

St Mary's Church Eccleston /

St Mary's Church Pulford

[Eccleston and Pulford Churches](#)

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Dear Reader,

The parish newsletter as well as home worship guides for those unable to attend the service in person, are available to download from the church website:

<https://www.ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org/category/newsletters/>

For up-to-date service information please see the church website:

<https://www.ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org/services/>

Please feel free to email suggestions for future newsletter articles. Thank you to Rob Hughes and Jeanette Howe for their contributions this week.

I hope that the Eccleston Font quiz on page 8 is of interest to our readers.

Kind Regards

Stephen Hutchinson (hutch@ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org)

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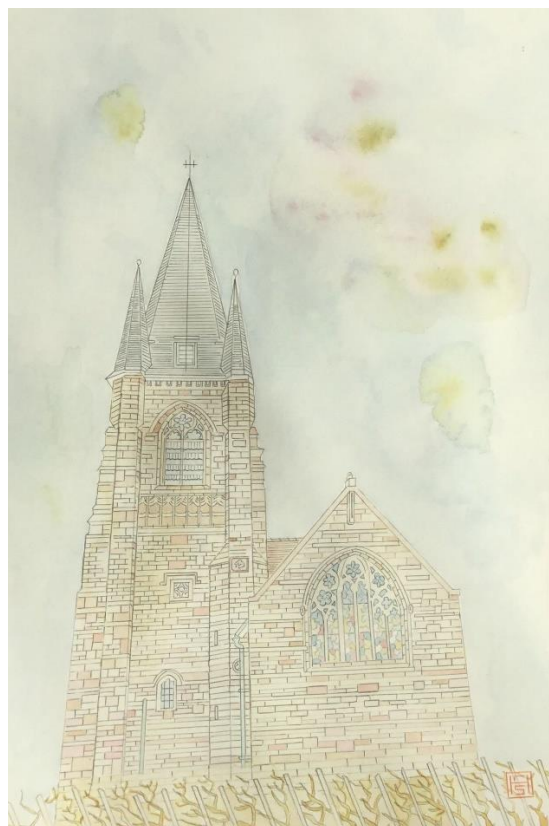


Figure 1 Pulford Church

Parish information

Rector:

Pulford/Eccleston

Church Wardens:

Pulford	Sue Payne	PulfordChurchWarden@ ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
Eccleston	John Richards	EcclestonChurchWarden@ ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org

Lay Minister

Pulford/Eccleston Jeanette Howe

Planned Giving Officer / Treasurer

Pulford/Eccleston Les Hocking

Electoral Roll Officer

Eccleston	Andrew Wilkinson
Pulford	Clare Willan

Organists and Assistants

Pulford/Eccleston Derek Whatling
/Dennis Jones

Director of Music

Eccleston/Pulford Maureen Richards mothemusic@gmail.com

Tower Captains

Eccleston	Andrew Pridding
Pulford	

PCC Secretary

Pulford/Eccleston Andrew Wilkinson

Newsletter/Website

Pulford/Eccleston	Stephen Hutchinson	Hutch @ecclestonandpulfordchurches.org
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Church Service Dates Times and Locations.

Date/ Sunday	St Mary's Church PULFORD 9.45am	St Mary's Church ECCLESTON 11.15am
5 th Feb	Priest: Canon Ian Davenport Reader: Margaret Walker Prayer Leader: Paul Williams	
12 th Feb		Priest: Canon Stephen Attwater Reader: Garth Jones Prayer Leader: Nayland Southorn
19 th Feb	Priest: Canon Stephen Attwater Reader: Paul Williams Prayer Leader: Sue Payne	Priest: Reverend Robin Mosley Reader: Hilary Bushnell Prayer Leader: Steve Hutchinson
26 th Feb		Priest: Revd. Dr Stephen Torr Reader: Terry Brightmore Prayer Leader: Mo Richards

Important News and Reminders: Food Bank

A reminder from Rachel Williams. Here are a few of the facts being highlighted on the Foodbank website: 3507, Emergency Food Parcels issued in 6 months to 30 September 22 - up 60% on pre pandemic levels, 7617, Local people in crisis fed, 2828, Feeding the equivalent of 2828 local children. The charity is very grateful for all donations - but especially non cook items such as crackers, Ryvita, Fish/meat pastes, Instant pastas/rice/soups and toiletries (toothpaste and brushes). They have PLENTY of dried Pasta, Baked Beans

Urgently Wanted

- Tinned Meat and Fish, Tomatoes, Desserts & Potatoes, UHT Milk & Juice, Custard, Small Jars Instant Coffee, Jams and Spreads, Instant Mashed, Cereal Bars, Instant Pasta & Instant Noodles

Also Wanted

- Cuppa Soup, Pot Noodles, Pasta Sauce, Biscuits, Breakfast Cereal

Rob Hughes Homily: Faith and Hope.

How often might we have debated the question: “*which came first - the chicken or the egg?*” Well one seemingly-compelling answer is “the egg came first, but what laid it was an antecedent of the chicken”. Which begs the question: “*Millions of years before chickens evolved, then, which came first - the ‘pre-chicken’ or the egg?*” So, what if a question was asked about faith and hope: “*Which has to come first. If either?*”



The text (which I used for my very first sermon as a Reader 43 years ago!) is a definition that appears in The Letter to the Hebrews, chapter 11: “**Faith is the substance of things hoped-for; the evidence of things not seen**”. A more modern translation uses these words: “**Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see**”. In a way, this ‘sort-of’ defines hope as well, and The Letter to the Hebrews continues to this effect (extracts); **it was by faith that:**

- *we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command (so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible)*
- *Abel was pleasing to God*
- *Abraham received his inheritance*

And concludes that “*all these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they were longing for a better country - a heavenly one.*” Which amounts to faith **enabling** hope for the as-yet (unknowable) future.

Have you ever given thought to the relationship between faith and hope? If so, there’s strong information here, in this Letter to the Hebrew Christians. I was reminded in a recent audio contemplation (that prompted this theme) that it’s not necessarily true that anyone who has faith must ‘automatically’ have hope as well. Nor vice-versa. In re-examining the question, I then drove myself crazy with various ‘arguments’ prompted by the contemplation:

Is hope a consequence of faith, or the other way around?

Some might argue they have faith and need hope; others, the opposite

Is it possible to have hope because we already have faith? Or not?

At this point I decided that thinking’s over-rated, and had a cup of tea and a day-off! Having given my strained-brain a rest, I starting from scratch, reasoning that it could well be possible that an incurable optimist might have hope without having faith, and that a fatalist might possess faith without any particular hopeful expectations for the future.

When push comes to shove, faith (from the Latin **fidere**) means **trust**, or '**confidence in truth**'. And whether we have religious faith or secular faith, it seems to me that faith lies at the very heart of all human activity, because we live our lives on the assumption that (for example) the sun will rise in the morning (we can't **prove** that it will), and that we'll be alive to see it (with no guarantees that this will be so).

There are, of course, lots of uncertainties in life, but in order to get by, we have to take for granted that we'll be around tomorrow, next week, next month, and so on... How else could we plan, for example: daily meals, or weekly shopping; visiting friends or having a meal out occasionally; and birthday celebrations annually? We have to optimistically assume ("hope") that we'll be around, and take at least that for granted.

Our faith, then, is rooted in the here-and-now, albeit based on trust. Trust, is itself based on our past and current learning and experience. Hope is quite different in one important respect - it's a trust that's looking to the future - having trust and confidence, in something we hope-for, actually coming to pass (even if it's not absolutely guaranteed here-and-now). Our faith tells us, in this moment, that something **can** be so. Our hope tells us to anticipate that it **will become so**.

Having gone round and round in a circle a couple of time, I came to understand that faith and hope go hand-in-hand, so debates about which-comes-first have little relevance.

As Christians, we can confidently commit to **the future we hope for**, because of our faith in God's promises, **here and now**, that it **will** turn out that way. He may see things differently from time to time, but He will always guide us to do what's best for us when we listen.

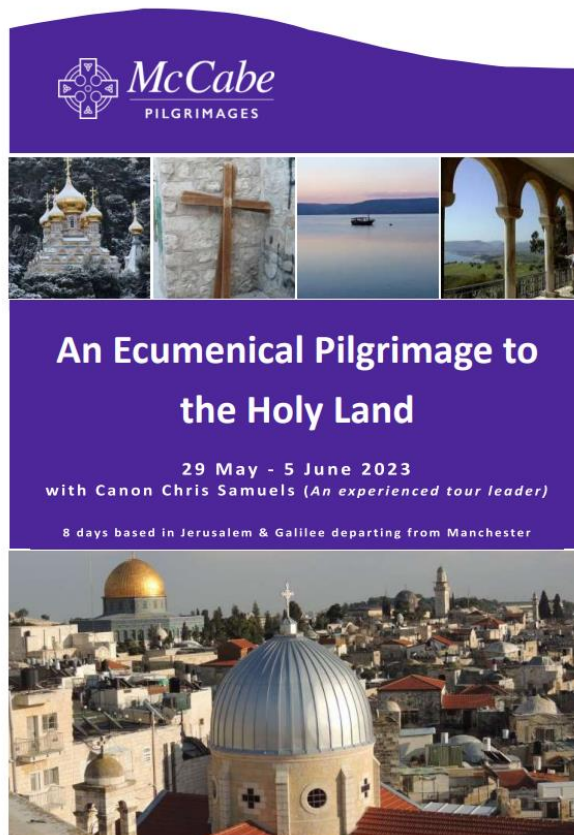
I'm reminded of a prayer that I used to use in my early days as a Reader (I think it was attributed to Frank Colquhoun):

God, grant us the faith that overcomes the world, and face both life and death calm and unafraid. Give us the hope that looks beyond this life to things unseen and eternal. And give us the love that binds us more closely to you and to one another.

[Rob Hughes]

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land – 29th May – 5th June 2023

A reminder that Canon Chris Samuels will be leading a trip to the Holy Land next year.



For details of the pilgrimage and contact details for Chris please click on the following link to see the brochure.

<https://mccabelive.eecsoftware.com/clientlibrary/mccabe/Images/0529%20Samuels%20MAN%20BROCHURE%20insurance%20for%20WEB.pdf>

To book a place visit ...[8 Day Holy Land Pilgrimage - McCabe Pilgrimages \(mccabe-travel.co.uk\)](https://mccabe-travel.co.uk)

and click on the "show all dates and availability" button. Chris's pilgrimage is the one listed for 29/05/2023.

Here is a link showing the fascinating beauty of the Holy Lands:

[Video of typical Holy Land tour](#)

The Eccleston Church Font Quiz.

The Eccleston Church font has 8 beautifully carved wooden figures surrounding the font cover. These figures are made up of the four Evangelists (St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke and St John) as well as St Stephen, St John the Baptist, St George and St Lawrence. Can you identify each of the figures though? I have added clues to the bottom of each photo. Write your answers below each picture, then compare these with the answers on the last page.



Figure 1 - This Saint is holding a purse.



Answer:

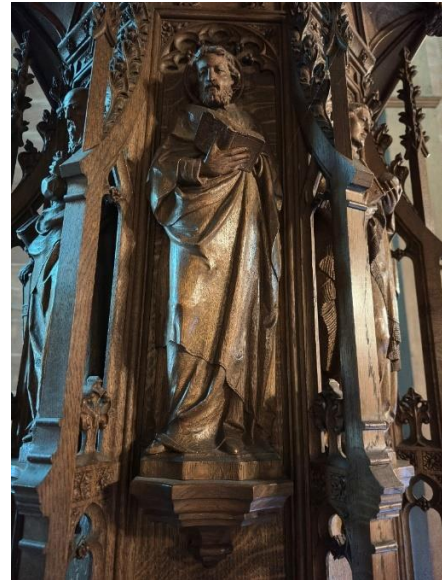


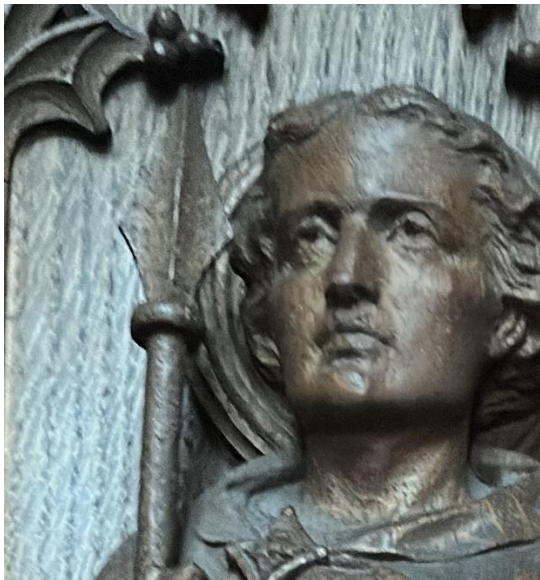
Figure 2 – A winged lion on the front of the Bible



Answer:



Figure 3 – This Saint is holding a shield and a lance (Ascalon).



Answer:

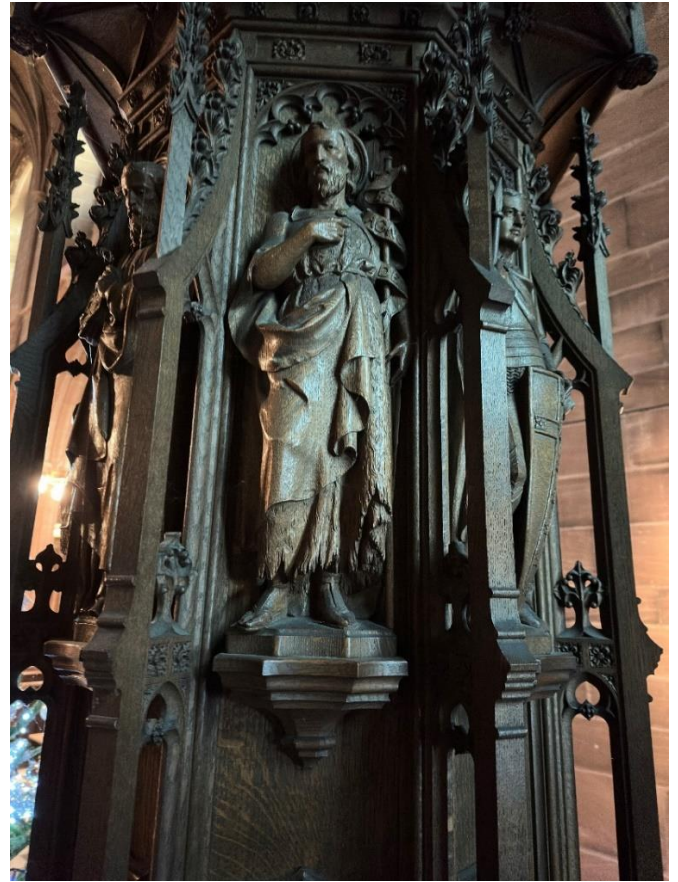


Figure 4 – This Saint looks like he has just come out of the sea as his tunic is soaking wet.



Answer:

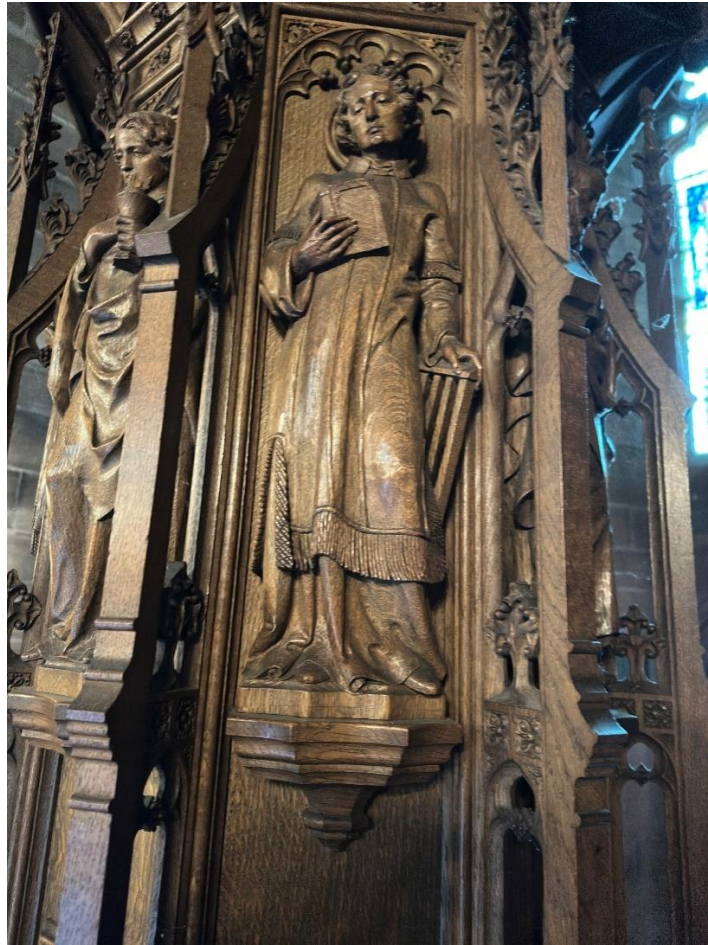


Figure 5 – This poor Saint is holding what looks to be a grid-iron.

Answer:

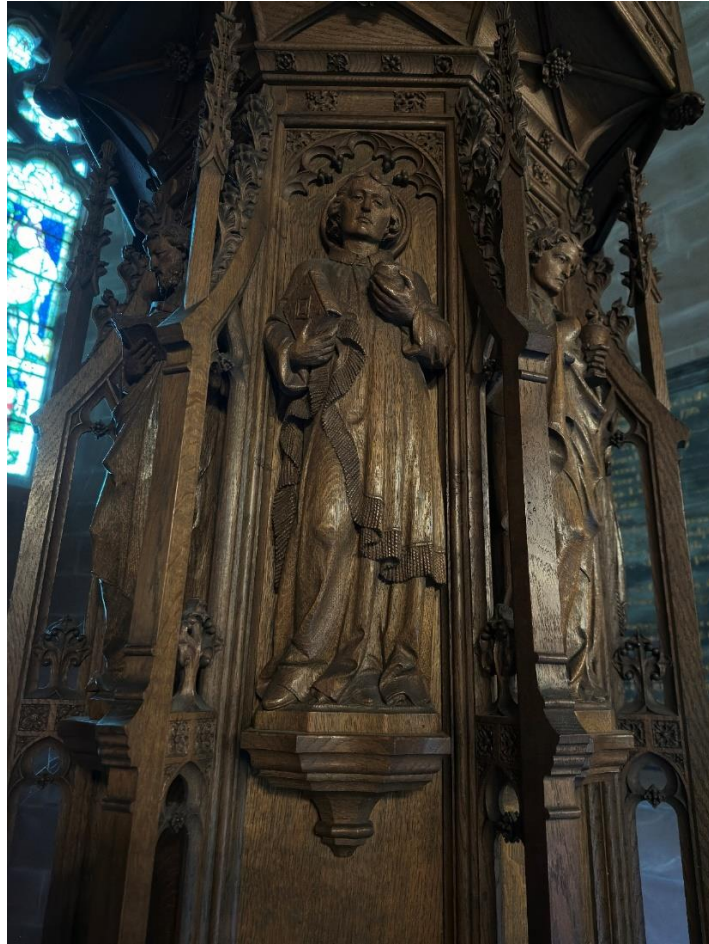


Figure 6 – This Saint is holding a stone.

Answer:



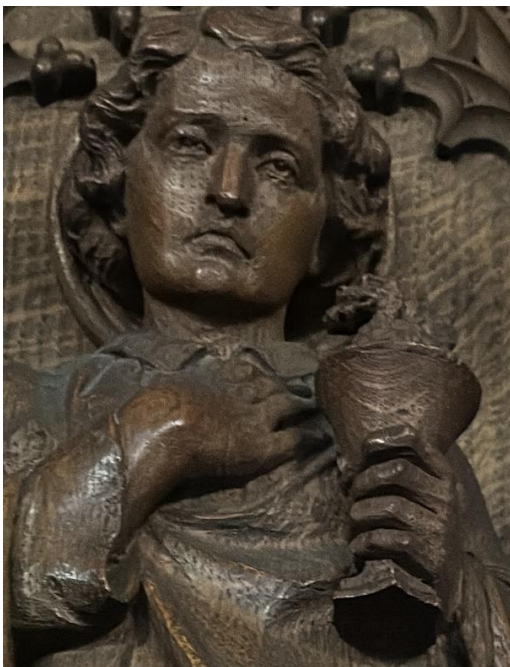
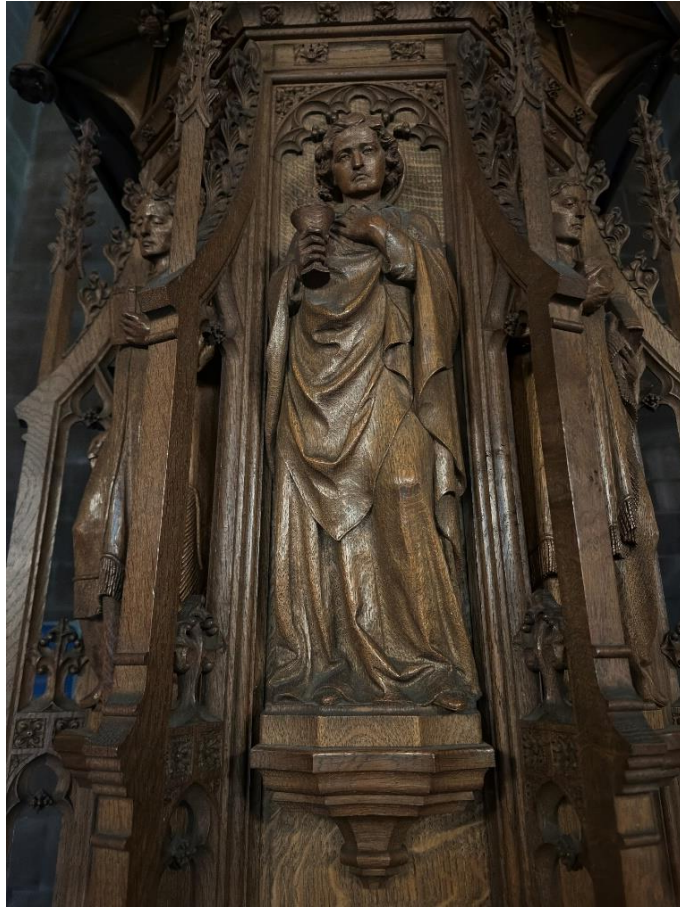


Figure 7: This Saint is holding a chalice with a serpent inside it.

Answer:

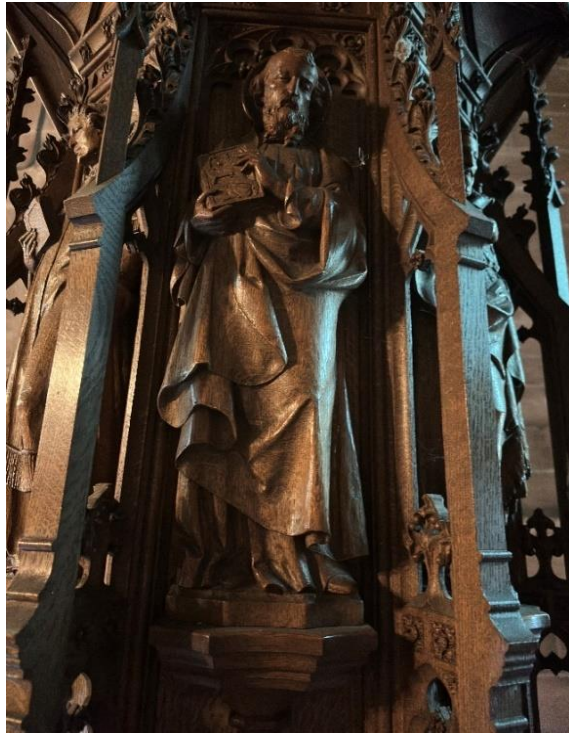


Figure 8: This Saint is holding a Bible with a Winged ox/bull on the cover. Note what looks like a hoof in the upper part of the animal.

Answer:

Jeanette Howe's Poem: Reflection on Rembrandt's painting "The Return of the Prodigal Son".

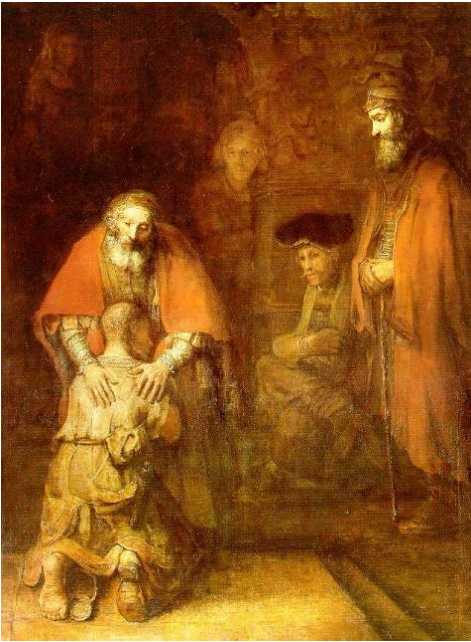


Figure 2 - 'The Return of the Prodigal Son' (circa 1668)

We were created to abide
In the love and light of God;
As a beloved child.
But we wanted our own way and took our unearned
blessings,
Our inheritance,
Before those blessings were due to us;
In rebellion,
Into the darkness.

Thoughtlessly, we squandered those gifts
In reckless living;
Losing everything,
Bound in debt,
Broken,
Ashamed;
Without the light,
Or the right to return to God's side...

But we did ...
To receive
Freedom from debt,
Wholeness,
Grace,
Mercy
And God's extravagant love ...
To be embraced as a child;
Once again bathed in God's glorious light.

[Jeanette Howe]

Answers to Eccleston Font Quiz.

Figure 1 – St Matthew. This Saint is holding a purse. Before Matthew became a disciple, he was a tax collector. Hence the purse.

Figure 2 – St Mark. A winged Lion is the traditional symbol for St Mark.

Figure 3 – St George. A shield and a lance are the traditional symbols for St George.

Figure 4 – St John the Baptist. The person who carved these figures has done an exceptional job here depicting a water-soaked garment. This Saint is obviously either standing in water, or has just come out of the water. This must be hinting at the baptism of Christ.

Figure 5 – Poor St Lawrence was tortured and killed on a grid-iron.

Figure 6 – This Saint is holding a stone. St Stephen was stoned to death.

Figure 7 – St John holds a chalice with a serpent coming out of it. This symbol is interpreted as a reference to a legend from the Acts of John, in which John was challenged to drink a cup of poison to demonstrate the power of his faith (the poison being symbolized by the serpent).

Figure 8 – This Saint holds a Bible with a winged ox/bull on the cover. The Winged ox/bull is a traditional symbol for St Luke.

[Stephen Hutchinson]