

Stringy symbols

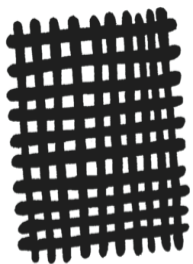
- Copy some Adinkra symbols from the internet or from Divine chocolate wrappers.
- Trace one on to card.
- Dribble glue over the pattern's lines.
- Stick string on to the glue and allow to dry.
- Roller or sponge it with paint.
- Print it.
- Frame it.



Nyame nti = faith in God



Owoforo adobe = standing firm



Kete pa = good marriage



Mpatapo = peacemaking

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St Peters Church

Belsize Square
London NW3 4HJ

<http://www.spbp.org.uk>

info@spbp.org.uk

Priest-in-charge: Revd Paul Nicholson

Tel: 020 7586 6522 / Mobile: 07971 223764

Email: paul.nicholson@london.anglican.org

Churchwarden: Ken Robbie

Music Director: Hannah Gill

Pastoral Network Officer: Alfonso Vonscheidt

stpetersbp@yahoo.co.uk

Childrens Minister: Romeo dela Cruz (07563 154739)

Sunday Services: 11.15am Parish Eucharist and Sunday School
[Children start in church, returning at Communion to receive a blessing]
6 - 7pm PrayerSpace

Weekday Services:
Thursday: 10.30am Holy Communion
Evening Prayer: check times on weekly pewsheets

Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals by arrangement with Father Paul.

Magazine material to be sent to judy.east@blueyonder.co.uk or given to Father Paul, please



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* from *Parish Pump*

writing and storytelling as well as musical theatre and performance courses for both scripted and devised pieces. Details at www.ridinglights.org/sts or telephone 01904 655317.

Beating the Bounds – get ready for 5 May

Beating the Bounds has its roots in medieval times, when parishes re-affirmed their boundaries by circling them in procession, pausing to beat each boundary mark with willow rods and to pray for the crops. It’s a tradition which continues in many parts of Britain.

Each year on Ascension Day, All Hallows by the Tower, the oldest church in the City of London, follows this tradition and prayers are said for the parish, its business community and the City. The south boundary of the parish is in the middle of the Thames, so the beating party boards a boat to mark that boundary mark. Local students from St Dunstan's College are involved and the ceremony is followed by evensong in the presence of the Lord Mayor.

In Oxford, members of St Michael at the North Gate Church have been beating the special boundary stones for more than 600 years. Today as they beat the bounds they pray for local shopkeepers, motorists, librarians and many others as they walk around their parish boundaries. You can watch them on YouTube at <http://bit.ly/Vk9Dlq>.

Beating the Bounds is traditionally a day of fasting and preparation to celebrate Jesus’ ascension and falls this year on 5 May. It is one way to prayer walk around your area to intercede for your community. You could revive the tradition in your neighbourhood, involving school children and civic leaders, or you could keep it simple, prayer walking around your community on your own or in a group. Pray a blessing on the people you see as you walk and stop at different locations to pray about specific local issues. It’s an exciting and engaging way to pray.

Churches praying together and working together in villages, towns and cities are at the heart of HOPE, which is working towards 2014 and a year of mission together in words and action. Find out more at www.hopetogether.org.uk

Here are some general observations on the spiritual side of life:

- Can't sleep? Try counting your blessings..
- Don't wait for the hearse to take you to church!
- Preach the Gospel at all times. Use words if necessary.
- Plan ahead - It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.
- Someone once said: "If you are going to soar with the eagles in the morning, you can't hoot with the owls all night."
- God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called.
- Read the Bible - It will scare the hell out of you.
- Experience is a wonderful thing. It enables you to recognise a mistake when you make it again.

Riding Lights Theatre Company invites YOU to its Summer Theatre School 2013

Do you enjoy acting and the theatre? Then here is a summer school aimed at you. The Riding Lights Theatre Company Summer Theatre School (23rd July to 3rd August) is one of the creative highlights of Riding Lights' year, and welcomes 100 actors, at all levels, wanting to learn to improve their skills. Would that include YOU, this year?

This year the theme of the 18th annual summer school will be: 'Judges Of Character... coming face to face with forgiveness and judgement'. Each of the courses will address this theme, whether devising new work or tackling classic plays to create theatre full of satire, song and a hunger for social justice.

The week offers 100 participants from all walks of life a variety of theatre courses, held in the beautiful setting of Queen Margaret's School, Escrick. For some it can become a gateway to other opportunities. One man went on to combine his love of drama and a desire to 'reach others' by working with a drama teacher at a local prison. Others have gone on to professional careers in the theatre as actors, writers and directors.

Open to everyone aged over 14, the Summer School Week offers courses in

DIARY FOR APRIL AND MAY

Creative Wizzkids Holiday Art Club in St Peters Studios mornings from April 2nd to 5th

Thu 4 th	10.30am	Holy Communion
	11.15am	Coffee and Croissants
NO CHILDREN'S CLUB OR COMMUNITY CHOIR		

Sunday 7th Easter 2

11.15am	Parish Eucharist
6 – 7pm	PrayerSpace

Creative Wizzkids Holiday Art Club in St Peter's Church mornings from April 8th to 12th

Thu 11th NO MIDWEEK COMMUNION, COFFEE, CHILDREN'S CLUB OR COMMUNITY CHOIR

Sunday 14th Easter 3

11.15am	Parish Eucharist
6 – 7pm	PrayerSpace

Thu 18 th	10.30am	Holy Communion
	11.15am	Coffee and Croissants
	3.30pm	Junior Youth Club
	6.45pm	Belsize Community Choir

Sunday 21st Easter 4

11.15am	Parish Eucharist
12.30pm	ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING (in church)
6 – 7pm	PrayerSpace

Tuesday 23rd George, martyr

Thu 25 th	Mark the Evangelist	
	10.30am	Holy Communion
	11.15am	Coffee and Croissants



3.30pm Junior Youth Club
6.45pm Belsize Community Choir

Sunday 28th Easter 5

11.15am Parish Eucharist *Celebrant & Preacher*
Fr Mark Speaks
6 – 7pm PrayerSpace

MAY

Wednesday 1st Philip and James, Apostle

Thu 2nd 10.30am Holy Communion
11.15am Coffee and Croissants
3.30pm Junior Youth Club
6.45pm Belsize Community Choir

Sunday 5th Easter 6

11.15am Parish Eucharist
6 – 7pm PrayerSpace

Wed 8th 5pm St Christopher’s School Concert

Thursday 9th Ascension Day

10.30am Holy Communion
11.15am Coffee and Croissants
3.30pm Junior Youth Club
6.45pm Belsize Community
Choir



Sunday 12th Easter 7

11.15am Parish Eucharist
6 – 7pm PrayerSpace

Tuesday 14th Mathias the Apostle

Thu 16th 10.30am Holy Communion
11.15am Coffee and Croissants

Food Banks – a sign of the times?

The rising cost of food and fuel, combined with static income, unemployment and changes in benefits have seen increasing numbers of people turn to food banks in the UK recently. Recognising the value of these banks, retired archbishop Rowan Williams has become patron of one in his new home town, Cambridge.

The Trussell Trust, a Christian charity, now oversees over 250 local food banks on a franchise basis. Banks typically provide boxes of three days’ emergency food to tide people over whilst putting them in touch with other agencies which might be able to help in the longer term.

Many of the banks are located in or around church premises. Thousands of people are giving time and money to find premises, gather supplies of food and make it available to those in great need. It’s good for the helpers, too – many are rubbing shoulders with, and hearing stories from, people they’ve never come across before.

The trust that has had a leading role in the food bank movement was founded in 1997 by Carol and Paddy Henderson and was based on a legacy left by Carol’s mother, Betty Trussell. The work had begun when Carol and Paddy were working for a UN feeding programme in Bulgaria and rescued a street baby, Boris. Paddy and Carol vowed to keep him alive and eventually he was taken into an orphanage.

The work started in Bulgaria soon spread to Britain. The Trust’s network fed over 128,000 people in a recent 12-month period, distributing 1,225 tonnes of food donated by the public, schools and businesses.

There are 2 foodbanks in Camden Town —one at the RCG City Church in Pratt Mews NW1, the other at Revelation Church, Berkley Road, 9 Eglon Mews, NW1.

mentors, especially Pat Gane (tutor at the Guildhall), Ben Gernon (finalist in the Donatella Flick Conducting Competition) and Mike Williams (music director of Eschoir). More recently I have taken part in a conducting workshop with Greg Beardsell (Assistant Director of the National Youth Choir of Great Director) and enjoyed leading a large choir of delegates from the Music Education Expo held at the Barbican Centre. I have also been invited to work with other London-based choirs to prepare for televised choral competitions and look forward to developing this area of musicianship.

Looking ahead to the rest of year, we have some exciting events lined up, including the closing concert of St. Peter's Arts Week on 30 June, and a proposed joint project with the Fleet Singers to commission new music from composer Benjamin Till. At the end of the year, in addition to our usual Christmas carol services, we have planned a festive evening of carols on 6 December as the lights are switched on at Steele's Village.

Recent years have seen an explosion of interest in choirs and community music-making. I have personally become increasingly passionate about choral performance over the last year, having experienced first-hand the benefits gained both musically and socially by being part a choir. It is privilege to work with the Belsize Community Choir as they go from strength to strength and I look forward to building a musical community together.

Hannah Gill

Special day for atheists

An atheist complained to a Christian friend, "Christians have their special holidays, such as Christmas and Easter; and Jews celebrate their holidays, such as Passover and Yom Kippur; Muslims have their holidays. In fact, every religion has its holidays. But we atheists," he said, "have no recognized holidays. It's an unfair discrimination."

"Nonsense," his friend replied, "People have observed a special day in your honour for years." "I don't know what you're talking about," the atheist said, "When is this special day?" "April first."

3.30pm Junior Youth Club
6.45pm Belsize Community Choir

Sunday 19th Pentecost

11.15am Parish Eucharist
6 – 7pm PrayerSpace

Thu 23rd

10.30am Holy Communion
11.15am Coffee and Croissants
3.30pm Junior Youth Club
6.45pm Belsize Community Choir

Sunday 26th Trinity Sunday

11.15am Parish Eucharist
6 – 7pm PrayerSpace

Thursday 30th Corpus Christi

10.30am Holy Communion
11.15am Coffee and Croissants
3.30pm Junior Youth Club
6.45pm Belsize Community Choir

Friday 31st Visit of the BVM to Elizabeth

Creative Whizzkids and Classical Babies continue on Wednesdays at 9.30am and 2.00pm respectively.



Have you ever wondered....

- ~ Are clones people two?
- ~ Why is it called lipstick if you can still move your lips?
- ~ Why is it that night falls, but day breaks?
- ~ Why is it that when you transport something by car, it's called a shipment, but when you transport something by ship, it's a cargo?

Father Paul writes

The span of this magazine covers the whole of *Eastertide*, which reverberates on for a month and a half after the annual commemoration of Holy Week and Easter. A momentum began to build up in the character of our worship and prayer from the 5th Sunday in Lent ('Passion Sunday'), so that even our regular Sunday pattern of worship was interrupted.

On Palm Sunday we started worship, not in the comforting familiarity of our pews, but by re-enacting Jesus' entry into Jerusalem by processing into church singing a hymn. There was no sermon on that day, but instead we read the entire Passion Narrative dramatically – many of us taking roles in the unfolding story. The following week, instead of ordinary weekdays before a Sabbath observance on Sunday, the whole six days before Easter (regardless of what took place in the world around us) were called 'Holy Week', and there were solemn commemorations in church to mark the Last Supper (on Maundy Thursday), then the Crucifixion (on Good Friday), before the joyful Feast of Easter, Sunday, which celebrated the Lord's rising from the dead, when we also renewed our Baptism vows.

The centrality of these observances can't be stressed enough, because these Holy days remind us of our story. I say **our** story, because for all Christians, the passion, crucifixion and resurrection of Christ cannot simply be something we 'mount on the wall', so to speak, something 'out there', separate from our own lives. They have to be identified with, and claimed for ourselves. The scientist and theologian David Wilkinson has commented that though we have to engage with, and think through, the philosophical arguments for the existence or non-existence of God, ultimately *his* faith rests on 'this man Jesus', and the realisation that (as he put it) "the Christian faith isn't built on just one thing – that if it snaps, the whole thing collapses", but rather "it's about being immersed in a story, a narrative, which flows out of the life of Jesus". It's often through contemplating the event of the Cross at this time of the year that we can trace the way in which *our own lives* have had experience of death and resurrection in a variety of ways through our journey of faith.

There is a strange paradox at the heart of this season of the Christian year.

Belsize Community Choir

As my first term as new music director of the Belsize Community Choir draws to a close, it gives me a chance to reflect on what we have achieved together as a group since the beginning of the year.

Since joining the choir in October 2011 and becoming piano accompanist soon after, I have enjoyed working with founding musical director Dwayne Engh and being part of a warm, friendly group. It has been a tough act to follow Dwayne's super-organised methods, but I hope that I have been able to preserve the ethos of group while always striving to achieve high quality, committed performances.

It has been a steep learning curve in knowing how to get the best out of the choir, and to choose repertoire that singers will enjoy and perform well. It has been a chance for me to revisit old favourites; music that I have played and sung with various groups both in Wales and London throughout my musical education. I enjoyed working with the choir on 'Ar Hyd Y Nos' and hope to include a Welsh flavour in future programmes!

There will also be other new developments; since becoming music director, we have been without a full-time accompanist, so we will be recruiting an accompanist for next term to support the choir and help them achieve the best standards in both rehearsals and performance. We are very grateful to Paul Nicholson for being a fantastic accompanist in our concert at St. Peter's on 15 March. It has also been a pleasure to welcome new members to the choir this term, though we are still keen for our membership to grow so that we can continue to perform music in multiple parts.

This week sees our final concert of the term in the 'Spring Singfest' at Emmanuel Church in West Hampstead on 26 March, an event at which we have performed in previous years. Singing along to Gary Barlow's 'Sing' (written for the Jubilee celebrations) should hopefully prove to be an uplifting experience for the 200 singers taking part!

Leading the choir this term is my first experience of conducting a group, apart from a short term of classes at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. I have been very grateful for the advice I have received from friends, colleagues and

It didn't keep me busy.
It kept me quiet.

It seemed like poetry had been safely tucked up for the night."

At one time he even stipulated that his poetry should never never be used in an exam. Wow! Many poets would give their eye teeth for that kind of public acclaim. Not he.

However his most famous work is probably his powerful anti war poem, "To Whom It May Concern" with its refrain, "Tell me lies about Vietnam". He was not afraid to stand up in public and recite it at demonstrations in the sixties. This was the time when we were all in danger of becoming immune to the atrocities of napalm and agent orange pictured on our TV screens while we ate our dinners stuffing ourselves, as he says, with garlic and butter and excusing it all as being in the interest of democracy.

A very short poem about his wife, containing the line, "I think of you, Celia, with nothing on," appeared on the walls of our tube trains for some years. I think she may have been embarrassed. I would have. And then there is the gentle one I heard the other night on Radio Four's Poetry Please, called "Beatie is Three " It is about his little daughter allowing him to hold her hand as they walk down a steep staircase and he wishes the stairs would go on forever.

For his simple language, with no flowery touches, every thought a powerful one, I will always admire his poetry and his courage. I thought it very brave of him to write in response to a request for a line or two about the royal family,

"Royalty is a neurosis. Get over it. "

He died in 2008 so there will be no more. What would he have said about the seemingly endless wars we are involved in today? Perhaps something like, "But you always end up killing little children ". I began my homage by saying it was hard to pin him down. Maybe not.

Helen Braithwaite

So much of what gets coverage in the news about religion is associated with tradition and even arch-conservatism. We've recently seen the old rituals played out regarding the election of a new Pope in Rome, for instance, and we constantly hear of the on-going division both in the Roman and Anglican churches between some traditional teaching and more contemporary thinking. At parish level it's usual to encounter small-c conservatism in church congregations who like, perhaps, to look back to the 'glory days' of their church's past – whether real or imaginary. It was just the same in the Judaism of Jesus' day. In the Gospels, the Pharisees represent blanket resistance to anything new – resistance which was to make Jesus' death on a cross inevitable - and yet there had always been Hebrew prophets who had a vision that things could develop differently. We read in the prophecy of Isaiah, for instance,

'Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing'.

What's striking is that this Biblical principle of *newness* came to be applied with just as much insistence by Christian writers *after* the crucifixion as before it. You might expect that God acting - doing a 'new thing' at a specific time in human history, centred in the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth, would make that act – with the rolling by of the years and the passage of time – into just another 'old thing'. But the experience of St Paul, and of countless Christians since, was that this became a pattern for his *own* life, something that was always new – a repeated sequence of dying and rising. He no longer gloried in his own past successes or reputation. Rather his whole motivation came to be to identify with Christ's sufferings and the power of his resurrection – always 'pressing on' (as he wrote to the Philippians), 'forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead'.

Yet this paradox of newness remains rooted for Christians in the Passion and Resurrection – the suffering, death, and rising again of Jesus Christ. Without reminding ourselves very intently of these events recorded in the Gospels - along with the accounts we read of the failures and betrayals of the friends in Jesus' circle, and their subsequent transformative experiences - we would run the risk of severing ourselves from our very foundation, of resorting to the kind of 'newness' which becomes little

more than novelty for its own sake. The pious words of Judas Iscariot in the Gospel of John Chapter 12, that the costly perfume with which Mary of Bethany was anointing Jesus 'should have been sold... so that money could be given to the poor', could ultimately be applied to every act of worship, or to any of our church furnishings. But Jesus responds in that passage by telling Judas to leave Mary alone, and significantly he relates her act of devotion closely to his imminent death. There are certain parallels between that Gospel story and what we were occupying ourselves with during Holy Week and Easter, when we made extra time to watch, pray and reflect. It is, after all, the opportunity we are given each year to immerse ourselves once more in *our story*.

Father Paul

ARTS WEEK PLANS

ARTS WORKSHOPS AT ST PETER'S

The Arts Week at St Peter's from 22-30 June 2013 will include not only a variety of performance events but also a set of workshops in five artistic subjects. If you have always wanted to try singing, dancing, drawing, knitting or working with clay, there is an ideal workshop here for you. We are pleased to announce the following programme.

Knitting workshop with Knatty Knitters of West Hampstead: Monday 24 June, 11.00am to 12.30pm. A workshop for beginners wishing to start and finish two simple projects in the time; and for more experienced knitters, including any seeking advice on knitting problems. The charge for beginners is £10 for the cost of materials; there is no charge for attenders with their own materials.

None of the characters of the parable were perfect; none acted perfectly. We don't know what the outcome was; whether the prodigal son was able to settle back into life with his family; whether the older son joined the feast and welcomed his brother back; whether he was able to grow into his stature as the future head of the family; or whether the father learnt in the future to value his older son more. We don't know. What we do know is that they remained family, forever tied to each other, for better or worse.

The Father said to the Elder Son, "Son, you are always with me; and all that is mine is yours".

The same is true of Christ. He may seem absent – after all even the Pope Emeritus said that at times it seemed he was asleep – but for better or worse, no matter where we fit in this tableau of imperfect creation, Christ is always with us; and all that is his is ours; and if we need a break, take it, for whenever we decide to return, he will run to greet us with arms outstretched, filled with compassion, his love sealed with a kiss. Amen.

Mark Speeks

A Homage to Adrian Mitchell

Living here in Belsize, Adrian Mitchell who died in 2008, was a bright, versatile deep thinking writer of many different kinds of verse and that makes him hard to pin down. He could be fiercely political, tender, funny, even rude. He also wrote about writing. One long wonderful poem is called "The Oxford Hysteria of English Poetry"..... An abrasive look at poems down the centuries it makes me laugh helplessly. It contains the lines,

"There hasn't been much time
For poetry since the twenties.
What with leaving the Communist Church
To join the Catholic Party,
And explaining why in the C.I.A monthly.
Finally I was given the Chair of Comparative Ambiguity
At Armpit University, Java.

son who was ill-disciplined and abusive; a family with a legitimately resentful and angry elder son. It may seem a thoroughly straightforward parable to understand with an easily understandable moral to it of being lost and found; a story of God's indulgent love; a God who celebrates a sinner who repents and returns to the fold; and yet it isn't quite as simple to take from it a code of behaviour; an ethic of how we are to behave. For, no one comes out of this story unblemished.

For some of us, it may be that we are like the imperfect Father. Indulgent, even negligent (allowing the younger son to just wander off), unequal in his treatment of his children, yet capable of great love; capable of exercising forgiveness; capable of being lost himself, and of then finding himself in the love that flowed when he saw his younger son return home. This Father welcomed home his son joyfully without a thought of blame or condemnation.

For some of us, perhaps we see ourselves as the younger son. Ungrateful of what was being given to him, or perhaps unaware of the great liberty his father granted him and certainly incapable of dealing with it, dissolute, uncaring, and yet capable of understanding what he had become, recognising his unworthiness. This son turned his life around, putting aside any false pride. He was able to say sorry. This son lost himself and then found himself.

Perhaps as likely, we are like the older son – after all, as most of the world is out there enjoying the liberty of free time, we are sitting here in church. Dutiful, faithful, yet perhaps also resentful or unsatisfied; judgmental, unable or slow to share our love.

Lent is a time when we are asked to put ourselves under the microscope, to ponder who and what we are, to recognise our failings and faults, but also our strengths and virtues. It is a time to embrace the reality of who we are and work with the grain of our being to be what we are called to be. But that vocation isn't to be something we can't be; it isn't about showing us a painting of a magical, perfect image of ourselves, and saying, "repent and be like that". It's about giving us a mirror, so that we can, spiritually, morally, say, I see where I have strayed or fallen short or could improve; and yes, I am able to do something about it.

Drawing workshop with Jonathan Martin of the University of the Arts London – Central St Martin's: Tuesday 25 June, 2.00 to 4.00pm. An introduction to drawing techniques and an opportunity to practise drawing under expert guidance. The charge is £10 per place, including the cost of materials.

Prayer through Clay with Mary Penley, ceramic artist: Thursday 27 June, 2.00 to 5.00pm. A workshop in prayer expressed through the potential of potter's clay. Bring an apron and a Bible and an open mind. The charge is £10 per place, including the cost of materials.

Opening the voice: a singing workshop with Hannah Gill: Thursday 27 June, 5.30 to 6.30pm. An opportunity for new and aspiring singers to practise in a group with St Peter's Music Director. Places are free.

Chantraine Dance workshop with Patricia Woodall, founder of the Chantraine School of Dance in England: Friday 28 June, 6.00 to 7.00pm. An introduction to this unique approach to dance as an expressive art for the whole person, for well-being and joy. Places are free.

The workshops do not require any previous experience or level of achievement in the field. They are open to anyone over 16 with an interest in the subject, or anyone over 8 for the dance workshop. All workshops are for limited numbers of participants, and all places must be reserved in advance by email to stpetersarts@gmail.com or telephone 020 7433 1385. Where there is a ticket price to cover the cost of materials, payment will be taken on the day.

You are invited to treat yourself to one or more of these little parcels of joy – and please book early before we begin advertising the workshops more widely.

Ken Robbie, Churchwarden

AND DRAMA:

Some of the material going into the Arts Festival in June will be the work of members of the congregation.

I would like to ask members to perform a short play, written by me, speculating on the reactions of the mother of one of the innocents massacred by Herod. It will be a rehearsed reading in modern dress with minimum props. The main characters will be the mother Rachel, her husband David, Mary, Joseph, Jesus—playing a small part—Pontius Pilate, and High Priests, and other small parts. Anyone interested in playing a part or helping with direction is welcome to get in touch with me, although by the time this comes out the cast may be complete.

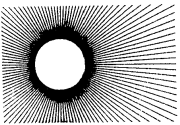
Bob Braithwaite

Contact details: 26b Daleham Gardens, NW3 5DA 0207 435 7040 / helen-bobuk@aol.com

COFFEE MORNING

Thank you to all who helped at our coffee morning and book and cake sale on 3rd March. It was a bitterly cold day and so we didn't have a lot of people there, but it was a pleasant social occasion and raised £156 we didn't have before. Please gird up your loins for our Great Summer Fair which will start our Arts Week at the end of June.

Mary Shakeshaft



HAMPSTEAD CHRISTIAN STUDY CENTRE

In the Crypt Room, Hampstead Parish Church from 7.45pm

Our summer course will run throughout May and will concentrate on the group of Oxford academics and writers who called themselves "The Inklings". It is 50 years since the death of C.S. Lewis and we shall have two lectures on his life and work, one on his theological writings and one on the Narnia books. Then there will be a lecture on Charles Williams and one on Tolkien. We hope to have a day in Oxford to look at their colleges, have a drink in the pub where they held their meetings and go to the Ashmolean or the Pitt-Rivers Museum.

Mary Shakeshaft

The Prodigal Son: Sermon

Today's gospel reading is very familiar. It is the story of the prodigal son. Prodigal of course means spending money or resources freely and recklessly; it means being wastefully extravagant. And certainly this prodigal son is all that. He demands his future inheritance from his father, signalling perhaps subliminally an impatience for his father's death; he then moves away and squanders what he has been given in dissolute living. And so, on his uppers, having reached the bottom, he returns to his father and, before he can even confess his sin, his father runs out to greet him, embracing him in his arms and celebrates his son's homecoming with an extravagant feast.

It is also about another son. A son who didn't demand from his father what was not yet rightfully his. A son who was dutiful and hard working. A son who seemingly respected his father and lived a righteous life. A son who, perhaps as a result, was taken for granted. A son who felt unappreciated; even unloved. A son who seemed burdened by duty and in need of the freedom which his brother took and abused. Yet an older brother who was not able to put aside his own feelings to welcome home a younger brother, to whom he also owed a duty and should have loved.

Lastly it is a story about a father. A father who gave to one son what was not yet his (for he was not yet dead). A father who gave to the son what may never have been his (as he was, after all, the younger son). A father who allowed this younger son to set off to a distant country, beyond the safety of his family, as if he had no understanding of what kind of son this one was. A father who, for whatever reason, didn't expect this son to fulfil his duty to his father and to his family. A father who also abandoned his own duty of care - for he knew nothing of what had become of his son.

And yet this father, filled with compassion, welcomed his son back home and sacrificed a fatted calf to celebrate – but didn't invite the older son to join them. The older son only knew of the party when he heard the music as he approached from the field and had to ask a slave why the celebration was taking place.

Jesus tells us then a story about a dysfunctional family. A family with an overindulgent, foolish father who had favourites; a family with a younger