

La Romagnola, 13 Triq Is-Sieqja, Misrah Kola, Attard
Tel: 21 415 465 email: djlmorris@onvol.net

BZN05



From the Minister's study.....

Dear Friends,

Have you noticed how religious language and imagery are sometimes misused by people in a non-religious context to talk about attitudes and behaviour which they don't like? For example, politicians can sometimes be heard denying a need for detailed discussions on a difficult subject by saying they 'don't want to get wrapped up in the theology of it'. On the other hand, when they're stuck for an image with which to drum up support for an ill defined scheme, they can be heard talking about 'vision' and 'the vision thing'. The problem is that such misuse of terms like theology and vision can discredit them not just in the eyes of those who don't know any better but also in the eyes of those who should.

Theology and vision are both subjects with which people who claim to care about God should be closely involved. It has been a central observation of people of faith for literally thousands of years (look at Proverbs 29.18 for an early example) that 'where there is no vision, the people perish'. One way of understanding that is to say that if there is no long term aim towards which people can work and which motivates them to get up and do things, they gradually lose interest and, spiritually if not physically, they perish - the heart goes out of them. The practice of faith becomes routine, routine becomes an end in itself and the search for God becomes diminished and obscured by layers of habit and inertia. At the same time, theology ceases to be practised or even considered. I say 'practised' because theology is something we do; it's not just something we talk or think about. Our theology is what we work out in our worship, our preaching, our singing, our talking, our giving and our entire living. So theology and vision together say a lot about who the people of God of any particular time and place think they are and where they think they're going.

All of this should make us think about our own theology and vision at St Andrew's. They are both 'communal virtues' - they will work best if we all contribute to them. So let's try not to leave everything that happens in the church in the hands of the few who are always willing to take up a task - let's all try to contribute in whatever way we can. Let's not be afraid either to make our contribution to the vision - the view of the best way forward is not restricted to a chosen few. Let's do the vision thing together and may God bless us all.

David Morris

FROM THE EDITOR.....



Dear friends,

As you will have seen from David's pastoral letters and writings he emphasizes that he sees the need for St. Andrew's to move forward in various ways with eyes firmly fixed on the future. It is for all of us to participate in that forward looking vision and to take stock and give thought to initiatives that can promote growth of our congregation numbers, the age composition and related matters.

The implications of every contribution sent to me will be seriously treated and considered.

There is always resistance, instinctively, to any change .

Apart from changes to existing things there is also the need now for new initiatives and further actions. Hazel's contribution in this issue is further indicative of the challenge.

It is necessary for our members to speak out on concerns and to debate as necessary. Each one has a role and each one is called on to be pro-active in the life of the church.

Our next magazine will be our Christmas edition. Let YOUR contribution make it a great issue!

I leave you with the words of George Herbert.....

*“Teach me, my God and King,
in all things thee to see,
And what I do in any thing
To do it as for thee”*

Every blessing,

Vee



BOOK REVIEW.....

By Jacky Deacon.

THE MAN WHO BELIEVED GOD

The story of Hudson Taylor.....

Hudson Taylor was born at Barnsley on the 21st May, 1832. Strong godly influence surrounded him from the beginning. He was taught, as a child, to believe in God and to see God and his handiwork.

The writer, in his story, outlined the outstanding features of Hudson Taylor's personality, his largeness of heart, one of his prominent characteristics which led to his great work, "God's Fingerpost," which, to use his own phrases, was "directing men and women to the Salvation of China."

At the age of 19, he left for China with hardly any money, suffering many hardships. But with his simple, childlike, unshakeable faith in God he carried on; God's word the sole foundation for his feet.

In one of his letters to his mother he wrote: "I feel as if I could not live if something is not done for China." The evangelization of China was his burden, the passion of his life and all his energies were concentrated to that end.

In response to his many pleadings for funds, a letter read as follows: "Dear Sir, my father says I may send all my money, so I have drawn it out of the Post Office Savings Bank – four shillings – which I hope will help to make the little boys and girls in China good and happy to love Jesus!"

The writer of this wonderful book says in conclusion: "If there is one thing Hudson Taylor would desire, it is that the last word should not be of the man but of God, not of the servant but of the Master".



ARE YOU PREPARED TO KISS A FROG?

Ever feel like a frog? Puffy, drooped, pooped? Leaping high once in a while but not getting much of anywhere.

The frog feeling comes when you want to be bright but feel dull.
 You want to share, but are selfish. You want to be thankful,
 but feel resentment. You want to be big, but are small.
 .You want to care, but are indifferent.

Yes, at one time or another, each of us has found himself or herself on a lily pad floating down the great river of life too frightened to budge.

Once upon a time there was a frog. But he wasn't really a frog.
 He was a prince who looked and felt like a frog. A wicked witch had cast a spell on him.
 Only the kiss of a beautiful maiden could save him. But since when do cute chicks kiss frogs?

So there he sat – an unkissed prince in frog form.....
 But miracles happen. One day a beautiful maiden picked him up and gave him a big kiss.
 CRASH – BOOM – ZAP!!! There he was, a handsome prince!
 And you know the rest.....they lived happily ever after.

SO.....

What is the task of the Church?

To kiss frogs of course!!!!!!

In what ways can we kiss frogs and transform them?

.....by getting involved in the life of the church

.....by using the talents God has given us

.....by caring for individuals within and without the church

.....by appreciating friends and family members

.....by helping in desperate third world situations,

.....by being Peacemakers, etc. etc.

Thank you all in anticipation, for kissing so many frogs.

V.C.



DOWN MEMORY LANE WITH THE KEOGH'S.....

(The Keogh's worshipped at St. Andrews and afterwards moved to Germany)

It is like yesterday when we arrived on contract at Malta International Airport, were met by a representative of the Ministry of Health and taken to an hotel in Sliema for two weeks.

The first Sunday on the Island, traditionally a day to go to church but which church? Although being in Malta invariably means being surrounded by churches, we had no idea how to get to a protestant church. At first we attended the Anglican Church but it was recommended to us that we go to St. Andrew's Scots Church as it would probably be more familiar to us.

We managed to penetrate the mysteries of the bus service and we arrived in style at the Valletta gate. Within 10 minutes we literally stumbled across the church, were met at the door by two men, handed hymnbooks and introduced to the minister. During the service, he showed the people the church brochure and also demonstrated its use as a fan to cool oneself.

Later we moved to the small village of Hal Safi. This was the happiest time we had in Malta, as there is nothing like life in a small Maltese village! Everybody soon knew we were from 'Africa'. We made friends very quickly and were invited to weddings, village feasts and funerals. We so enjoyed living in the village. Just after our arrival in Malta, Peter, the new German Pastor also arrived. A young man with round spectacles and a guitar! He was our first contact to the German congregation. At the first Communion service Colin handed Peter a large piece of bread (to be distributed to the elders), As he was not familiar with our way of communion he didn't know what to do with it and promptly stuffed it in his mouth. It was simply too large to chew! Dear Peter became a good friend to us.

Meeting fellow South Africans made for even better times in Malta.

In looking back we realized what a privilege it was to have been part of St. Andrew's and its people and really enjoyed our time on the island and revisit it regularly.

QUOTES FROM CHURCH BULLETINS.....

These sentences actually appeared in church bulletins or were announced in church services:

- The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been cancelled due to a conflict.
- For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.
- Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.
- Bertha Belch, a missionary from Africa, will be speaking tonight at Calvary Methodist. Come hear Bertha Belch all the way from Africa.
- Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7pm. Please use the back door.
- At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be "What is Hell?". Come early and listen to our choir practice.
- A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. music will follow.



"But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere"

- James 3:17

A NEW HOUSEGROUP

The consensus for the new housegroup is alternate Wednesdays at 6.30 at the manse. The first meeting will be on Oct 8th – if you would like to join us, please come along.

David Morris



Written by: Linda Henry
SUNFLOWERS

A typical Sunday poolside scene,
With huge umbrellas
Of artificial yellow and green,
And matching sunbeds
In paler shades
Accommodating an endless parade
Of supine bodies, dark or pale;
While children scream,
Babies wail,
And tinny traces of Walkman sound
Are drowned by the splashes of water round.

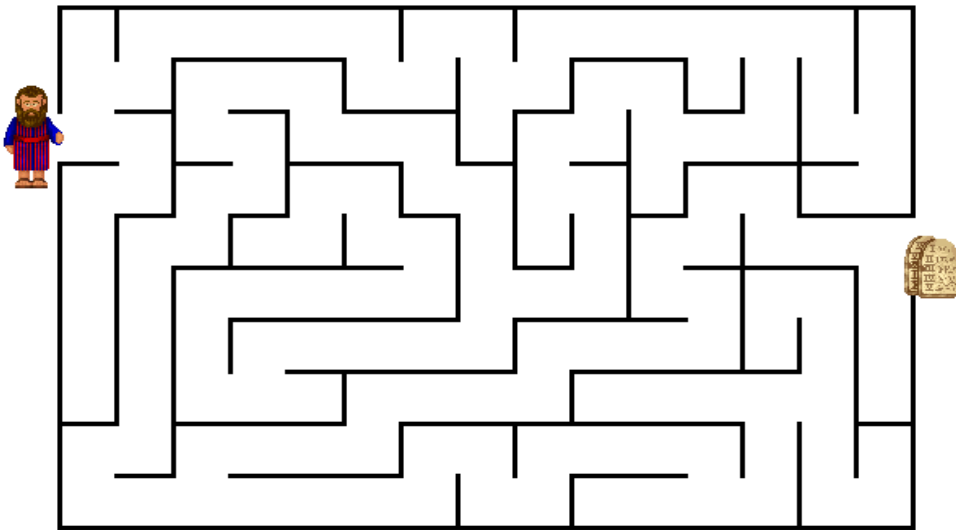
As proselytes prostrated pray
At the harsh sun's altar,
A further bench lets me survey
The hotel garden.
A cooling breeze
Rustles a forest of quasi-trees;
Arm-thick stalks towering high
With canopy leaves
Try to touch the sky.
Their green is the green of calm and peace
Which fills the troubled eye with ease.

Atop these sturdy structures, heads
Of glowing yellow
Nod or bow, and seem to shed
Benevolent smiles
On all around;
While posses of worshipping bees have found
Those pitted places
Of sweet delight
In kindly faces.
Their mesmerizing murmurings calm
My brittle brain, become my balm.

JUNIOR CHURCH ACTIVITY PAGES

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The Israelites had been travelling in the desert for three long months. They finally came to a place called Sinai. The Israelites were very tired and set up their camp at the edge of a mountain called Mount Sinai. This mountain is also known as God's holy mountain. God told Moses to climb to the very top of Mount Sinai. He had some rules for the Israelites that would help them to know what was right and wrong. They are called the Ten Commandments. God gave these rules on two tablets that were made of stone. Moses took the tablets with him back down the mountain so he could show them to the Israelites.



Help Moses find his way to the Ten Commandments.

MEMORY VERSE Deuteronomy 6:17a

“Be sure to keep the commands of the Lord your God.”



Write the number of the Commandment in the blank in front of their meanings below

- | | |
|--|--|
| ----Use God's name only in ways that worship him. | ---- love only your husband or wife |
| -----Be satisfied with what you have | -----Do not worship or serve anyone except me. |
| -----Do not murder anyone. | -----Keep one day a week for God. |
| -----Worship God only. Do not worship things that people make. | -----Love and obey your parents. |
| -----Do not take what belongs to someone else | -----Do not lie about other people. |

A CHRISTIAN SHOULD BE:

A mind through which Christ thinks,
A voice through which Christ speaks,
A heart through which Christ loves, and
A hand through which Christ helps



WRITTEN BY CHILDREN.....

Dear God.....

Please put another holiday between Christmas and Easter.
There is nothing good in there now.

Maybe Cain and Abel would not kill each other so much if they had their own rooms. It works with my brother.

Of all the people who work for you, I like Peter and John the best.

We read Thomas Edison made light. But in Sunday school they said you did it. So, I bet he stole your idea.

It is great the way you always get the stars in the right places.



That best portion of a good man's life - his little nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love.

- Wordsworth

HARVEST SUPPER TIMES

In the late sixties St. Andrew's was enjoying a fairly stable congregation, an influx of 'Sixpenny Settlers' (retired British residents who were afforded a very favourable tax arrangement, all of them still very active, and with an astonishing range of expertise) replaced the rather transient fellowship that was made up (mainly) of Services personnel and Dockyard managers, and slowly a togetherness was established. Valletta, in those days was relatively traffic free and there was plenty of scope to arrange church activities.

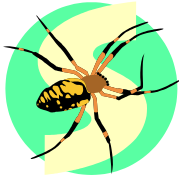
We had an active Ladies Guild and the suggestion that we should hold a Harvest Supper was agreed enthusiastically. There were several wee problems, there were no utensils available, no crockery, no cutlery..... But, nothing daunted, an invitation was issued, "COME, bring your own plate, fork, knife, spoon, napkin and your sense of humour". The fare was rather meagre that first year but the atmosphere was fantastic.

Gradually we gathered enough funds to buy the necessary equipment, six dozen of everything. We made table cloths. The Guild raised funds for the lovely velvet curtains which are still in the Hall (well, by the time you receive this edition there will be new curtains hanging, ed.) and over the years a great team evolved. There was the Timpana Lady, the Shopping/Roast Beef Trio, the Salad Makers, the Trifle/Apple Pie Team and, usually, After Eight to round off the meal. The Choir led the singing of the favourite Harvest Hymns.

Numbers, perforce, had to be limited to seventy, the extent that the meal could be served and enjoyed in comfort. Unfortunately, circumstances made it impossible to continue having the occasion, but the equipment is still in the church premises and with some enthusiasm from the very much younger and active members who have joined St Andrew's it would be lovely if similar activities could be arranged. There are still some of the 'Old Fogies' around who are willing to pitch in!!!!

Hazel Anderson.





DISTURB THE SPIDERS

A spider complained to his friend about a bad headache.

“Where do you live?” asked the friend.

“In the pulpit” He replied. “Every Sunday morning it’s the same problem, clomp, clomp, clomp, bang, bang, bang, as the minister climbs the stairs” I can’t stand it any longer.”

“Come and live with me,” said the second spider.

“As you know I live in the collection box by the door, nobody ever disturbs me.”

**D ISTURB THE SPIDERS.....
SUBSCRIBE TO THE NEW BIBLE FUND.**

Submitted by Ken Wroe.

Any financial support towards to production of the magazine will be very much appreciated. We would also like to encourage you to contribute interesting articles for the magazine!

OUR CHURCH AND OUR MONEY

When we speak on Sunday mornings about all that we have coming from God, we sometimes forget that that means our money as well as everything else. While it is true in one sense to say that all our money belongs to God and we should account to him for it, it is not very helpful. It is better to realize that God gives us resources to do the work he asks of us and he gives us brains to manage those resources; it is our task to put the two together. If we mean what we say in our worship, we will take this task very seriously and give it regular prayerful attention. Our financial situation at St Andrew's would benefit from more attention.

Last year, we spent LM2,700 more than we took in. We anticipate spending LM3,500 more this year than we expect to take in; and that assumes that we will recover the full cost of the new bibles and hymn books (due later this year or early next year). A large proportion of our overspend is catching up on expenditure that should have taken place in earlier years but which for a variety of reasons did not take place and is now urgently required.

At the moment, our church is supported by the Church of Scotland and The Methodist Church to the extent of 50% of ministerial costs. Over the next few years we must expect this support to reduce. We cannot expect to go on being subsidized by central funds from our parent churches, particularly since those funds are much more stretched than they used to be. Both the Church of Scotland and The Methodist Church are having to make major economies in their overall expenditure; to someone sitting in Edinburgh or London, St Andrew's in Valletta could look like a good place to start economising. We should be planning to meet at least 75% of our ministerial costs in 4 years time, half as much again as we meet now. Difficult as this will be, it must be right that we should be expected to stand on our own feet.

We can hope to achieve an increase in our income from additional donations to the stipend fund, as we have received recently, from better fundraising, from increased giving by church members, or some mixture of the three. With regard to giving, the Kirk Session is very mindful that for some of our members, additional giving is out of the question. At the same time, some of us no doubt need to ask ourselves whether we are being realistic in the amount we give to the church each week and perhaps some of us could give substantially more than we do.

We have quite a fluid membership – people come and go from Malta all year round. When they are off the island, most people do not keep up their giving nor, despite the best of intentions, do they usually make it up in full when they come back. The problem is that the church's expenses go on whether any of us is in Malta or not. The church urgently needs to have a more reliable income – how would any of us manage a household budget if we didn't have some fairly reliable idea of what was coming in each week or each month? To achieve this, the Kirk Session wishes to introduce an envelope system for church members' regular giving.

We are therefore asking all who consider themselves to be members of St. Andrew's to start using the envelopes which will be available for collection from December. Visitors, too, are most welcome to join the scheme. There will be no identifying marks on the envelopes and no-one will know how much anyone puts in their envelope. The envelopes will simply have the church stamp on them and they will be numbered with the week of the year to remind us of our weekly commitment. All we ask is that members commit themselves in their own minds to a certain sum for their weekly giving and that they put that sum, as a minimum, into one of their envelopes each week throughout the year whether they are in Malta or not. When the offering is taken, we simply put the envelope(s) in to the bag instead of cash. People who have been away can bring any number of envelopes with them when they return to St Andrew's. In this way, over the course of the next year, we should be able to get an idea of what the church's regular income might be and be able to plan accordingly. We wish to introduce this system from the 1st of January next year and would be grateful for your comments on the scheme to David Morris or to any elder before then.

Our finances are as much part of our faith in action as anything else. In a way, they are prior to many other things since if we don't get them right, eventually we will not be able to sustain any of the other work. Please pray about the information in this article. Let's try to be worthy of the trust God has placed in us and of the opportunities he has set before us. Please use the envelopes.



Vive la difference?

The question of how we live with those who are not like us has always been a difficult one. We used to deal with it by conquering difference as we discovered it and while that still happens far too often, at least in theory it has become less acceptable than it used to be. Politically, economically and socially, the question of living with difference affects us at all levels. It affects nations around the world, in associations like the EU and the UN, it affects ordinary people who have to grapple with the effects of emigration and immigration, it affects those who move in their work from country to country and place to place. But do we find that the Christian response to difference is any different from anybody else's? What are our Christian roots here?

We have to start by acknowledging that historically the Christian response has been little or no different from any other. We have fought wars with other races and faiths ostensibly and actually over questions of religion – remember how the memory of the 12th Century crusades still arouses Islamic anxieties - and Christians have killed each other in huge numbers because they disagreed with each other and couldn't live with the differences. At different times and with different degrees of intensity, Christians of all denominations have behaved towards other faiths and towards each other as if their particular path were the only path to God. In many parts of the world this still happens and there are still strong elements, not least in some Western Christian denominations, which want to maintain this line or something close to it. After all, they say, how can what we believe to be the truth about God really be true if somebody else's different words are also true? But think about the biblical origins of difference.

You will probably all remember the story of the Tower of Babel – it's in Genesis Chapter 11. The people are building their tower; they all share

one language and are one people until God comes down, scatters them and confuses their language so that they don't understand each other. Difference is created by God and it is only after difference is created that we meet, in Chapter 13, the idea of the people of God who in Abraham are called to be a blessing to all the scattered nations of humanity. But even these newly-called people of God can't live with their differences – Abraham's people and Lot's people have to separate to avoid their quarrels. So from the very earliest times of humanity's search for God, there has been division, separation and difference. This has spilled over into all areas of life and throughout history there has been mistrust of people, ideas and ways of life that are different from our own because we have forgotten the corollary of the Abraham story.

In the Abraham story, there is acceptance of difference and amicable resolution of it. Abraham and Lot accept that they see things differently, they discuss it amicably and they agree on a solution. The paradoxical implication is that God's loving purposes are worked out precisely when differences exist between people; we need difference in order to be the people God intends us to be. Difference has to be worked out through the lives of people who are committed to the search for God in their own particular way but who can work with a different way on its own terms. We have to be immersed in our tradition and fully committed to it if we are to be useful to God and truly accepting of others also seeking to serve God in their traditions; we will not come to know God either by closing our minds to other ways or by continually sampling a bit of this and a bit of that all our lives and thereby avoiding commitment.

The idea that because we believe in one God, we have to believe that there is only one path to him is beset with difficulty. If we look around us and at ourselves, we see such diversity in the world that it is difficult not to believe that God delights in diversity – difference is a deliberate feature of creation. How many different ways are there of being a tree or a dog or a

cat or a human being? This diversity suggests strongly that we have to respond by embracing and celebrating it, not least in our church. We need to look at our church life and make sure that being immersed, properly, in our tradition does not just make us tribal and exclusive but helps us to be truly appreciative of the different efforts and understandings of others and therefore inclusive. Our church should be full of people who are different from each other, who understand and experience God in different ways and who share their different understandings and experiences with each other. It is not that we always agree with each other that makes us a church but that we accept each other, learn from each other and help each other to grow in faith within the wider compass of our tradition. Vive la difference!

YOU ARE WHAT YOU THINK

The trouble is, with most of us, that we let conditions influence our thinking instead of letting our thinking influence our conditions. The plain truth is that what we think we eventually become, therefore we cannot blame other people, circumstances or conditions, for our lives reflect our innermost persistent thoughts. (Arnold Walker)

Try this for yourselves

While sitting at your desk make clockwise circles with your right foot. While doing this, draw the number "6" in the air with your right hand. What direction is your foot going now?

My friend's preparations for a visit from her children included a trip to the bank. Waiting in line at the teller's window, she lamented to the middle-aged man behind her, "My children are in their twenties, and I'm still giving them money. When does it end?"

"I'm not sure I'm the one to ask," the man said, while glancing uncomfortably at a paper in his hand. "I'm here to deposit a cheque from my mother."

CHURCH FUNNIES.....

After the christening of his baby brother in church, little Johnny sobbed all the way home in the back seat of the car. His father asked him three times what was wrong. Finally, the boy replied: "The priest said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home, but I want to stay with you guys!"

TAILPIECE

This is the story about 4 people named EVERYBODY, SOMEBODY, ANYBODY AND NOBODY.....

There was an important church job to be done, and EVERYBODY was sure that SOMEBODY would do it. ANYBODY said he would do it, but SOMEBODY got angry and said that, really, it was EVERYBODY'S job. EVERYBODY thought ANYBODY could do it, but NOBODY realized that, because of SOMEBODY'S anger EVERYBODY left it to SOMEBODY to do. In the end EVERYBODY blamed SOMEBODY and NOBODY did what ANYBODY could have done in the first place.

Meet Jeremiah

One of the noteworthy things about Jeremiah was that he was not afraid to complain to God. There was no false piety about Jeremiah, no ineffectual religiosity. As we might say today, Jeremiah told it like it was, both to the people around him and to God. His problem was that the people of his day didn't like what they were told and they told him so in no uncertain terms. This was what provoked his complaints to God. 'Why did you give me this job', he asked, 'if you didn't intend that people would listen to me?' God's answer amounted to telling Jeremiah to stop complaining and get on with it. Jeremiah did just that and his book is a testament to a career in which the things he warned about happened, the nation was destroyed and many of its people were led away to captivity. It can't have been much consolation to Jeremiah that he was vindicated by events because the last we hear of him is that he was taken to Egypt as a captive and presumably died there unknown and unnoticed.

Jeremiah's story has a lot to say to Western European Christians in our times. Here in Malta where religion is so much in evidence we can forget how much pressure the Christian faith is under in European culture at large. The European Parliament has just voted against mention of Europe's Christian roots in its proposed new constitution; the Christian perspective on events seems increasingly unwelcome. We too can complain to God about all this but if we do, we should expect the same sort of answer that Jeremiah got; 'stop complaining and get on with what you're called to do.' Jeremiah's

story is a classic example of what often seems to happen to people who set out to take God seriously - very rarely does anyone listen to them; what they say and do only sporadically makes any difference in their society.

The great saving grace in all this is that God is faithful. 2500 years after Jeremiah's complaints, we're still reading his words and finding echoes of our own experience in them while the views of those who opposed him are long gone. God's timescale is not the same as ours. Like Jeremiah, in our own day we may see no result for our efforts but God may well build on what we do in days that we will never see. So the task for those who set out to serve God in times like ours is to be faithful as God is faithful. Like Jeremiah, we do what we honestly believe we are called to do as well as we can for as long as we can, remembering that we are here to serve God and the world, not to please ourselves or the world. Read Jeremiah – and remember.



We read in 1 John 3.18-19.....

“My children, love must not be a matter of words or talk; it must be genuine, and show itself in action. This is how we may know that we belong to the realm of truth.”

PRAYER.....

Lord, the Church is a mystery, for in every land and through every century, despite our sin, it hands on the life-giving message of grace.
Thank you, Lord of the Church.

Knowing our own weakness, and our frequent feeling of impatience, you still draw us to the table of your love.
Thank you, Lord of the Church.

But as we are part of it, so we make the Church what it is.
We are elements in the ineffectiveness of the Church, and its habitual self-concern.
Forgive us, Lord of the Church.

We like the rules and the fuss over trifles; we are content to keep the Church to an hour on Sunday, so that our lives are not upset.
Forgive us, Lord of the Church

So we pray that, as the Church is the community where love and truth come together,
We may grow in love,
Overcoming all the obstacles of our prejudices and facile judgements;
We may grow in truth,
Until we know the breadth of your saving purpose.

You made the Church through your great act in Jesus Christ.
Through him you said to us,

“Come, follow me, receive the Spirit.”

Grant to the Church everywhere your encouragement, that our love may be genuine and show itself in action.

AMEN