



# Life, the universe and everything

Richard Llewellyn *reflects on* Luke 8:22-25

It is almost impossible to put ourselves in the shoes (or, in this case, the boat) of those who knew Jesus in the days of his earthly life and ministry. In the intervening centuries we have managed, very successfully, to turn Jesus into a barely human, mystical, almost magical figure, or a plaster statue, or any number of things that he certainly wasn't, and isn't. Those who first met him came to

know him as they would their own brother or next-door neighbour – as an ordinary person, a man, a fellow human being. Those whom he chose to be his first disciples lived with him, it seems, twenty-four hours a day. They would have seen him, no doubt, happy and sad, encouraged and angry, confident and bewildered, certainly hungry, thirsty and exhausted. They became his followers first and foremost

**Who are you, Jesus, that even the winds and waves obey you? Show me, I pray, your humanity and your majesty. Your humanity, that I may grow to be more like you in your compassionate love and your anger at injustice, and your majesty, that I may trust you more and more. Amen.**

## Faithful one

by Katharine Smith

On Wednesday we commemorate the man held to be the first ever official saint. Katharine Smith tells us about Polycarp.

Born in AD 70, Polycarp's family had received their Christian faith directly from the apostles of Jesus. At the age of forty he became bishop of Smyrna, now known as Izmir, in Turkey. He served the Church as bishop until his martyrdom in AD 155. In that year a young Christian boy was put to death for refusing to follow pagan

practices. The crowd then shouted for Polycarp, who was brought by soldiers to the stadium and even in the noise of the crowds he heard a voice from heaven saying "Be strong, Polycarp, for I am with you." He refused to "swear by the genius of Caesar", saying "for eighty-six years I have served Jesus Christ, and he has never done me wrong. How can you expect me to betray and blaspheme my king, who has saved me?"

Polycarp was immediately burnt at the stake and, when his body had been reduced to ashes, Christians collected what remained of his bones and laid them to rest, assembling at that place each year to remember him. ☺

because they were attracted by his teaching: his completely fresh, new and exciting portrayal of God's open, generous, demanding but forgiving relationship with each individual.

What must have been astonishing was that this attractive and compelling teacher who was blowing the dust of ages

off the formalism and burdens of religion also seemed to have the whole world in his hands: "Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?"

Jesus is both our brother and Lord of the universe. Forget one or the other, and we will certainly have got him wrong. ☺

## Ways of praying *The Eucharistic Prayer*

by Richard Greatrex

The Eucharistic Prayer, the longest and most complex prayer in the Communion service, is also the most significant, and has been an integral part of the liturgy since the early Church.

Each Eucharistic Prayer is a long prayer of consecration with, at its heart, the institution narrative, derived from the descriptions in the Gospels and

in 1 Corinthians, of Jesus' words and actions over bread and wine at the Last Supper. It both remembers this event and re-presents it, bringing a moment of history into the immediate present, reconstructing time itself so that all generations throughout the ages share Christ's salvific offering of himself. This makes it a corporate act, even though most of the text is spoken by the presiding minister.

While the priest prays aloud on behalf of the congregation, who briefly respond at points, those present should also be silently praying it, before responding with the final great "Amen", transforming this subtle, complex prayer into an outpouring of praise from all God's people. ☺

“ People think of science as rolling back the mystery of God. I look at science as slowly creeping toward the mystery of God.”

Allan J. Hamilton (born 1950), American physician, author and medical consultant