

CONCORD

M A Y 2 0 0 6

Prayer for the Month,

Eternal God, Creator and king of glory,
With great triumph you have exalted your one and only Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ, to your kingdom in heaven;
Do not leave us without comfort and encouragement,
but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us,
to inspire and enthuse us,
and exalt us to that place where Christ has gone ahead,
and where with you and your holy Spirit he is worshipped
and glorified, now and for ever. Amen.

Based on the collect for the Sunday after Ascension day, ASB.

Northenden Rectory,

Dear Friends,

Firstly, and briefly, to highlight Christian Aid Week, which falls in the middle of this month. We so often hear of needs and disasters, let alone the harshness of man's inhumanity to man, and it is natural that compassion fatigue can set in. It seems to me, however, that we are rarely meeting the needs of the *same* people twice. Each need is fresh, even if it seems like the last one. One of Christian Aid's aims is to give people the ability to meet their own needs next time round, through development, and money raised during Christian Aid week is more for this ongoing task than for special crises. So "let us not grow weary of well-doing", even when compassion fatigue does threaten.

Also in May ~ early on, so I hope this reaches you in time ~ is the local election. It is not my place here to tell you who to vote for, but I would encourage you to vote, and to treat it as a moral exercise. It is not just a matter of who will best serve my interests, but rather, which individual, or which party, is most likely to serve the needs of the community as a whole, and its weaker

members in particular? Where do honesty and integrity most lie? And, in the light of the recent comments by the Archbishop of Canterbury, if for no other reason, who will prove the best steward of God's creation as we face problems of pollution and global warming?

We are in that period between Easter and Whitsun when we as Christians should be thinking of the implications of Christ's resurrection. There are many, and I can only suggest a couple here now.

A first is the obvious one: here is a promise of eternal life. "As in Adam ~ *our old human nature* ~ all die, even so in Christ ~ *as we identify ourselves with his new humanity by faith* ~ shall all be made alive." Death may seem fearsome, the great unknown: but Christ has been there, and come through it with the promise that where he is, in the glory of God's eternal heaven, there we can be also.

And a second implication of Christ's resurrection is hope. There is no situation in this world which is beyond hope; Christ's situation on Good Friday seemed so hopeless, not just dying, but bereft, it seemed, of God his life, ... but even there he could look forward to paradise, and come through the horror. It is no easy way, but it is a hopeful way, and no situation which we face will be less hopeful. With his presence we too can find hope.

Yours faithfully, **Greg Forster**

Magpie ...

... has been watching the traffic lights project at the corner of Church Rd. and Palatine Rd. It is quite a marathon! Three months and counting. It looked for a week or so in April as if the lights would be powered by gas ~ but it was just that Transco decided this was an opportune moment to dig up the holes that the lighting electricians had just filled in, in order to relay our main gas pipes. How does the song go? "It was on a Monday morning the gas man came to call ..."

... heard about Drythelm the other day. "Drythelm?" you may well ask, "who's Drythelm." Well, he was a 7th century monk, in days when monks were made of stern stuff. To aid his prayers

and devotion he often stood waist, or even neck deep in the river Tweed while he said his prayers and psalms, even in winter with chunks of ice swirling round him! “It’s a wonder that you can bear such cold”, someone once said. “I’ve known it colder,” came the reply. “We’re amazed you practice such severe discipline,” they said. “I’ve seen worse suffering,” was his laconic response. And we grumble about the odd snow-flurry!

... occasionally gets asked about the Church Inn. It seems as if the developer says he is being delayed because the City Council planners say they have not enough business to hold a committee meeting. Wherever the truth lies, he has now put forward some new plans, for four houses facing towards Elverston Street on the old pub car park. At last, perhaps, we may see some movement. The sooner the old building is renovated, the better, for all that it is difficult to produce an acceptable scheme for the area behind it. Whatever else you say, a derelict *and unused* car park is hardly an asset to the village.

... and thinks he will set a grammar test for his readers this month; punctuate the following:~

woman without her man is nothing
(see the last page for the “answer”)

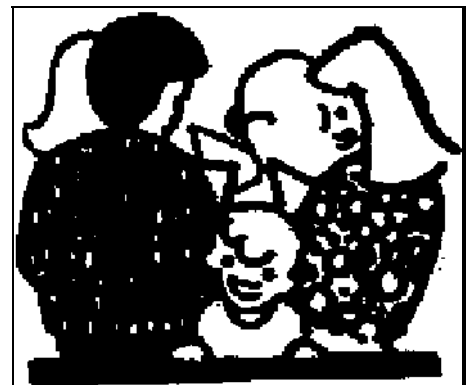
St. Wilfrid’s Church,

Ford Lane. (Off Church Rd.)

Rector: Greg Forster (998-2615)

Organist: Arthur Mellor (928-0472)

www . stwilfridsnorthenden . org . uk



Services:

On Sundays at 8.00am **EXCEPT MAY 14TH AND 21ST**, and on Thursdays at 10.00am there is a Communion service (using the old Prayer Book).

There is usually a “Sunday Club” for 7 – 11+ year olds in the Rectory at 10.30am, for about an hour, except when there is a Family Service (for parents and children together) in Church. ***This month, however, it is not meeting.***

A Sunday School, for children from 3½ to 6+, meets in the Church Hall from 10.30 till about 11.30am.

7 th May	10.30am	Family Communion & Parade Service
	6.30pm	United Evening Worship
14 th	10.30am	Baptism and Holy Communion
	6.30pm	Evening Worship
21 st .	10.30am	Morning Worship
	6.30pm	Holy Communion
Thurs. 25th		Ascension Day.
		Holy Communion at 10.00am (ish)
28 th	10.30am	Holy Communion
	6.30pm	Evening Worship
4th June		Whit Sunday
	10.30am	Family Communion
	6.30pm	United Service at Northenden Methodist Church

Please note too that the church is open each Sunday afternoon from 1.45 – approx. 5.15pm, for prayer, visiting, enquiries, &c.

The Rector is usually on hand if you want to talk or ask about anything, or to pray for health and wholeness.

F or your D iaries

Mon. 1 st May	Women's Group, Rectory, 7.45 for 8.00pm
Wed. 3 rd	Bible Study. Rectory. 8.00pm
Thu. 4 th	Church Council Meeting. Hall, 7.30pm
Sat. 6 th May	Coffee Morning. Church Hall, 10 – 11.30am.
	<i>NB, no Bible studies on 10th, 17th or 24th May.</i>
Thu. 25 th	9.15am (ish) in Church ~ <i>School Ascension Day Service</i>
Tue 30 th May.	Archdeacon's Visitation; (for Sidesmen, Wardens) 7.30pm, St. Matthew's, Stretford.
Wed. 31 st .	Bible Study. Rectory, 8.00pm
Thu. 1 st June	Folk Music Concert, 7.30pm in Church. <i>Coffee Morning, June 3rd ? Listen out for details, if any.</i>
Mon. 5 th	Women's Group, Rectory, 7.45 for 8.00pm.

WOMEN'S GROUP ...

As usual, you are most welcome even if you have not come before, and if you need a lift contact me on 998-2615.

The speaker on 1st. May is Jackie Walker, on Adult Learning. We will be meeting, despite the Bank Holiday..

Sue Forster

CUBS, BROWNIES; A Cub group uses St.Wilfrid's School on Tuesday evenings, 6.00pm;, *contact Mike Clegg, 998 – 4143.*

Brownies, Church Hall, Mondays from 6.00pm.

From the Registers ... In Memoriam ...

Daniel Costello (Sydney, Aus.) 26, Kath Vernon (Withington) 99,
Eric Melling (ex Church St.) 86, Matthew Brewis
Sheila O'Connor (Heyridge Dr.) 72, Janet Price. (ex Lingard Rd.)
Marilyn Wilkinson (Newall Green)

Toilets update ~ church and hall:

We have sent off the plans for the toilets in church to the diocese to obtain a "faculty", i.e. permission to do the work, and we look forward to their go-ahead. As for the work in the church hall, estimates have been submitted to the city council's planners, and we await their verdict on what grant we can expect to receive.

Confirmation.

Greg Forster.

There will be a Confirmation Service at St.Wilfrid's on June 25th this year, at 3.00pm.

Confirmation is a chance for people, from eleven years upwards, to affirm for themselves the promises made at their baptism. There is no upper age limit; It gives a chance to think about what we believe, and to ratify (confirm!) our commitment to God through Christ. There are some things which need explaining in the preparation sessions And it is the chance for the church to welcome you ~ confirm you ~ into fuller membership so that you can share regularly in the communion and express in that way how God strengthens you in your life week by week.

Some people have already expressed interest; if you want to join them, please contact me as soon as you can.

Folk Music in St. Wilfrid's ...
Thursday 1st June, 7.30pm
with Kieron Hartley and Friends.
Admission £3.00, towards the work of the Booth Centre.
Refreshments.
Folk music, old and new, to listen to or sing along with.

Janet Price.

You will have noticed in the *In Memoriam* section a record of the death of Janet ~ correctly Winifrid Lucy ~ Price. With her churchwarden husband Tom she was a mainstay of St. Wilfrid's from the 1950s to 1980s, regularly at the Thursday service, and singing in the choir on Sundays. Soon after his death she moved to the south, to be closer to her daughter and son-in-law, Dilys and Roger Twigg, where he worked as vicar in cathedrals down there. She died peacefully there at the end of April. Her funeral was in Winchester, but in due course her ashes will be interred next to Tom's here in Northenden.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

14TH – 21ST MAY.

There will be collections around the houses of Northenden, as in previous years, and envelopes in church.

Christian Aid works in developing countries, and also in Britain, to support education and community development; to help communities become self-sustaining through improved agriculture or local industries; and to meet crisis need through disaster relief.

Their annual report, videos and a DVD, and copies of their regular magazine for supporters, are available to read or borrow from St. Wilfrid's church ~ or ask the Rector.

No doubt there will also be TV adverts that week.

A PASSION FOR MANCHESTER *Greg Forster*

Did you see, or even go to, the Manchester Passion on Good Friday? There was a very happy atmosphere in Albert Square for the performance. We noticed a few, relatively minor, technical hiccups, which were probably less obvious on the small screen than at the live venue ~ or venues, since some of the roughness was simply the changeover from one part of the city centre to another, and was understandable and pardonable.

Some of the words were lost, to the crowds, in the applause which greeted the live singing, but which was phased out in the broadcast version. As for the singing, I have no problem about using pop music to highlight a story or articulate a message. My usual problem with it is that the words of recorded or stage versions are so loud and overlaid with the instrumentals as to be undecipherable. On this occasion, the acoustic presentation made it all clear, and I thought it was appropriate that the feelings and problems of modern writers were matched to incidents of the passion narrative.

The cross procession too was interesting, and it was illuminating to hear comments by people of other faiths and none as to what their involvement meant to them. More could have been made of the cross itself in the square ~ it seemed to be put down and forgotten once it had got to the town hall steps. Perhaps it was too heavy, or awkward, to stand more upright. Perhaps the impact was intended to be seen from the aerial cameras, and not from the ground.

The event set in a city centre was billed as a unique occasion. Maybe, but it would bear repeating every so often, with different music and highlighting other nuances of the story.

DIG NORTHENDEN MILL ~ AGAIN!

Watch out for publicity about this project. Details of how you can join in should be published in the local press, and on leaflets and posters in early May. Registration will probably be via the Archaeology Unit at the University, as last year. We shall be digging through June, with an open day early in July to reveal all!

In the Beginning, God ...

Over the last few months there have been intermittent items in the press and on radio about “Creationism” and Science. It is a complex issue, with a number of hidden agendas in the background, I suspect. Those who do not like “Academy” type schools find it convenient that some of their sponsors allegedly hold “creationist” views, and might have undue influence over the curriculum. Is the concern here really about creationism, or about a particular kind of allegedly elitist education?

The question is not just a British one ~ and indeed, it may draw some of its heat from the arguments in America. There was glee in the “scientific” camp, it would seem, when a court in small town America ruled that Creationism could not be taught in the town’s school. I would be less gleeful about that if I had been involved directly in the case, because it was decided not as a question of scientific truth, but with relation to the American Constitution. This decrees an absolute separation between religion and the State (believe it or not!)

The opponents of creationism (or rather, of “intelligent design”) argued that to suggest that God was involved in creating the universe was a religious tenet which could not be taught in a state school. So, the science curriculum there is controlled by a fundamentalist adherence to a document written in the late 18th century, and not on the evidence of science itself. How unscientific! It worries me that one day the scientists may come up with something very important, such as incontrovertible proof that there *is* global warming and it *is* caused by America’s greed for energy consumption, but that any restriction on the right to go on burning energy will be found to be unconstitutional. (But that’s a different story! Or is it? The bible calls us stewards of creation)

But to return to Science and Creation ... I do not see the problem here. We live in an amazing and complex world, full of wonders and intricate interrelationships, full of beauty and power. I am content that scientists are analysing it, learning to use it (I hope with moral wisdom and restraint) and trying to describe it. I recognise that they carry out this task without any theological presuppositions (though it probably did help the early scientists to

believe in a rational and ordered world, owing existence to a rational creator, and so capable of being understood rationally).

But to say, with one of those early scientists, “I have no need of that hypothesis” about God in relation to my science, is very different from making a doctrinaire ~ and unscientific ~ assertion that there is no God. It is simply that scientific methods are not tuned to detect him directly, and will discover scientific truth about the way the world works however it was started. It is equally appropriate for a scientist to say, in the words of Sir Isaac Newton, that she is “thinking God’s thoughts after him,” ~ finding out what God already knows. The science does not *prove* that, but our human response to scientific discovery is quite legitimately one of awe, if not worship.

I would actually go further. While I recognise that it is not in the nature of science to investigate the possibility of God, I would suggest that it is not in the nature of science to pronounce on the impossibility of God, either. It is both unscientific and illogical for it to do so. As someone once said, “absence of evidence” (or the lack of the technology to find it.) “is not evidence of absence.” In fact, we can go further still, and point out that some scientists, looking at the way the dynamics of the universe work, (if they were slightly different, it would have collapsed or totally disintegrated) have spoken of an “anthropic principal” behind it all; that is, it was programmed to produce life, as we know it.

So, I find no difficulty in accepting scientific theories about how the world works, and at the same time believing that it is the product of an intelligent designer. If there is conflict between science and religion, it is in the minds of some scientists, and some believers, who are perhaps claiming more for their fields of knowledge than is appropriate. Perhaps also there are hang-ups on both sides, springing from a sorry history in which organised religion did try to suppress scientific investigation, and in which science has been used to justify religious persecution. To give in to this sad legacy is certainly unscientific, and shows a lack of faith too.

So, what can we say about scientific theories about creation and evolution? Not that they are absolute truth, but that (as with all scientific theories) they are the best explanation which fits the known facts yet. They will be refined and supplemented, just as we have seen Newton's mechanical physics transcended by the work of Einstein, Lovell and others. It still works within its limits, but is only part of the picture. That picture will grow more, and as it does, I will probably say HalleluJah (if I can understand it!)

But what, then, about Genesis? Don't you believe that any more? ~ someone may ask. I do believe Genesis, but not as science, but as a piece of theological polemic. Its author was not telling us how long creation took so much as *who* was responsible for it, *and who was not!* Egyptian myths spoke of the sky as the belly of a goddess, arched over the world; Genesis says No, the true God created it and put it there. Babylon thought that the stars controlled human destiny; Genesis says No, the one true God created them and set them on their courses, and he controls their destiny! In a simple story Genesis tells us that there is one God, whose character we humans at our best reflect, not many who (in Egypt's myths) are like the beasts that are *his* creation.

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And **Magpie's** grammar test: ... punctuate the following:~

woman without her man is nothing

It could be ...

Woman! ...Without her, man is nothing.

Or

Woman, without her man, is nothing!

Take your pick!