



### Across

- 1 Animal that carries the guilt away (8)
- 4 Ora \_\_\_ nobis (3)
- 8 Job's \_\_\_ weren't much help (10)
- 9 Praise Him upon the \_\_\_ and harp (4)
- 10 \_\_\_ waters cannot quench love (4)

### Answers to last month's crossword



### Down

- 11 Did Adam use this? (3)
- 12 Thomas Aquinas or Teresa of Ávila, e.g. (6)
- 14 Entrance to churchyard (but none of St Mark's) (8)

- 1 How Nicodemus visited Jesus (8)
- 2 Jewish festival (8)
- 3 Plague insects (8)
- 5 Gift (9)
- 6 Sister of Moses (6)
- 7 Mother of Constantine (6)
- 11 One third of Trinity hymn line? (4)
- 13 The \_\_\_ is His and He made it (3)

Answers in next month's issue.

## From Fr Simon

The Church has always upheld certain views on relationships, marriage and sexuality. Currently within The Church there are a variety of strongly held beliefs concerning LGBTQ+ leading to disagreements. These different standpoints are more than theoretical, because we are talking about people's lives. Many people have felt misunderstood, mis-heard, and overlooked. Others have felt demonised and cast out. There has been much hurt.

The Church of England has recently published a large text book and a course in order to help all sides of the discussion express themselves safely, and to be valued and heard. These resources are called Living in Love & Faith. I hope that we can form a group in Golcar and Longwood to look at these resources in the future. In the meantime, I would like to express my own views on these matters, and some of the reasoning behind them.

So, to lay my cards on the table, I think that the acceptance and greater understanding of sexuality in modern society is to be celebrated. For too long people have had to live in fear or in pretence. I have not been persuaded by any argument in scripture or otherwise that says only heterosexual relations are right. Rather than denouncing LGBTQ+ people, we should be following Christ's example in offering scandalous hospitality to all (in the words of Archbishop Stephen Cottrell).

This is what I believe, but I do not want to stop other people talking about their own opinions and experiences.

In future magazines I will try to explain my reasoning in more depth. One of the elements of Living in Love & Faith is the moving stories of people's lives. So I'll begin by telling you briefly about my life.

I grew up in a family in Essex. I had 2 older sisters and 2 younger brothers – both of whom were adopted – and now would be described as black, but back then we talked about them being brown.

I presumed everybody was heterosexual, because that was all I knew. I had no idea that tv characters like Mr Humphries in *Are you being served?* (I'm free!) were an early portrayal of gay people.

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# For All the Saints

*by Mother Janet, Associate Priest*

Today I want to think about those two stalwarts of the church: St Peter and St Paul.

Traditionally many ordinations take place on the feast of Peter and Paul. Peter, of course, was the rock on which the Church was built and Paul was the great evangelist, taking the good news to the Gentiles.

However, at first sight it might seem that somebody had a great sense of humour putting them together in the lectionary for celebration on 29th June. After all, Peter and Paul were about as different as chalk and cheese. Peter the fisherman, eager, impulsive, warm, probably not all that religious till he took up with Jesus. Paul the devout Pharisee, a stickler for the rules, a bit cold and stern, a Roman citizen, reasonably wealthy, very conventional until he met Jesus on the road to Damascus. Widely different types and yet the Church needed both of them to grow.

Diversity is a great gift. God did not make us all like identical flowerpots and many gifts enable growth in any organisation.

Peter and Paul with their differing attitudes and beliefs were both needed on the project to make the church grow and develop fully.

They fell out sometimes spectacularly. You can read in Acts how Peter was not too keen on including the Gentiles, despite Paul's success in baptising them. To Peter, the Jews were the Chosen People — so why include the inferior Gentiles?

Then Peter had a dream where he was told to eat creatures which according to Jewish law were forbidden, and a voice said to him "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean" and his attitude changed especially when he found that, following his baptising some Gentiles, the Holy Spirit came on them, just like on the Jews.

The clear message for us and rest of world is that Jesus died for all people, whatever their race, colour or creed.

As a church, we need to be prepared to accept the views of others as we seek to help our church to grow. I believe that the way forward is for all of us to join together using the talents which God has given to us, rejoicing in the diversity of those gifts and using them in the service of each other and our church.

*From Fr Simon* [continued from page 1]

In secondary school, people spoke about homosexuality as something dirty, to be used as an insult, and an excuse to be nasty to others. To my shame I got a bit drawn in to this culture. I was bullied a bit myself at school, and when there was a chance to join the popular group – even if that meant joining in their prejudice of others – I generally took it.

During A-levels I was forming my own identity and opinions rather more, and then it was off to university. Some of my closest friends from this time later "came out" as gay. University was a place to meet people from a variety of backgrounds and was quite an experience after Clacton-on-Sea.

In this time I learnt that gay relationships were really very common place. That many popular showbiz figures were gay. I found that gayness was not something to be feared, but simply that it was different from me. Gayness stopped being an exotic, self-indulgent dirty sin, and became a valid relationship, a beautiful expression of genuine love. Together with the rest of society, I was learning about what science and nature told us about sexuality. Together with many in the church I was re-learning about certain scriptures (more on this in later magazines).

I was fortunate to marry Sam. We spent 3 years in South Africa doing voluntary work. Whilst there we lived and worked in a conservative / evangelical / charismatic community. The people there were wonderful and had a profound effect on us both. But we had major differences on our views regarding homosexuality. Once we did try to explain our position, but it was not the open meeting of enquiring minds that we had envisaged.

Since then, back in England, I have got to know many people who are not "hetero-normative". And I have seen that many of these relationships have been a blessing on the couple themselves, as well as a blessing on others. These friends of mine include teachers, educational psychologists, clergy, church wardens, students, head teachers, elderly people, Christians, Muslims and members of my family. When working with asylum seekers I have seen some of the scars inflicted on homosexual people – both physical and emotional.

For me, now, LGBTQ+ is simply not a big deal. People are people. Love is love. I often make mistakes when people ask me to use certain pronouns (eg they/them instead of she/her), but I'm slowly improving. In an interesting twist, I'm grateful for the tolerance of the LGBTQ+ community as I seek to be inclusive, but keep tripping up.

So that, in a nutshell, is me. More next month...

*God bless*