

Ploughshare October/November 2001 (Scanned version of the original)

From the Rector

I have been privileged to work with some wonderful curates in this parish. Readers who remember them will agree. John Cook, Jonathan Jee, Pete Wilkinson and Petra Owen are all supposed to have been trained by me - although I guess that, in truth they have trained me. Others came to us ready trained: Peter Allan, Sheila Pite, Judith Henderson, Brian Porter and Andy Broom. Wonderful ministers of the Gospel each one.

None have been more remarkable, more gifted or more used than **Petra Owen**. At her farewell, one of the teenagers said "If you ask any of us who we think of as being Jesus with skin on it would be Petra". She has handed on a wonderful youth group. They all love Petra and are learning to love Jesus even more.

Since I was ordained I have always been aware of Jesus' words of warning "Woe to you when everyone thinks well of you". Petra as ever seems to be the exception to the rule. Everyone does speak well of her (as was evident at the farewell) but it doesn't stop her speaking out when it's called for, risking being unpopular, and neither does it go to her head - as it would for most of us.

She has been a genuine friend to so many and best friend to an amazing number of them. We shall remember for a long time her drama, her love for the Bible and her knowledge of its Jewish context, her laughter and her tears, her prayer, her fondness for Wales ("God's own country"!?), her cat Charlie Brown, who has emigrated with her, and much, much more.

We pray that God will help her to settle quickly in the USA and use her there as He did here. And we pray that God will take us forward without her, for, hasn't left us.

Christopher Frith

A Prayer in a violent world.

Lord, I can't understand the violence there is around us today.

Innocent people get beaten up in the streets, or killed by bombs or terrorists; bodies once so full of life broken and destroyed.

Then, I remember your body broken and mutilated on the cross; that seemed useless and a waste, but it has given us the strength to live more fully and with more love.

Help us, who are your body on earth, to play our part in breaking the power of violence through the strength of the everlasting love YOU have given to US.

Help us to carry the pain and the cost of this loving with courage and joy.

Amen

What We believe

The Nicene Creed is an established part of the Anglican service, and is also used by millions of church members of all denominations worldwide. Originating from The Council of Nicea (now Iznik in Turkey) convened by the emperor Constantine in AD 325, the Creed sets out the main beliefs (*creed* comes from the Latin *credo*, meaning "I believe") of the Christian faith. The Nicene Creed has three main sections - our belief in

- God the Father, as Creator
 - God the Son, Jesus Christ, as Saviour
 - God the Holy Spirit, as the giver of life
- which form the three persons of God: the Holy Trinity.

We believe in one God

The opening states three main points about God the father:

- that there is one God
- that he is all powerful
- and that he created everything This reflects the first of the Ten Commandments used in the Summary of the Law, also found in the Anglican Service:
"Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord."

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ

The second and longest section, sets out our belief on Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, and establishes him as being both from God, and being God. It may even seem repetitive: "God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God" but we must remember this creed was written during a time of great debate and controversy within the Church, particularly about the nature of Jesus Christ, and his relationship with God the Father. These statements are in response to those controversies, and clarify the belief that the Son is indeed God.

The central narrative contains the key facts of Jesus' life from the gospels. It may seem odd to shorten Jesus' life history in this way, but these are simply the essential beliefs at the heart of the Christian faith. Notice that Pontius Pilate is mentioned by name, rather than, more generally, the Roman government or Jewish authorities; this could have been so as not to offend large groups of people at the time. It is, however, ironic that the man who publicly washed his hands of the responsibility for Jesus' death, has lived on in history, in the Nicene Creed, as being almost personally to blame for his suffering.

The reminder that Jesus will come again to judge is and establish His Kingdom makes it clear that as Christians we believe Jesus' story is far from over.

We believe in the Holy Spirit

The final paragraph identifies the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity, and, in the Western version of the Creed, established clearly that the Holy Spirit is both Father and Son, although this remains as a point of controversy within some areas of the Church (and consequently a version of the Nicene Creed exists which reflects the belief that the Spirit proceeds from the Father only).

The phrase "the giver of life" is a wonderful expression of the way God communicates with us, and that, by the work of the Spirit, we can have life to the full, as Jesus promised.

Overall the Nicene Creed is positive, looking forward beyond our loves on earth, towards a new life with God for all eternity. In saying the Creed, it

- reminds us of what we believe in,
- allows us to remember what Jesus Christ has done for us by his death on the cross,
- and strengthens our faith, not only individually, but corporately as the body of Christ.

By **Pat Clayton** (who is training to be a Reader. This article was originally written as part of her training course).

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

North Wales to Holymoorside

It started in January 2001. Alex and I were living in North Wales having retired there 3 years previously. The phone rang one day and on the other end was Roger a friend from East London who we had not seen for about 10 years. He and his wife Mary were staying quite near on holiday and wondered if they could come to lunch.

The following day they arrived. After lots of chat about the past they then asked Alex "Why ever did you retire?" This was a question we had been asking ourselves. After 10 years in a West London parish, Alex had been beginning to feel rather tired and thought that meant retirement time.

After 3 years rest and only being used occasionally in local churches he was beginning to feel fit and a little frustrated. Mary then asked had we considered a House for Duty post. We had never heard of this. So the following day we ordered the Church of England newspaper, and there was the advert for St. Peter's. I persuaded Alex to ring and ask for a job description and application form. Pam Frith answered the phone and said Christopher would be in touch. A few hours later Christopher rang and spoke to Alex. Things seemed to be moving at a very fast pace.

We were invited down to meet Christopher and Pam and a few people from St. Peter's. After talking to Christopher and Pam, we made our way over to St. Peter's to meet the "DCC". We were both feeling quite apprehensive - no need - we were met by some of the friendliest people you could wish to meet. They made us feel so welcome and asked us about ourselves and why we wanted to come, but in such a friendly way.

The following morning on our way home before we arrived in Wales we both knew that St. Peter's was where we were meant to be.

Christopher and St. Peter's must have thought so too and we were offered the job and accepted.

The people of St. Peter's had been working very hard on Rose Cottage so that we had a delightful home to move into and so on 28th April 2001 we arrived to be greeted by Joy with tea, coffee and biscuits.

There is not much more to say except that this feels like home. We can hardly remember living elsewhere and have decided to live here forever - God willing - and we would like to say a great big THANK YOU to St. Peter's for welcoming us so warmly. We have arrived home to so many friends.

Pat Simpson

The Apostle Paul's Words on Love

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live in peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay." Says the Lord. On the contrary: (*Romans 12:9 to 21*)

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him something to drink.

In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Holiday Club July 2001

Impressions of Cosmic Circus –a Group Leader's Perspective

Even as I volunteered to be a group leader for Cosmic Circus I wondered what I had let myself in for. I need not have been concerned because right from the start the event began to go with a swing.

We were a very and integrated group yet made up of quite different individuals and we took part in all sorts of activities such as games, storytelling, arts and crafts, singing and dancing and, of course, learning about the Christian message.

It was lovely to see the smiling and excited faces of the children as they came each morning to take part in another fun packed session. The puppets were very popular with the children, especially Ginger, and indeed Sarah in my group fell quite in love with him. The children enjoyed working as a team and in the process they made lots of new friends and we all had a wonderful time.

I feel that we have reached out and shared the love of Jesus with others and made a real difference to some of the families who came along. At the end of the week quite a few of the parents said how grateful they were and how much the children had enjoyed it. I know I enjoyed it and look forward to next year when, I am confident, even more children will attend.

Joan Galloway

An interview with Ginger

Interviewer. How are you?

Ginger. I am fine, although I'm a little sad.

Interviewer Why is that?

Ginger. Because I miss all the children from Cosmic Circus.

Interviewer: So you had a good time at our holiday club?

Ginger: Yes, it was great I met loads of people and made lots of friends. It was especially good when people came to see me, and I got to talk to them personally.

Interviewer: So where are you living now?

Ginger: I'm staying at David's house, although it's not as nice as the home that Phil Herrick made for me at Cosmic Circus. That was excellent!

Interviewer: What else do you remember about Cosmic Circus?

Ginger. I really enjoyed the activities and the games. There was so much to do that I didn't know where to begin.

Interviewer: Will we see you at St Thomas' again?

Ginger: Yes, I'm sure I'll be back to see you all again.

Interviewer: Bye

Ginger: Bye

Klub Novi Most

Barbara Goodacre is the link from St Thomas' with Novimost International, and has provided Ploughshare readers with this update on activities which took place over the summer:

Klub Novi Most finished its summer season on August Bank holiday weekend, and the last team of short term volunteers, together with the three summer long workers, returned home to cooler climes. Beginning on 18th September, the Klub will be open on Tuesdays and Thursdays, Saturdays for sports, and Tues - Fri weekday evenings throughout the Autumn. Over 200 children and young people signed up for Klub Novi Most over the summer.

GIVE THANKS AND PRAISE TO GOD - 10 items from the KLUB NOVI MOST PRAYER UPDATE

- That he has provided for all our needs and in time
- For the continuing attendance of the children and young people throughout the summer
- That there were no incidents of nastiness, despite there being young people from very different social and ethnic backgrounds the Klub - the kids mixed really well
- For old friendships which have been re-kindled and continued through the Klub
- That there were no major problems or difficulties with any volunteers on any team throughout the summer
- For his protection - there was not one significant injury throughout the summer at Klub Novi Most our drivers had not one accident, despite travelling many miles to and from the airport and on excursions
- For the neighbours, as there has been no issue with noise or activities at the Klub, and only encouragement for it.
- For the positive impact which clearing the sports ground has made in the community
- For the young women who walked over an hour to get to Klub
- For the young couple that came to Klub Novi Most because they saw it on Bosnian TV

As you can see, your prayers have been answered! Praise God for his faithfulness! If you would like to receive further information on the work of Novi Most International, please visit our website at www.novimost.org.

News from Alison Hawksley –Earthquake in Peru

When I awoke that Sunday morning in June to discover that there had been an earthquake in Peru, I was anxious, but did not imagine it could have affected Alison. I am sure that, like me, many of you were shocked and dismayed to find that the quake had actually caused severe damage in Arequipa, where Alison teaches. Fortunately, we were soon reassured of Alison's safety.

Few buildings in Arequipa had escaped the damage; the cathedral had lost one of its towers and the other one was left balancing very precariously. Most of the old buildings were damaged: there had been eighteen deaths and over 200 people injured. The earthquake had measured 7.9 on the Richter Scale!! However God had protected all the church members - not one of them suffered injury and none of their houses were touched.

When the quake began, Alison was on the first floor of her home, and thought at first that it was a train passing. When she realised what was happening, she ran out of the house into the street, where she saw a block of flats moving from side to side, and windows breaking. The ground was really moving. Thankfully, it lasted only about a minute. Alison's home was untouched, but all her books had fallen from the bookcase, and some of her picture frames were broken. There were tremors throughout the night, and she did not sleep much, but she was all right. To quote Alison, "Gracias a Dios!"

We must continue to pray for Alison's work and safety.

Yvette Jacques

Summer Fete 2001 Revisited

There we were again, writing letters for prizes; building up the programme; drawing posters; counting tables; making plans; and putting up the bunting -and not putting up the bunting.

Why is it that whenever we do something which God is blessing, the devil always has to get his oar in! Well, this year he well and truly messed us about with the bunting! - even to the point that when it finally did go up, *just two* days before the event, somehow the ladder managed to get tied to the tree!

When the day finally arrived we were faced with such a dilemma. After a dry start, by mid-morning the heavens opened, halting the outside proceedings. The question was - how long could we *sensibly* wait before we committed ourselves to carrying on outside? Although time was running out, we all felt that if we were too hasty in moving everything into church, we would be sorry. The afternoon turned out to be so nice, that it would have been such a shame. *I just thank God for being in control.*

It was so lovely to see so many people there again, despite the bad weather we had had in the morning, which must have made many people reconsider their afternoon plans. However, when it was obviously going to stay nice, an awful lot of people supported us from the community, and it turned out to be another afternoon with a lovely warm, relaxed, fun atmosphere.

Like last year we had the usual games; stalls; bouncy castle; stocks; puppet show; gorgeous refreshments and BBQ; music by Jonah and so on. In addition this year we had a pony ride for

the younger children, which they all loved. As most of the games were only 10p each, the children will have certainly had good value out of whatever spending money they had been given - I know mine did.

When I asked Glyn (nearly 4) what he remembered most about the Summer Fete, he said: "Just that flower." (He had bought a flower [donated by Petra], which he carried round all afternoon.) And Gareth (11) when asked the same question said: " Neil shouting *"not too hard!"*, as the wet sponges flew through the air at great speed, towards him in the stocks."

(Aren't memories wonderful- we all store such different ones of the same events - like the gospels.)

As ever, these events need a lot of practical and prayer support. The social committee would like to thank everyone who helped - in whatever way, towards making the afternoon so enjoyable. Many people put in an awful lot of time before the event, and on the day, and we are very grateful. Being quite a small committee these community events could not possibly happen without help from other church members. So thank you for the you might have played in 'welcoming a stranger'.