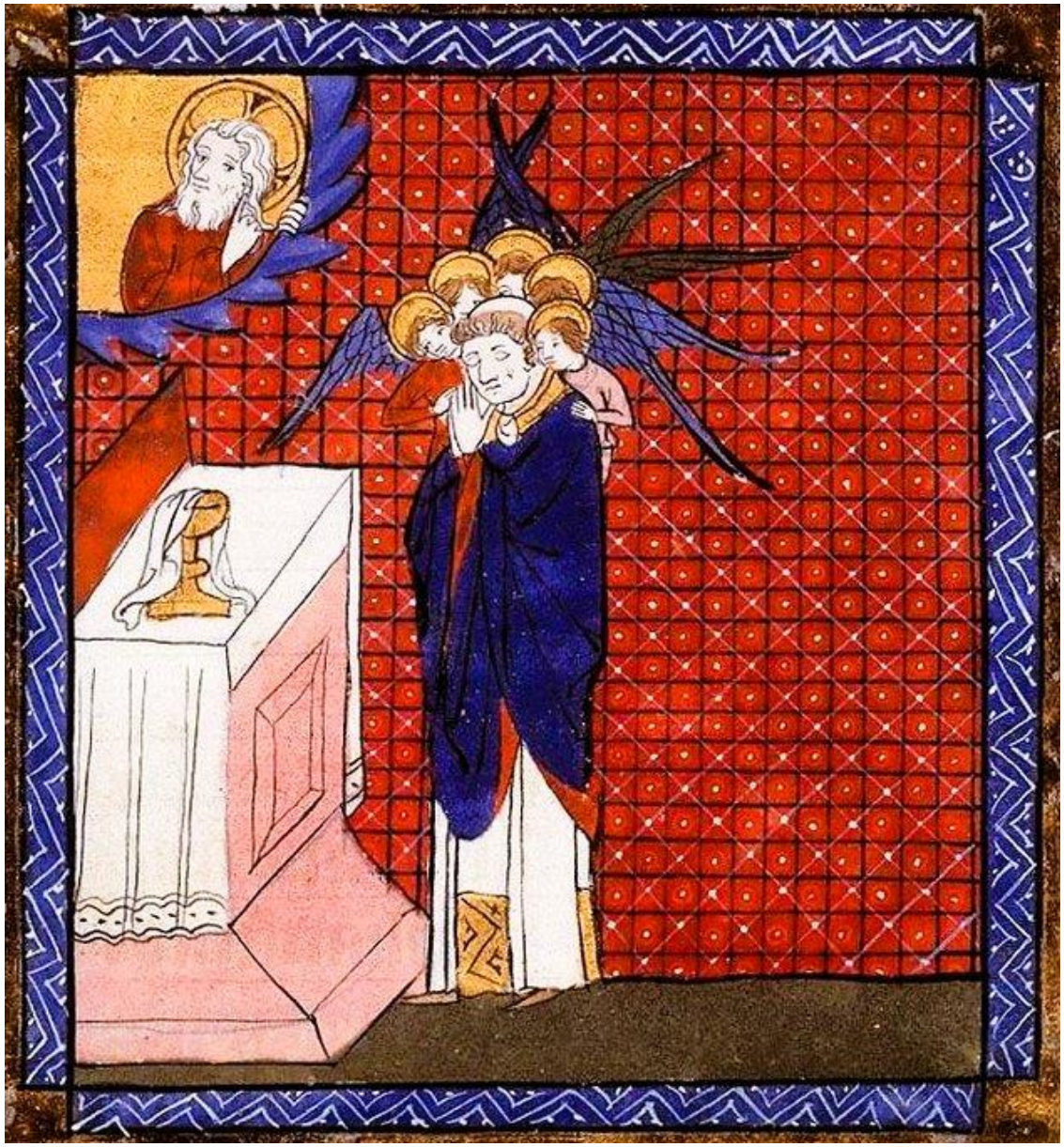
Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,
Though foolishly he lost the same,
Decaying more and more
Till he became
Most poor:
With thee
O let me rise
As lark, harmoniously,
And sing this day the victories:
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

My tender age in sorrow did begin:
And still with sicknesses and shame
Thou didst so punish sin,
That I became
Most thin.
With thee
Let me combine,
And feel this day thy victory:
For, if I imp my wing on thine,
Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

Easter wings

by **George Herbert**

This emblem-patterned poem is a meditation on the physical and spiritual resurrection as set out in 1 Corinthians 15. When first published, it was printed sideways on opposite sides of the page, one verse on each, to highlight the set of wings.



This charming illumination comes from a manuscript dating 1370–78, and shows a priest praying. His head is surrounded by angels, so he is listening to angelic advice. God is shown (in the top-left corner), His face bearing a look of benevolence as he strives to hear every word.

78 D 41, f. 133r Guillaume Durand de Mende, *Le Rational des divins offices* (Paris).

The left-hand image is a iconic image of Henry VIII's fourth wife, **Anne of Cleves**, painted in 1539 by Hans Holbein. After 485 years, the painting had become dirty and discoloured, so it was cleaned. The restored image (right) was unveiled in March 2024. The colours and form seem sharper so everything is now clearer and altogether more real. It's what Holbein intended.

Seeing the difference between these two images after cleaning reminds us that we need to 'clean' our Christianity, looking beneath the surface and remove what is not central. That way we can see what Jesus intended.

Author The Authorship of this letter was somewhat controversial in early church history. It claims to be Peter's and, in character, is compatible with that claim. Certainly, the evidence strongly supports the 2 Peter being written by the same author as 1 Peter (see 1 Peter 1:1 and 2 Peter 3:1), although differences in style between the two have led to doubts. Today, the consensus is that Peter wrote both letters.

The author identifies himself as Simon Peter (1:1). In a highly personal passage, speaks in the first person singular (1:12–15) when he claims to have been an eyewitness of the transfiguration (1:16–18). He says this epistle is his second letter to the readers (3:1) and refers to Paul as 'our dear brother' (3:15).

Date Tradition teaches that Peter ministered in Rome during the 60s AD. Peter died during Nero's persecution around 65 AD so the letter was written prior to this date. 2 Peter was written toward the end of Peter's life (1:12–15). He mentions having written a prior letter (3:1) to the same readers (which is probably preserved today as 1 Peter). Therefore, 2 Peter was probably written during the period 65 and 68.

Purpose 1 Peter and 2 Peter were written to address different situations, so the two letters vary in terms of content and emphasis. In both, Peter acts as a pastor (literally 'shepherd') of Jesus' sheep (see John 21:15–17), and seeks to commend to his readers a combination of Christian faith and practice.

Peter's first letter employs a metaphor of sheep and shepherds, so he 'feeds' Jesus' sheep by teaching them how to deal with persecution from outside the church (see 1 Peter 4:12). His second letter, Peter next teaches the members how to deal with false teachers and evildoers who have come into the church (see 2:1 and 3:3–4).

This, his second, letter is best divided into three sections which correspond to the three chapters. Accordingly, he wrote with three interrelated purposes, to:

(1) stimulate Christian growth (chapter 1).
(2) combat false teaching (chapter 2), and
(3) encourage watchfulness in view of Jesus certain return (chap. 3).

Chapter 1 encourages its readers by reminding them how Jesus has already equipped them to lead a godly life. Their faith in Christ should be vibrant. He then cites the characteristics of that life (2 Peter 1:1–15). It is impossible to overestimate the impact of verse 1:4: '[by knowledge of this life] 'you may participate in the divine nature', which sponsors an entire branch of Greek and Russian Orthodox teaching.

Peter reminds his hearers that all prophecies, if genuine, will be fulfilled. For Peter, the most important evidence is his being an eyewitness of Jesus' transfiguration (2 Peter 1:16–21).

Next, in chapter 2, he warns against false teachers—voices that deceive and draw people away from Christ into sin. They do so by teaching about things they do not understand. Peter gives a dire warning for these teachers, who will be judged harshly by God (2 Peter 2:1–9). Those who fall for these schemes are enslaved to sin (2 Peter 2:10–22).

Finally, in chapter 3, Peter addresses the specific claims of those false teachers. He again warns that those who pervert the message of God will be subject to extreme judgment. Anything not preserved by Christ will be utterly destroyed (2 Peter 3:1–13).

Peter concludes the letter with a reminder that saved Christians must set aside sin and focus on preparing to live in peace with God. He also refers to the writings of the apostle Paul as 'Scripture,' supporting the doctrine of divine inspiration (2 Peter 3:14–18).

Oddity The Letter to Jude and parts of 2 Peter look very similar (so, for example, compare 2 Peter 2 with Jude 4–18); they also show great differences. It has been suggested that one borrowed from the other or that both draw on a common source. In fact, it is very likely that Peter remained in contact with Jesus' brother Jude after Pentecost so any similarities reflect ancient teaching from Jesus himself.

The Second Letter of Peter

Resources

https://www.biblestudytools.com/2-peter
https://www.bibleref.com/2-Peter/index.html

Gonville ffrench-Beytagh

Gonville ffrench-Beytagh was born on 26 January 1913 in Shanghai, the son of an Irish businessman and a South African mother. He derived from two aristocratic Irish families.

Gonville was sent to an English boarding school at a young age when his parents separated. His experience of school Christianity made him determined never to attend a church ever again. He left England for New Zealand at the age of 17 but was soon expelled.

He became a down-and-out. After sleeping rough and doing casual labour, a chance encounter with a distant relative in late 1932 brought him to South Africa. He took odd jobs but was still an irreverent agnostic. He was mugged and beaten savagely while returning from a riotous party and was left with a broken jaw. He was visited in Johannesburg General Hospital by Alan Paton (author of *Cry the Beloved Country*) and was soon befriended by a brother in the Community of the Resurrection.

He attended Midnight Mass to placate his new friends and underwent a profound religious experience. He later wrote,

> *It was a hot night and as the doors had been closed, the air was completely still. I knelt at the communion rail, and as I knelt there I felt a very strong cool breeze—and that was all. I do not think that at the time I had any idea what the word 'breath' or the word 'wind' means to the Christian, or even that the Greek word for the 'Holy Spirit' means 'breath'. I did not even think of Jesus breathing the spirit on his disciples. All I know is that this breath, or wind, which I felt, had a meaning and a content for me which I have never been able to communicate to anyone else, and still cannot describe.*

A year after this experience, Gonville went to ordination college. It was 1936 and he was 24. He compared the experience to a prison. But he persevered and was ordained a deacon in 1938 and priest in 1939.

He served in several parishes and became a canon at Johannesburg Cathedral. He had no political consciousness until, many years later, he first made contacts outside white society. He said, 'The utter nonsensicality of racial discrimination really hit me.' He grew disillusioned with the stealthy encroachment of apartheid.

He was promoted often. His passport was confiscated in 1965 after agitating for freedom. He became a prominent opponent of apartheid, condemning it as 'blasphemous against God and man.' As Dean, he opened his cathedral's doors to black worshippers; the police used dogs to chase him up the cathedral steps and beat him with a rhino-whip. But Gonville continued the protest. He arranged an international network of aid to support the education and healthcare needs of black South Africans.

At Christmas 1970, he preached that the 'South African way of life' was really the 'South African way of death.' He was arrested, placed in solitary confinement, and interrogated brutally. He was found guilty as a terrorist and jailed although the charges were clearly invented. His conviction was intended as a warning to his Anglican colleagues.

Gonville appealed against his conviction. The charges were upheld but the sentence commuted to deportation. He left for London that same day. In some respects the sentence was a mistake because, from England, he attained international prominence for his uncompromising resistance to apartheid.

Archbishop Michael Ramsey recognised his prophetic voice and made him rector of a London parish with no resident parishioners (!) and, thereafter, he had space and resources to focus on writing and spiritual direction. He retired in 1986 and died in 1991.

Gonville's gifts as a speaker and spiritual counsellor were in great demand. He also had eccentricities and weaknesses, and suffered crippling depression, which he concealed with courage and wrote about frankly in his last books *Out of the Depths* and *Encountering Darkness.*

His legacies include the peaceful transition in South Africa with a truly Christian Church at its centre; and the way he inspired so many to live and work for the Kingdom of God.

Further reading

http://www.patrickcomerford.com/2012/04/in-retrospect-canon-gonville-aubie.html
https://www.fministry.com/2011/02/gonville-ffrench-beytagh-on-holy-spirit.html
https://wikivisually.com/wiki/Gonville_ffrench-Beytagh
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gonville_ffrench-Beytagh

And where is Jesus, this strange Easter day?
Not lost in our locked churches, anymore
Than he was sealed in that dark sepulchre.
The locks are loosed; the stone is rolled away,
And he is up and risen, long before,
Alive, at large, and making his strong way
Into the world he gave his life to save,
No need to seek him in his empty grave.

He might have been a wafer in the hands
Of priests this day, or music from the lips
Of red-robed choristers, instead he slips
Away from church, shakes off our linen bands
To don his apron with a nurse: he grips
And lifts a stretcher, soothes with gentle hands
The frail flesh of the dying, gives them hope,
Breathes with the breathless, lends them strength to cope.

On Thursday we applauded, for he came
And served us in a thousand names and faces
Mopping our sickroom floors and catching traces
Of that *corona* which was death to him:
Good Friday happened in a thousand places
Where Jesus held the helpless, died with them
That they might share his Easter in their need,
Now they are risen with him, risen indeed.

Malcolm Guite

Easter

Reproduced with permission, from
https://malcolmguite.wordpress.com/2020/04/12/easter-2020-a-new-poem

What distinguishes a Christian from anybody else is not that they go to church, or that they are good, or that they has been baptised, but that they know that they—John Smith, Jane Jones—is loved and valued at a depth beyond any human imagining and that they desire to respond to that love.
They may feel almost filled with hate and lust and envy, but they know they are loved—the whole of them, not just the 'good' bits—and so they can begin to open themselves to God and their fellows and allow the power of divine love to flood through them.

Gonville ffrench-Baytagh
Encountering Glory

Prayer is keeping
in step with the Spirit
Archbishop Rowan Williams

The day of resurrection!
Earth, tell it out abroad the Passover of gladness,
the Passover of God.
From death to life eternal,
from earth unto the sky,
our Christ hath brought us over,
with hymns of victory.

Our hearts be pure from evil,
that we may see aright
the Lord in rays eternal
of resurrection light;
and listening to his accents,
may hear, so calm and plain,
his own 'All hail!' and, hearing,
may raise the victor strain.

Now let the heavens be joyful!
Let earth the song begin!
Let the round world keep triumph,
and all that is therein!
Let all things seen and unseen
their notes in gladness blend,
for Christ the Lord hath risen,
our joy that hath no end.

The day of resurrection

This ancient hymn of praise was written by the Greek poet and theologian, St John of Damascus (675–749). This version is a translation done into verse by the Victorian scholar J M Neale.

Did you know?

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. *Genesis 1:1*

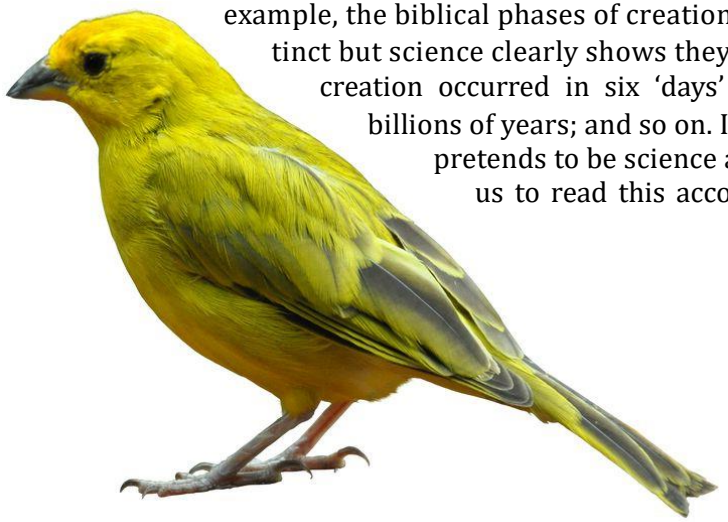
The first chapter of Genesis describes the way that God created everything, taking six days to make Heaven and earth out of nothing. In order, He makes light (day 1); the sky (day 2); the earth, seas, and vegetation (day 3); the sun and moon (day 4); the animals of the air and sea (day 5); and land animals, then humans (day 6). God finally rested from his work (day 7) which explains why the Sabbath is a day of rest.

The magnificent description in Genesis 1 is highly repetitive, so each day starts with the Lord speaking, 'And God said, 'Let there be …' and each ends with an affirmation, for example, 'God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.'

Incidentally, each day follows the Jewish pattern and proceeds from sundown to sundown rather than midnight to midnight.

The descriptions are drawn very precisely, and are phrased with great precision. It is a poem. Furthermore, the highly repetitive nature of the poem suggests it was first written to be read aloud as liturgy. While we know almost nothing about the structure of ancient Jewish liturgy at this time, the context suggests either the start of planting season (in which case Genesis 1 should be seen as comprising a series of prayers that ask God for a good harvest), or these verses were read / sung at the harvest (in which case they celebrate God's provision).

If Genesis 1 is a liturgical poem (either imploring or celebrating) then it is not history. Reading this chapter in a literal way is not valid and leads to ridiculous conclusions: the Bible contradicts science—for example, the biblical phases of creation are separate and distinct but science clearly shows they overlap; Genesis says creation occurred in six 'days' and science suggests billions of years; and so on. In fact, Genesis 1 never pretends to be science and God does not wish us to read this account in such a manner.



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www.penninepen.org.uk

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