

Christ the cornerstone

Heather Smith *reflects on* Acts 5:27-32, Psalm 118:14-end and John 20:19-end



Only a few days ago we were once again surprised by the joy of Easter. For those who experienced it first hand, it must have sent their heads into a whirring frenzy. Today's Gospel reading describes how the disciples were able to see Jesus' wounded hands and sides. They were surely unlikely to forget it and it affected everything they did for the rest of their lives.

The words in the extract from Psalm 118, which would have been familiar to every Jewish person, take on new meaning in the light of the Easter story. Among all the words of rejoicing is the reflection: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone." This foundation enabled Jesus' followers to do extraordinary things.

The reading from Acts shows that the disciples (now apostles) were not inactive in the days that followed Pentecost. They had, despite contrary instructions from the high priest, "filled Jerusalem with [their] teaching". But, said Peter on hearing this complaint, "We must obey God rather than any human authority."

Many today still see Jesus as the stone they should reject, and perhaps even those who follow him treat him as the cornerstone for a building like the garage – important, but hardly central to our life. Now is a good time to consider what it really means to be Easter people. 🍷

Risen Christ, may we, who seek to follow you, be inspired to build our lives on the solid foundation you provide, and to fill our villages, towns and cities with the news of your love. Amen.

People of the New Testament *Anna (Luke 2:36-38)*

by Caroline Fletcher

Anna is mentioned early in Luke's Gospel, when Mary and Joseph bring the eight-day-old Jesus to be presented in the Temple. Although she's often mentioned alongside Simeon, she's an important character in her own right. She doesn't merely repeat Simeon's message that Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled in Jesus, but reinforces and adds to his witness. Indeed, it can be argued that Anna, who never leaves the

Temple, is the more pious of the two. Unlike Simeon, she is not content just to see the Messiah for herself, but wants to tell others. We read (verse 38) that she goes "to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem".

It's been pointed out that while Mary was the first to be told the good news, Anna was the first woman to understand fully and proclaim it. She might appear in only three verses of the Bible, but her influence should not be underestimated. 🍷

Walking with Rosie *Rosie knows the way*

by Gillian Cooper

Our morning walk is always the same: round the corner, across the bridge, past the church, turn around and back to the petrol station to pick up the newspaper (and get a biscuit), through the recreation ground (no lead required), up the lane and home. Rosie knows the way. If I deviate from it, if it is raining or we have an appointment, she is indignant.

Rosie has a good sense of direction. If we go somewhere for the first time, she knows the way back to the car. On the beach, she knows the best route through the rocks and the pools onto firm sand. "Follow Rosie, Rosie knows the way," I say.

"I am the way," said Jesus. I cannot always see my way through life, but I have a guide who will not let me fall or drown, who will lead me onward through death to my eternal home. 🍷

“By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness... to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

Luke 1:78-79