

FROM YOUR CURATE

from Holymoorside



Dear Friends,

While the rector was away I thought John and I were doing rather well. Everything seemed to be ticking away rather smoothly until . . . "I could tell Christopher was away. A pair of shoes were kicking around in the vestry. Christopher would never do that he's so organised." You don't always create the impression you think you're making. Neither does the Church. We say that God the Father, Jesus God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are equally important, equally worthy of worship (co-equal, co-eternal). Then we give one or other undue prominence.

Some churches are churches of God the Father. They delight in the order and permanence of God's creation. They reflect it in a precise, carefully organised and structured worship. Baptism is a celebration of God's gift of life. Communion a celebration of God's creation represented in bread and wine. Harvest is of crucial importance, but the Church takes care to celebrate through the year the part played in the life of the parish and the world of education, industry and a wide variety of profession and voluntary activities. Prayers and hymns are always directed to God the Father, never to Jesus or the Holy Spirit. Quality and order are all important. Those who love spontaneity or fail to reach the high standards of conduct or decorum can easily feel rejected. (Cathedrals, civic churches?)

Then there is the Church of God the Son. It delights in the saving work of Jesus. The quality of the worship is seen as less important than the sermon - the proclamation of salvation. Baptism is identifying with the death and resurrection of Jesus, Holy Communion remembering Jesus' death until he comes again. The world outside is important because each non-believer is in need of Christ's saving love. Evangelism is thus paramount. Prayers and hymns are said and sung to Jesus as well as God the Father. Preaching and evangelism are all important but those who are more moved by action rather than words can feel excluded. (Churches with big-name preachers?)

Finally there is the Church of God the Holy Spirit. It concentrates not so much on what Jesus has done but on what the Holy Spirit is doing. Order and preaching take second place to spontaneity as the Holy Spirit works in different members of the church fellowship. Baptism is being filled with the Spirit, Holy Communion in a fellowship meal for Spirit filled Christians. The world is invited to see the Holy Spirit demonstrated in power in the life of believers. Prayers and hymns are said and sung to God, Father, Son or Holy Spirit as directed by the Spirit. Every member's ministry is all important but those who believe the Holy Spirit is speaking through silence, through the mainstream churches or through tradition can easily feel that they are not included (House churches?)

Father, Son and Holy Spirit. One God. Three churches? Which church do you most identify with? Where would you place St. Thomas', St. Peter's, St. John's? What can we learn from the three stereotypes I have drawn? What are we missing? Can we, should we, seek a Church which combines the best of the churches of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit? - a Church of the Holy Trinity? What impression are we creating through the life and ministry of our church?

Yours very thoughtfully

PETER ALLAN.

NEWS ROUNDABOUT



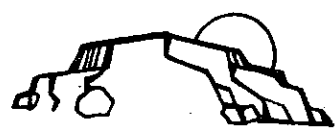
FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ?

- Yes, we certainly did, with great joy and enthusiasm. Each day seemed to allow us to grow as a group, and so 120 children with around 50 helpers began to recapture the excitement of those early followers of Jesus. The singing and chants led by Jim started and ended the day, together with an explanation of each day's theme and then a bringing together of children's work, ideas and fun at the end. The children wearing their colour coded foot badges went off into their different age groups where they joined in a variety of activities; drama, collage, puppet making and sport to name but a few. Walking around the groups, getting ideas for the final session each day, Jim and I could only be impressed by the dedication and preparation undertaken by the leaders of each group, and the wholehearted involvement of the children, for example some thirty 6 year olds engrossed in a drama session which lasted 1½ hours - I never heard anyone say "I'm bored".

As always adults can learn so much from the children - their willingness to follow provided they can see the point of something, their ability to shed all inhibitions and to join in, and above all their sense of being a group that is enjoying itself - isn't this what the disciples following Jesus came to realise about life with him. Certainly all those helping during those three days came to appreciate more fully the point of being a disciple and when at the end the children were asked to "sign on" as a follower of Christ the question mark in the original title of the three days seemed to have been filled in with an emphatic answer - JESUS.

ST. PETER'S NEWS

May I mention once again our month monthly family service at 11 a.m. on the first Sunday of the month. It is an informal service, with choruses and stories/Bible readings; anyone is welcome to come along, and we look forward to seeing you there.



TRIVIALITY?

Whilst playing a trivia game with a group of twenty 12 year olds . . .

Question: Which apostle was the 'rock' on which Jesus built his church?

Answer from the first group (after some discussion) Marble.Me: The apostles were people who followed Jesus!

Answer from Maxine, in another group: The Rock of Gibraltar, Miss.

NO COMMENT!



The Problem

Our church building, our lovely little well cared for Church, would never pass any building regulations.

- 1) The entrance leads straight onto the road (there is no pavement) near a sharp bend.
- 2) There is no toilet (some have said they dare not attend church without this facility).
- 3) There is no sink unit.

The Solution

To provide these either (a) in as cheap a form as possible or (b) in a form appropriate to the rest of the building and able to last a long time. Braveley St. Peter's Council supported by St. Thomas' P.C.C. chose the latter course.

PLEASE GIVE: (especially on our Gift Day October 9)
Envelopes are available in all three churches.

The Problem

The cost is in the region of £12,000.
How do we find the money?

The Solution

We are the solution. Please pray: (especially in our prayer fortnight Sept. 25 - Oct. 9).

Almighty God, whose blessed Son, though he was rich, yet for our sakes did become poor: Grant us the spirit of generous self-giving that the Church extension may be speedily built and thus further the work of thy Church. Help us who have received so freely from thee to give as freely in our turn, and so share the blessedness of giving as well as the happiness of receiving. We ask this in the name of him who gave himself for the life of the world, ever thy son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

A WORD IN SEASON



Dear Editor

The other Sunday, after church, we went to the Sports Centre for a game of badminton. When we arrived, we were amazed at how many people were in there. It dampened our game of badminton, to think "why are more people here than at church?" The centre was full of families and people of all ages, yet here at St. Peter's we are striving hard to build up our family service. It saddens us to think that people can't even spare an hour a week to praise God, for without Him we would not be here.

Lastly a thought to end with. "What are we doing wrong as a church and as Christians? What do we need to do to change this situation and attract people as well as sports centres?"

"How can we as Christians act?"

Chris Sharratt.

A SHABBY-LOOKING OLD man used to go into a church each day at midday for a few minutes: the caretaker was suspicious — he wasn't in there long enough to pray!

'I can't pray a long prayer', said Jim; 'but I just comes in and kneels and says, "Jesus, it's Jim", and waits a minute, and then comes away'.

Some time later, lying injured in a hospital bed, the Ward Sister wondered how it was that Jim seemed responsible for a real change of atmosphere in the ward — it was now a positive, often happy, place.

'It's my visitor', Jim explained. But he never had any visitors.

'Every day at 12 o'clock he comes and stands at the foot of my bed. I see him and he smiles and says, "Jim, it's Jesus".'



THE DAY THE CURATE(S) BEAT THE RECTOR

A challenge was issued by the Rector, Christopher Frith, to the Curate, John Cook, to meet at Somersall Park. Instead of pistols at dawn it was to be cricket bats and balls at 6.30.

Volunteers for the match were sought from Church members and Chris Cowley was deputed to pick two sides of supposed equal ability. As the tale unfolds, you will see she needs more practice.

The date was set and the players, a motley crew clothed in anything from aging whites to a suave blue tracksuit, appeared from all points of the compass. The Curate, ably assisted by the Curate-to-be (Jonathan Jee) won the toss and following much discussion and consultation decided to bat. The batting order took yet more deliberation; when it was finally settled, Jonathan realised that his number six had not arrived.

The innings opened with Carleton Badger and Charlie Brassington. The Rector's side drew first blood - Charlie out in the first over. This brought together a potentially devastating partnership of Carleton and Ruth Frith. Carleton scored, runs stylishly, but Ruth found difficulty in scoring anything at all and when out in the 6th over had yet to trouble the scorers.

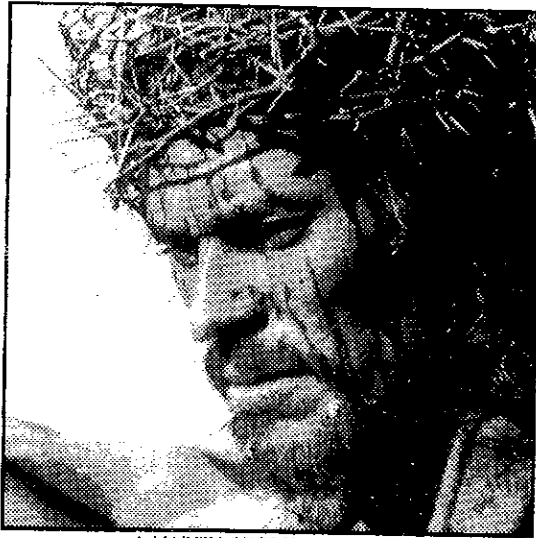
It was at this point that John Cook strode confidently to the wicket only to walk somewhat less confidently back, having given his boss an easy catch. Carleton and Jonathan Jee set about the bowling before the former was eventually out for a good 39, giving the Rector a second catch. Supported by David Ratcliffe, Jonathan continued to score freely. The innings closed after 20 overs with a good score of 126 for 6.

The Rector's team opened with Andrew Riches and Nick Ratcliffe. However, the Curate's secret Excocet, John Prentice, was wheeled out for the second over and bowled a double wicket maiden (a technical term for the cognicents). Mr. Cook's side never looked back, after that, and wickets fell regularly until the score was 25 for 8.

However, out of the sunset appeared two white knights to save the Rector's blushes, the Rector himself and John Badger. Together they put on 53 runs with some spirited running between the wicket until the Rector committed cricketing suicide by taking a run to the wicket-keeper. There was an unfounded rumour that he was tired at the time. The innings closed at 80 for 9, giving a resounding win to the Curate's team.

Many thanks to all who took part and to the Barbarians Cricket Club for lending us their ground. Special appreciation to Naomi Redhead who was asked by her captain (the Rector) to go from deep long-off at one end to deep long-off at the other, each over - for non-cricketers that is, a very long way. Not to be outdone, Mr. Cook made Ruth Frith do the same. Who says that chivalry is dead?

D.R.



A MARTIN SCORSESE PICTURE

THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST

Martin Scorsese's film has aroused considerable controversy. We print some extracts from comments by members of CARE* Trust who have seen it:

Our reaction is one of sadness and dismay, but it would be easy to over-react . . . Most of the action surrounds Jesus and other characters from the Gospels, like the disciples, Mary Magdalene, etc. . . . Although the film has potential for a creative and dramatic portrayal of these characters, it is marred by a variety of bizarre incidents

Some points that concerned us as we watched the film were:

- the constant portrayal of Jesus as weak, indecisive, demented and confused (to the point of demonised or drug-crazed). He seems to lean heavily on Judas, who is shown to be stronger.
- the opening scenes of Jesus making crosses for the Romans and assisting in the crucifixion of a Jew, to the ridicule of his fellow Nazarenes
- Jesus accusing himself of lying/sinning/needing forgiveness/possessed

Much has been reported about the "dream sequence" after the crucifixion where the dying Jesus dreams he is lead from the cross by a young girl who later turns out to be a satanic messenger. He marries Mary Magdalene and is seen briefly in bed having sexual intercourse with her. Mary is shown to be pregnant but then the angel tells Jesus that God has killed her. He then sets up home with Mary and Martha, and appears to have fathered children by both of them, leading a happy 'family' life . . . The dream sequence is very long - over 30 minutes - in a 2 hour and 40 minute film.

The film is a major distortion of the person and ministry of Jesus, our Lord. It is a sad and sick mixture of a little fact and a lot of fiction. An unbeliever will have great difficulty separating the two. The film is offensive, not only because of the brief sexual scenes but also because it ridicules Jesus and shows him to be weak, weird and sinful, suggesting that he was a man aspiring to Godhead and not in any way divine.

Action

We do **not** advise anyone to see the film but we must be careful in response that we do not simply add to the massive publicity.

* CARE: Christian Action Research & Education.

There are four courses of action we would commend for your consideration.

1. PRAY for wisdom and sensitivity in the way to proceed
2. WRITE to the Chief Executive or Clerk of the District Council or to the Chairman of the Licensing Committee, asking them to preview the film. Say that you consider it offensive to Christians and that you do not think it should be shown in your area.
3. TAKE this as an opportunity for positive evangelism. While the film may distort the view of our Lord, we can use every opportunity to present the real Jesus. The film is being talked about - we must talk about the Lord.

21st Century Christian magazine are producing a colour 8 page booklet to be available from mid-September, "How much of a man was Jesus?". It will include contributions from a number of authors and provide a clear picture of Jesus. Copies (price 35p each, £2.75 for 10 etc) will be available from 21CC, Elm House, 37 Elm Road, New Malden, Surrey KT3 3HB. These could be used to hand out to viewers of the film as they leave the cinema - do **not** consider any kind of protest to stop people going into any cinema.

4. PRAY for those viewing the film, and for many opportunities to present the gospel. PRAY that even out of an offensive film like The Last Temptation of Christ, people will come to know the real Lord Jesus Christ.

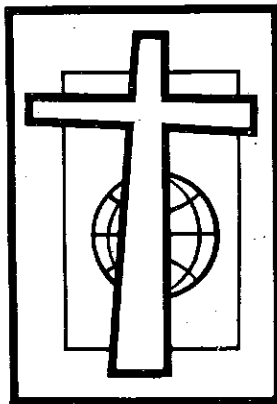
Dear Editor,

I am writing to comment on the new film which has just been released in this country entitled 'The Last Temptation of Christ'. The Daily Telegraph's religious correspondent, the Revd. William Oddie, who has seen the film and reviewed it in the paper, stated that the movie "opens by showing Jesus as a collaborator with the Romans, hated by everyone in Nazareth for making the crosses on which the Romans crucify Jews."

This interests me because if this statement is correct then the producers of the picture have made a grave historical error. Jesus could not have made crosses for the Romans in Nazareth because the Romans weren't there. Nazareth was part of Galilee, which between 4 B.C. and A.D. 39 was an independent tetrarchy ruled by Herod Antipas. The tetrarchy was allied to Rome, but it was certainly not part of the empire. This point is made quite clear in the gospels (see Luke, chapter 3).

Yours sincerely

Andrew Banks.





LISTENING

You are NOT LISTENING to me when:-

You do not care about me

You say you understand before you know me well enough

You have an answer for my problem before I've finished telling you what my problem is

You cut me off before I've finished speaking

You finish my sentences for me

You find me boring and don't tell me

You feel critical of my vocabulary, grammar or accent

You are dying to tell me something

You tell me about your experience, making mine seem unimportant

You are communicating to someone else in the room

You refuse my thanks by saying that you really haven't done anything

You ARE LISTENING to me when:-

You come quietly into my private world and let me be

You really try to understand me even if I'm not making much sense

You grasp my point even when it's against your own sincere convictions

You realise that the hour I took from you has left you a bit tired and drained

You allow me the dignity of making my own decisions even though you think that they may be wrong
way

You do not take my problem from me, but allow me to deal with it in my own way

You hold back your desire to give me good advice

You do not offer me religious solace when I am not ready for it

You give me enough room to discover for myself what is really going on

You accept my gift of gratitude by telling me how good it makes you feel to know that you have been helpful.

Contributed by the Bloemfontein Samaritans in South Africa.

PEACE OF MIND

We listen to the newscasts that come daily to our ears,
We read alarming headlines that intensify our fears.
We grow more and more dissatisfied and feel less and less secure,
As our days become more anxious and the future more unsure,
For with violence and dissention and chaos all around,
We no longer feel with certainty we stand on solid ground.
But in place of reading headlines that disturb our peace of mind,
We should once more read the Bible and on its pages we would find,
That this age is no different from the millions gone before and that in every hour of crisis God has opened up a door.

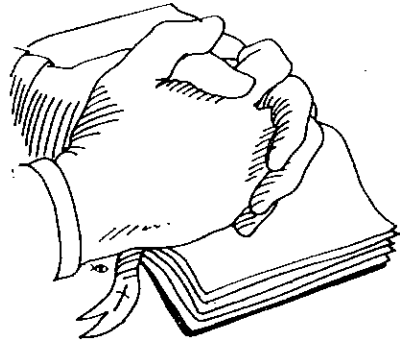
To all who seek his guidance and trust His all wise plan, for God provides protection beyond that devised by man.

And while God's almighty power is not ours to understand, we know who holds the future and we know who holds our hand.

We have the steadfast knowledge that we never walk alone, and to rest in the assurance that our every need is known,

Will help dispel our worries and in trusting Him we'll find right in the midst of chaos God can give us peace of mind.

Chris Sharratt.



THINKING OF CHRISTMAS CAKES

Last year, the Rector recommended (as one of various ways of making Christmas more Christian) putting Mary and Joseph on your Christmas cake instead of Father Christmas and snowmen. Unfortunately they are not easily obtained. So, to plug a hole in the market, Ruth Frith is manufacturing attractive crib scenes for Christmas cakes, under her trade name 'Roof'. Standard price: £3.50. Special orders and commission can be undertaken. A sample will be on display at St. Thomas'.