

**ST TERNAN'S SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL
CHURCH MUCHALLS**

MAGAZINE

February 2019



Sunday Service 10.30a.m.

Scottish Charity No. 023264

www.stternans.co.uk

Ministry Team Blether -George Masson

A belated, Happy New Year to you all with health, happiness, and God be with you in the coming Year.

Ministry Team held a meeting at the beginning of December and were delighted that Bishop Andrew attended. Among other items up for discussion was the Rota compiled up to the beginning of March 2019, Visit to Westhill SEC Community Church by various members of the congregation.

We were fortunate in October to have as a visiting preacher an Ordinand from Scottish Episcopal Institute in the Diocese of Brechin, Roxanne Campbell. As part of her training led worship and preached at St Ternan's. Excellent presentation. Another two Ordinands are planned to lead worship and preach at St Ternan's in 2019.

The Advent Studies this year was led by Ken Tonge running a pottery class. The fruits of their labours can be seen displayed at the back of the church. Such wonderful talent. I am afraid my skills as a potter come nowhere near the figures on display! In fact, they are not to be seen!

Christmas has come and gone. This is the third year that we have joined with the local Communities in "Community Celebration of Christmas". This year there were over a 100 people in the congregation. A big thanks to all the musicians, solo artists, the Hope Family and especially the pipers. All very ably conducted and co-ordinated by our Organist Morag.

Thanks also to all the ladies who served up the drinks Christmas pies and shortbread after the service.

The Carol service Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Services were also well attended, so "haud it gaun" folks!

Never be weary of doing good- A prayer of John Wesley

You are never tired, O Lord, of doing us good; let us never be weary of doing You service. But as You have pleasure in the well-being of Your servants, let us take pleasure in the service of our Lord, and abound in Your work and in Your love and praise evermore.

Psalm 95's wise words on worship - Rev Paul Hardingham.

'Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever' (Westminster Confession). We are created to worship, but who or what will we worship? Psalm 95 invites us to worship God and to engage with His presence and power.

Rejoicing in God (1-5): *'Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord.'* (v1). In worship we are called to praise God through *'singing, shouting and extolling'*, because He is our king (3), creator (4) and rock (1). He truly has the whole world in His hands, including you and me! Whatever our circumstances, worship enables us to acknowledge his sovereignty over our lives.

Reverence before God (6,7): 'Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.' (v6). Worship brings us into the place of submission before God. The NT word for worship means 'to prostrate' ourselves before Him. It challenges the counterfeit 'gods' in our lives e.g. power, money, sex, work etc., as well as calling us to trust Him in whatever we are facing, as He is a loving shepherd who cares for us.

Responding to God (8-11): 'Today, if only you would hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as you did...in the wilderness,' (v8,9). Our worship enables us to listen and hear God's voice. He has a fresh word to speak into our lives on a daily basis. Unlike the people of Israel in the wilderness, we are warned not to harden our hearts, but to embrace God's new life. The test of genuine worship is not whether it feels good or fits our taste, but does it lead to greater obedience in our lives. Johann Sebastian Bach headed all his compositions with S.D.G. i.e. 'Soli Dei Gratia', which means 'To God alone be the glory'.

Psalm 95

Be my Valentine? - Tony Horsfall

St Valentine's Day falls on 14th February and since the 18th Century has been associated with the declaration of love, albeit anonymously. Originally this might be through the offering of sweets or flowers, and now more commonly by the sending of an unsigned card.

One suggestion is that St Valentinus was a Roman Christian who performed weddings for soldiers in the Roman army, even though they were not permitted to marry. According to this story, Valentinus was sentenced to death for his offence, but during his imprisonment prayed for the blind daughter of his judge, who miraculously recovered. Before his execution he left her a note, which he signed 'Your Valentine.'

All of us long to know that we are loved by someone but declaring our love to another is always a risky business since we may be rejected. They may consider us not attractive enough, or unsuitable in any number of other ways. The pain of unrequited love is indeed great, and so many of us hold back because of the fear of rejection.

One thing we can be sure of, however, is that we are loved by God. He loves us because He made us, and likes us as we are. He loves us because He gave His Son to die for us, and thought we were worthy of such a sacrifice. Here is One who knows everything about us and loves us just the same. His love is unchanging and unending, and we need never fear His rejection.

Here is the best declaration of love ever made. God says to you, "I have loved you with an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3)."



With Valentine's Day and Love in mind:

The Christian is supposed to love his neighbour, and since his wife is his nearest neighbour, she should be his deepest love. - *Martin Luther*

Men should keep their eyes wide open before marriage, and half shut afterward. - *Madame Scuderi*

QWERTY celebrates a big birthday - *Tim Lenton.*

The inventor of the QWERTY keyboard - now almost universally adopted in English-speaking countries - was born 200 years ago, on 14th February 1819, in Pennsylvania. Christopher Latham Scholes was an Episcopalian who could trace his ancestry back to two of the original Mayflower pilgrims, John and Priscilla Alden.

Although he did not invent the typewriter from scratch, Scholes was instrumental in developing a successful working model. Vital to this was his changing the keyboard, which was originally in alphabetical order but had a tendency to jam. Scholes rearranged the levers so that frequently used keys would not interfere with each other.

Scholes started out as a printer and then, after moving to Wisconsin, became a newspaper publisher. He served two terms as a Senator for Wisconsin, one as a Democrat and one as a Republican.

His typewriter was not a commercial success until he joined forces with the Remington company, selling them half his rights for \$12,000. In 1878 he added a shift key so that the writer could switch easily between capitals and lower-case letters. He died in 1890, probably of tuberculosis.



Some miscellaneous observations on modern life...

A cabbie is a fare-minded person.

A closed mouth gathers no foot.

A dentist and a manicurist fought tooth and nail.

A fine is a tax for doing wrong. A tax is a fine for doing well.

A man said his credit card was stolen but he decided not to report it because the thief was spending less than his wife did.

A will is a dead giveaway.

According to my calculations, the problem doesn't exist.

Age doesn't always bring wisdom. Sometimes age comes alone.

A Few Thoughts on Abraham - by Ken Tonge

Abraham has figured quite a lot recently; in Russ' recent address and in the opening discussions in the latest "New Daylight" magazine. Russ' readings are a straightforward version of the Bible story put into modern, easily understood, everyday language. The general tenor of the readings is that Abraham is a man with great faith in the belief that he is doing what God expects of him. The daily commentaries in "New Daylight" offer the same view of Abraham as a man of faith. Whilst one may agree that, in his actions, Abraham demonstrates a high degree of faithfulness and commitment, personally, I cannot help but question the Machiavellian nature of the way he goes about his business. Some years ago, Joe Morrow, in his sermon, reiterated the usual arguments regarding Abraham's faithfulness in his treatment of his son, Isaac. That sermon prompted me, at the next opportunity, to give my views on what I saw as the dubious morality of Abraham's methods. That address is reproduced here for your own assessment. Was I being unfair to Abraham?

Address Sunday 3rd July 2011 ----- 1st reading Genesis 24:34-38,42-49,58-67

Today, as often happens, there doesn't seem to be any obvious connection between the three readings. So, I decided to concentrate on the 1st reading, from Genesis, for my talk. It's part of a series of readings from that book that we are getting just now.

You may have noticed that the reading was in three parts, with chunks left out in between. I'm not sure why they do this – abridging the readings – maybe to shorten them; perhaps they think we've got the attention span of a goldfish? Today's reading is just part of the story of finding a wife for Isaac, the son of Abraham. It IS quite a long story – 67 verses, and there is quite a bit of repetition, but it's an interesting story and deserves to be read right through from the beginning, not just from half way through with bits left out.

Anyway, it got me thinking about marriage, about Abraham and about some of the things that Joe Morrow said in his sermon last week – that was based on the story of Abraham and the way he took Isaac up the mountain and was going to sacrifice his son as an offering to God.

But to start with I want to say a few words about marriage because today's reading is about finding a wife for Isaac – the preliminaries to a wedding.

Now, looking around I know that most of us here either are married or have been married. And I suppose most of us got married in church. (show of hands indicated two who did not marry in church). So, I suppose we all know what – according to the church – marriage is all about. But in case it's too long ago and you've forgotten – I'll remind you.

Well the Prayer Book started with the well-known "Dearly beloved we are gathered here today ---Bla, bla, bla – (Nods all round)

And it went on to say “to join this man and this woman, duly considering the causes for which matrimony was ordained” And these causes are then summarised:

Firstly – for the procreation of children to be brought up in fear of the Lord.

Secondly – for remedy against sin; to avoid fornication.

Thirdly – for mutual society, help and comfort.

Well, that was good thinking for the church to put in number two and three, because the first reason for marrying may not always apply. People don't always marry to have children. Sometimes folk marry when they are past child-bearing; or they may marry and find they are infertile; or they may simply choose not to have any children – friends of ours in Germany decided not to have children – they were so frightened of the Russians just across the border and they thought it wasn't a good time or place to have kids.

I think it is acknowledging that the purpose of marriage may not always be to procreate that has led to marriage services evolving; so that now it is possible for there to be same-sex marriages. And the service now says, “these two persons” rather than “this man and this woman”.

In this country and in many others, marriage IS restricted to “these two persons”, but there are places where this is not so; particularly in many Muslim countries where a man may have up to four wives.

Then there are some societies that don't actually HAVE marriage. The explorers of the South Pacific in the 18th Century discovered groups of islands where a whole village would constitute an extended family for bringing up children who might know who their mother was, but may have to guess who their father was – the sleeping arrangements were so flexible.

With the relaxation of the divorce laws it may be getting that way over here. In any school now, you'll find numbers of children who have a “new daddy” and an “old daddy” and lots of aunties and uncles in a large extended family. The long-term effect of this seems to be a lack of will to make a firm commitment. Living together and having children whilst unmarried is quite normal and condoned by most churches which would formerly have condemned it.

So, it seems, marriage is not something subject to universal, fixed regulations and can be adapted to suit the nature of the society you find it in. Abraham's was a very different society as we shall see.

Now, I'm sure many of you folk must have asked yourselves the question of why you got married. Or maybe you put it like “Why on earth did I get married!”

And only you can answer that. But the church's three CAUSES for marriage may not cover all the REASONS for getting married. There are LOTS of reasons why people get married:

To escape from bad parents,

To acquire riches or status,

To legitimise illegitimate children,

For economic reasons (2 can live as cheaply as 1 – Aye right!)

To gain access to another country, --- and so on

Now, it used to be the case, certainly when I was young, that you got married because all your friends were doing it. It's what people did. It was the normal expected thing. And the most popular times for weddings was in the Spring – Easter and Whitsuntide were very popular. I think it was all to do with hormones – the sap rising and all that.

It was just like that for Peggy and me. We got married around Whitsuntide and looking back I think it was largely sexual attraction. Yes, we were madly in love, but I think in retrospect it was largely physical. Sure, we enjoyed each other's company, the mutual support and doing things together, going dancing, going to the pictures, going to the theatre to see the pop stars of the day (long forgotten now – Guy Mitchell, Johnny Ray, Ruby Murray).

But really, I don't think I gave much thought to the long-term when we got married – I didn't think, then, what it would be like now, 50 or more years on.

I think I was still largely obsessed with Peggy's beautiful red hair, which is what attracted me in the first place. I can blame that on my Sunday School teacher, Miss Wainwright – she had bright red wavy hair and a nice round face with freckles. And she worked in an office with an export business. And Miss Wainwright would clip foreign stamps off parcels and envelopes and bring them to the Sunday School and hand them out for us to stick in our stamp collections – stamps from exotic places like Egypt and Bolivia and South Africa. And I guess in my young mind red hair became associated with kindness and generosity. I couldn't tell you anything about the Sunday School lessons, but I can say, that when I got interested in girls, I was only interested in red-heads. I now know, of course that not all red-heads are kind and generous like Miss Wainwright!

Fortunately, the one I married turned out to be loving and caring and has looked after me for over 50 years.

So, what has all this to do with Abraham and Isaac? Well, it's to do with the reasons for getting married.

I've told you MY reason for marrying Peggy. Peggy could tell you the reason for her marrying me. Each of you who have married could tell us YOUR reason for getting married.

But you see the difference – Isaac had NO reason for getting married!

It was his father, Abraham, who instigated the search for a wife for his son. And he didn't care who she was, so long as she was one of the family – and definitely not one of those Canaanites in whose land he was living. Whatever Isaac's wishes were – they didn't come into it. Abraham actually left it up to one of his trusted servants to find a suitable girl. He himself didn't care – just so long as she was one of his own people. This gets repeated several times because it is so important to him – you don't get this by just reading selected verses from the tale. And he also insisted that the girl be brought to Canaan to live with Isaac – there was no question of Isaac going to live elsewhere with his bride.

All this, Abraham said, was in order to fulfil God's vision – the covenant, the promise made in Genesis 15, that Abraham's seed would multiply like the stars in the sky and occupy all the land from the Nile to the Euphrates. To bring this about Abraham imposes his will on his son and his son's future wife.

Well, to me, this makes Abraham sound like a control freak, an empire builder and a xenophobe. Not what you'd call a Mr Nice Guy.

Fortunately for Isaac the servant who went looking for the bride-to-be put his own criterion on the choice – within the constraints imposed by Abraham.

We imagine the servant waiting with his camels and watching the women going down to the well to get water for the evening. They'd be in little groups chatting and swapping stories – some of them no doubt laughing and slagging off their men-folk – a bit like Loose Women on the TV. Quite a sociable gathering. The servant had a plan – the girl he was looking for would be kind and generous and helpful – one who would gladly draw water for him and his camels. And by this means he found Rebekah, who turned out to be Isaac's cousin – perfect.

I don't think Rebekah, any more than Isaac, had much choice about getting married. Abraham and Isaac were very rich and gave her expensive presents. I think her family were quite keen – they wanted a few days to think about it, but the servant wouldn't allow them time. So, they made their minds up very quickly and Rebekah was on her way almost immediately with her nurse. It sounds almost like she was sold.

And we note the little verse recited by Abraham's men when she accepted to be Isaac's bride – “You are our sister; may you be the mother of myriads; may your sons possess the cities of our enemies.”

What we have here is an arranged marriage the purpose of which is to populate and conquer. Isaac and Rebekah were to be like a cuckoo in the nest of the Canaanites

Abraham claims to be doing God's will – he has a covenant with the Lord. But, personally, and at the risk of being branded as anti-Semitic, I must say, I don't like the way Abraham goes about his business.

And here I take issue with Joe Morrow and what he said about Abraham taking Isaac up the mountain to be a sacrifice. Joe said that Abraham had so much faith in God – that God would provide – that he knew he wouldn't have to kill Isaac on that mountain. Well, that may be so. But, did Isaac know that? Just imagine the child's terror! He clearly knew what happened in a sacrifice – he asked his father about the animal on their way up. He is trussed up and placed on top of a pile of firewood on the altar. The knife is raised above him and is about to plunge down. That is a terrible thing to subject a child to. What kind of father would do that to his son?

Well, actually the same kind of father who previously had, with his wife's blessing, already fathered a son – Ishmael – by one of his wife's maidservants – Hagar. And then, after his legitimate son, Isaac, was born he had expelled Hagar and Ishmael out into the wilderness with minimum provisions – almost certainly to die. They were saved by an angel at the last minute.

And remember how Abraham came to be wealthy? He went to Egypt and passed off his wife as his sister – deceiving Pharaoh. An accomplished con-man.

Again, when Sarah, his wife, died - he insisted on buying a plot of land for the burial site from the Hittites – which the Hittites didn't want to do. Abraham, by this means, established some legitimate territorial rights – the thin end of the wedge which would lead to a complete take-over - another part of Abraham's plans to fulfil the covenant.

When I read the story of Abraham, I read the story of a man whose motto seems to be “The end justifies the means”, and nobody will be allowed to get in the way.

How different from Jesus.

Abraham died an old man in his bed. Jesus sacrificed HIMSELF as a relatively young man in his prime. They claimed to serve the same God; yet their methods and their vision were so different.

Abraham would populate the region from the Nile to the Euphrates with Hebrews and would create many enemies in the process.

Jesus would spread his gospel over the whole world, to all peoples of all races, not just to the Jews, not limited by geography. He tried his best to avoid making enemies. The only people he upset were the Temple hierarchy who just didn't want to get the message.

Abraham's God and Jesus' God are the same God supposedly. But I know which one I prefer. It's the God who gives us freedom. Who asks us to follow His commandments but forgives us when we fail, so long as we really try hard.

He is a peace-loving God. He doesn't want us to make enemies. He loves ALL mankind.

He wants us to love one another as He loves us.

And he wants us to marry for love, not because we like red hair.



Any comments on this article please send to Ken Tonge

Romance, marriage and all that stuff - *the way children see it...*

How do you decide whom to marry?

- You got to find somebody who likes the same stuff. Like, if you like sports, she should like it that you like sports, and she should keep the crisps and dip coming. - Alan, age 10

No person really decides before they grow up who they're going to marry. God decides it all way before, and you get to find out later who you're stuck with. - Kirsten, age 10

Summary of Vestry Minutes – Friday, 11th January 2019

Irene welcomed the Bishop to the meeting and, also, new member Muriel Hargreaves

Matters arising from Minutes of Vestry meeting 9th November 2018

Strutt and Parker

Ian has contacted them again to affirm what their fee covers (£1200).? Annual inspection of the property inside and out. He awaits a reply as this has not been happening.

The Memorial Plaque

George has been seeking quotes for the removal and replacing the Memorial Plaque. There is a risk of damage and breakage as it has been stuck to the wall, and subsequent cost of repair to plaque and wall. It was suggested that it might be a better option to have a completely new one(s) and leave the other one where it is. Further quotes to be obtained for this.

Sub-Committee - The Future

Russ gave a lengthy overview of what their ideas and suggestions were to 'advertise and inform' people and raise awareness of what could be offered. There were several practical issues that would need addressing.

The Bishop asked about the objectives - to encourage people to know more about St. Ternan's, and activities that may interest them to come along.

Christmas Cards

We had far too many cards this year, despite the usual distribution going ahead and 50 were shredded this week. There were additional people responding to the information about service times which was a very good outcome. It was felt we need to reassess the numbers ordered for next year. We contribute £50 to the cost of printing them by Newtonhill church. With modern technology – Facebook etc. – do we need to deliver to all the houses?

The Community Celebration of Christmas was very well attended, and some people came back to the church for the Christmas services.

Treasurers Report

	Income	Expenditure	Difference	Total Funds
Nov-18	£ 1,939.14	£ 3,053.53	-£1,114.39	£ 24,519.85
Dec-18	£ 3,848.55	£ 2,795.41	£1,053.14	£ 25,572.99

The accounts for 2017/2018 have been sent to Mr Alan Duffus, Diocesan Treasurer along with the completed financial schedule.

The OSCR submission is completed and the accounts forwarded to them.
The application for Water exemption from Business Stream has been accepted.
Carol has written to the Auditor expressing thanks and advising him he has been appointed to audit the books next year.

Property Convenors Report

Rectory.

All of the outstanding work now completed – decorating bedroom, Parish Room floor repaired, gutters to N and S side garage roof, and some tiles Rectory roof replaced (recent storm damage)

Church and Extension.

Completed – tiles repaired and replaced and recementation of skews on roof.

Three surplus pews have been sold – two going to a new owner this week and the third going in the near future. *14 mice have been trapped

under the organ - a high frequency device is now installed at the back of the church as a deterrent!

Heating System

Taken delivery of 4.00 tons of Pellets early December £246.75

Furnace brickwork roof section has collapsed resulting in boiler shutdown. Estimated repair - £1800. Funnel also needs replacing and brick work required.

No heating in church meantime. Ian to obtain Space heater for Sunday Service. Costed and approved by Vestry

Ministry Team Meeting

The rota has been approved. One minor adjustment – the Readings for January 27th and 3rd February will be interchanged.

PVG Report -Jan sent this report.

I received a copy of the Future Group's email re 'Work needed' and although not specifically requested I felt it would be useful to outline to the group the activities I think they will need to be aware of, for possible projects with respect to Safeguarding.

This is the information that I shared with the Convenor of the Group that when they are looking at new volunteer roles that they should

- Draw up a role description that details what activities a person will be involved in,
- Do risk assessments for all possible new ventures (not only just for safeguarding but reputation, financial, sustainability and process (and possibly other areas I haven't thought of).
- Determine whether the roles needed would be considered 'Regulated Work' and thus a PVG Disclosure would be required; or if it is a position of Trust, where formal PVG membership is not required, determine what safeguarding measures we would need to be aware of.
- Determine who will provide regular support and supervision for the volunteers (I feel this is an important role and must be considered at the outset).
- Determine what Safeguarding training is needed (in addition to other types of training) for both the volunteers and supervisors.

I look forward to receiving information from Vestry as to what roles people will be undertaking so that I can arrange the PVG ID checks and also work with the appointed supervisors with regard to references and consent forms.

Social Group Report

The November Bring and Buy sale raised £18.00. We didn't have one in December – everybody contributed to Christmas Pies etc for the festive season.

The Floral Art evening was a very successful and enjoyable event. After hall expenses and a donation to

Isabel Campbell for her chosen charity, £334 went to church funds. Many thanks to all who helped during the evening.

Muriel has suggested a Burn's Lunch – haggis, neeps and tatties following Sunday Service on February 3rd. Donation- £5

The Future

Irene invited the Bishop to give his thoughts of 'the Future'

He is aware of obstacles we face, and appreciates the Stipend is very 'expensive' for us – our Rectory income is essential to our survival. He told Vestry there is money available to support a part-time priest if and when the needs are identified and he is actively looking at various solutions to encourage and recruit new priests, which means looking for the right person with mixed skills, willing to help people through the transitional period – 3-4 years. It will involve congregations working together, and a need for a vision-aiming for it with the right person but retaining our individuality. The Bishop was sympathetic to our older congregation and the need for leadership and guidance to ease some of the pressure.

He was present at the 'cluster' meeting held last year, and there are still dates and proposals to be actioned. The support being offered is recognising we are a worthwhile organisation and are fully aware of the needs involved when helping people.

A.O.C.B

Chapleton. Retiral Apartments. There are to be 94 flats for people over 55's. There will be a bus available for the residents. – Could we have events there or at the church for them?

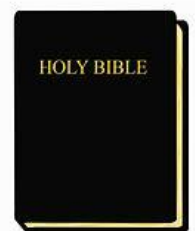
Our Futures Vestry Meeting. The Bishop advised we 'go canny' and explore fully the implications of doing things too quickly. He would be willing to send a mediator to assist in decision making should it be deemed helpful.

Irene thanked the Bishop for coming, and his thoughtful comments.

Rhona Vassilikos

The Bible verse of 2018

A Bible app, YouVersion, has named Isaiah 41:10 as the most popular verse of 2018.



That verse has been posted, bookmarked, and highlighted more times than any other on the app (which has been downloaded more than 350,000 times around the world).

Isaiah 41:10 reads:

'So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.'

The verse also came top in Chile, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Perus, South Africa, Spain and the United States.

But in the UK, for 2018, we preferred

Jeremiah 29:11:

'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'

Love Despite Brexit?- Rev Paul Hardingham

Should I stay or should I go? (The Clash). Since the Referendum in June 2016, we have seen families, our nation and Parliament divided by different opinions over Europe. But *'at the heart of the Christian message is Jesus' command to love our neighbour. This includes those with whom we agree and disagree: at home, in Europe and further afield.'* (CofE Bishops, December 2018).

As we celebrate St Valentine's Day this month, how can we conduct this debate in a loving way? The Apostle Peter reminds us: *'Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honour the emperor.'* (1 Peter 2:17).

Respect everyone: However much we may disagree with another people's perspective, we should respect them as people. This applies even if they don't respect our views!

Love the church: Among the family of believers there should be an even greater respect for each other! The way we treat each other not only reveals the depth of our love; it will also cause people to glorify God and want to be part of the family.

Fear God: We must demonstrate our allegiance to God by putting Him first and following His leading. Of course, this doesn't stop Christians from having different opinions to each other.

Honour those in authority: We are called to honour those who are in authority over us *'for the Lord's sake'* (13). Even when we disagree with their decisions and actions, we should keep our respect and not speak ill of them.

Peter is calling us to live with the freedom to make up our own mind on Europe, while listening to what others say (16). *'A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.'* (Martin Luther).



Signs & Symbols: Why do we cross ourselves?- Rev Dr Jo White

Do you 'cross' yourself? Do you literally make the sign of the cross over or upon your body?

People do this in different ways: some with certain fingers joined together, some touch their right shoulder before the left, some do small contained crosses on their head, lips and chest whilst others do an exaggerated sign extending as low as they can reach and almost wrapping their arms around themselves.

Keep your eyes open one time and look at your fellow congregation members as the priest extends his or her arm to bless them and you'll see many different responses. From keeping their heads bowed, crossing themselves at the same time, to standing quite informally and just watching.

For me it's not really 'how' you do it but rather '*What's it all about?*' If you 'Google' that question you'll get lots of great theologically sound and sometimes deep suggestions.

Let me offer you my personal take on it that has grown to become daily the first thing, last thing and most important prayer of each of my days.

It's an acknowledgement of God's love for me individually and us collectively and how through this we are forgiven and set free to live life to the full – with courage and strength.

As I start at the highest point and descend it reminds me that Jesus, God's own Son came down to earth for love of me and all of us.

As I cover the width of my body, I feel His love wrapped around me, surrounding me, encouraging me, strengthening me, enveloping me and all that will take place in my life and the world today. Not a magic protection layer but a recognition of His presence wherever and whatever takes place.

May you be blessed – In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.



The Sicilian Job- Morag Hill

So, there we were in Catania having spent a wonderful evening at a familiar restaurant, visited the amphitheatre and generally soaked up the Sicilian atmosphere. Our first day of the holiday.

Apartment Casa Aria fully met our expectations. Illustrated in an online brochure, the three-roomed apartment comprised a mezzanine bedroom above an open-plan downstairs with kitchen and bathroom. Split-level living. Bella Bella. We were delighted and pasta-ed out.

A visit to the lower level living area, including the bathroom, entailed climbing down a wooden ladder from the bedroom. Not a problem for us young, fit, sixty-somethings.

At eight o'clock the following morning, however, having imbibed un poco di vino the night before, descaled and scaled the ladder successfully, it was entirely unexpected to have knocked oneself out on the final descent. And to be gathered up from a pool of blood and thence taken to the Pronto Soccorso in an ambulance. Split-level living indeed.

The owner of the bella Casa Aria, who accompanied us on the emergency mission, insisted that this had never happened before in all her years of holiday guests staying in the Casa and ascending and descending the scala. With piercing cries of "presto presto" to the driver through all red traffic lights she promised sotto voce a free fortnight holiday in her luxury villa. No split-levels at all....

An open wound at the back of my head required twenty-one stiches. Multiple cuts and bruises to arms, legs, feet and torso were minor. Bene bene!. After a head scan, I was bandaged up a la Rab C Nesbitt and kept in for osservazione overnight in the A and E suite.

Other occupants of the pronto soccorso ward included men, women and children in various states of injury- and a teenager plastered from head to foot, in tutti senzi...

Hospital food was 5 star! Even if it hadn't been, residents of this ward were visited by relatives and friends at all hours of my remaining day and night. They brought varying quantities and temperatures of food, wine, comfort and prayers. I, being bereft of almost all of these, was immediately and generously offered everything that had been brought in to everyone else. Tanto tanto.

Following a second CT scan in the morning, blood pressure and blood tests being satisfactory, we received a print-out of the story so far and were allowed to continue on our way. No passport asked for. No questions and no money demanded. Morag from Scotland was apparently enough. Thank the Dio we hadn't Brexited...

We left the Ospedale and crossed the road to partake of some double espressos. The café was conveniently sited between two casas funebre, featuring a crematorio grande. Offertas speciales were emblazoned on their shop sign.

Deciding not to linger we gulped espressos and headed off to the stazione for our next leg of the trip. Our destinazione- Enna, an auspicious name of a town if ever there was one....

Collecting interested stares from my bandage we boarded the train. The bandage had to remain in situ until my return to Stonehaven when the stitches would be removed.

After an uneventful two-hour journey and feeling no pain we alighted at Enna to discover that there were no buses, no taxis no for onward travel to the hilltop town seven kilometres away. Not a problem for us fit sixty something year olds. To be fair, my other half did enquire as to my feelings about walking up the hill. But the sole was with mio, the bandage was al dente and the painkillers were doing their job. Why on earth not?

After an exquisite seafood meal in the town and a check-in to our ordinary single-level hotel room we drank to our health and collapsed for an early night.

Morning brought a storia differente. On becoming vertical at half past seven I was very surprised to experience blood pouring from places a bit of a way down from my head wound. Ah, of course, internal bleeding.

The hotel reception phoned for an ambulance to take me to Umberto 1st's ospedale pronto. Head bandaged and now nethers bandaged in towels, trying to pretend the impromptu "nappy" under my skirt did not exist- here we go again, I thought, Andiamo!

Attention was immediate and High-Tec. Ultra sounds, X-rays, probes... I was not given permiso to eat anything, of course, so was attached to a glucose drip. A young lad of a doctor came to enquire about my head and damaged internals.

"No sex?" he asked.

"No, I certainly no b..... sex.... Che cosa?" Then it dawned on me.

No sicks- no I hadn't been sick - just felt it.

On the plus side my long-suffering husband on this third day of our holiday was offered all the choices of ospedale food that I was denied-salami, ricotta, pasta, fish, fruit, ice cream...

As for me, there now followed the starving, naked ignominy of a full-body scan - in front of as it happened nine or ten male nurses, orderlies, postmen for all I know taking their smoke break outside the open windows of the scanning room.

I was beyond embarrassment.

But I must say these Sicilian medical services were certainly thorough.

Next, I was permitted to put some clothes on although the outfit consisted of a light, disposable, transparent trouser suit covering yet displaying everything. Matching green paper slippers and co-ordinating paper hat covering my bandage completed the outfit.

The pitying looks I received being wheelchaired to the endoscopio department were nothing to do with a suspected serious medical condition. They were expressions of sympathy for a woman with an unfortunate lack of eleganza.

The good news was that the egg-size lump on my head was now more of a large walnut and the copper scent of dried blood a perfume.

Back in the A and E room another overnight stay for obsevatione was required. Best of attenzione, though. A molto molto campo nurse twiddling his curly locks came in every two hours to ask if my bowels she are ok? And if I wanted pi pi. Mama Mia.

Morning dawned. I was still alive; the bandage was still on and the screaming emergency brought in overnight had gone.

All tests clear. No need of funebre servicios. No charge. However, there was one last question from the duty doctor- he asked if I had ever seen the Loch Ness Monster....

And so, we continued on our Sicilian travels. Taking with us a collection of coloured holiday snaps of lumps, bumps, and my large bowel..



Manner of speaking

'Are your father and your mother in?' asked the minister when the small boy opened the door.

'They was in,' said the youngster. 'But they is out.'

'They was in. They is out. Where's your grammar, young man?'

'She's gone upstairs, for a nap.'



**True Love
(Lk2:22-35)**

Broken world,
Broken lives,
Broken hearts
Without hope
Until there, in the Temple,
In that bundle of a baby,
Love provides
Restoration,
According to his word.

By Daphne Kitching

Ministry Team

**Interim Minister: Bishop of Brechin
Right Rev'd Andrew Swift Tel: 01382 459 569**

George Masson Tel: 01569 739283

ROTA - FEBRUARY 2019

Date:	CELEBRANT/ Pastoral Assistant/ Address/Chalice	Readers/ Intercessions:	Readings:	Sidesperson	Cleaning/Flowers Teas
03/02/19 The Presentation of the Lord	ARMA ISLES Irene Butler Carl Nelson	Jan Horn Carl Nelson Eric Hargreaves Muriel Hargreaves	MALACHI 3: 1-4 HEBREWS 2: 14-18 LUKE 2: 22-40	Eric Hargreaves	Sheila Usher Rhoda Nelson
10/02/19 Epiphany 5	REV JANE NELSON Russ Huddleston	George Masson Di Driver Sue Manson Sue Selway	ISAIAH 6: 1-8(9-13) 1 CORINTHIANS 15: 1-11 LUKE 5: 1-11	Sue Selway	Sue Manson/ Di Driver Carol Masson
17/02/19 Epiphany 6	GEORGE MASSON Irene Butler Eric Hargreaves	Sue Selway Carol Masson Eric Hargreaves Ken Tonge	JEREMIAH 17: 5-10 1 CORINTHIANS 15: 12-20 LUKE 6: 17-26	Jan Horn	Rhona Vassilikos Katie Gill
24/02/19 Epiphany 7	ERIC HARGREAVES Irene Butler	Jan Horn George Masson Ken Tonge Muriel Hargreaves	GENESIS 45: 3-11, 15 1 CORINTHIANS 15: 35-38, 42-50 LUKE 6: 27-39	Carl Nelson	Muriel Hargreaves Peggy Tonge/ Oksana Huddleston
01/03/19 WORLD DAY OF PRAYER	SUE SELWAY		Theme: "Come everything is ready"		
03/03/19 Sunday before Lent	JOHN USHER Sheila Usher Address: Ken Tonge	Katie Gill Eric Hargreaves Jan Horn Sheila Usher	EXODUS 34: 29-35 2 CORINTHIANS 3: 12-4.2 LUKE 9: 28-36(37-43)	Eric Hargreaves	Sheila Usher Rhoda Nelson



