

# A guiding faith

Caroline Hodgson *reflects on* Luke 14:1. 7-14

The actor Martin Sheen is not reticent in speaking about his guiding faith, and he admits that the balance between stardom and humility has not always been easy. He tells a story from the time when he was filming *Gandhi* in India in 1981. After he made a donation to Mother Teresa's charitable work, the director Richard Attenborough invited Sheen and some of the other cast members to travel from Mumbai to Calcutta to meet Mother Teresa. Sheen was greatly excited at the prospect and, when he got back to his hotel, he told his son, the actor Emilio Estevez. In response, Emilio simply asked his father: "But why do you want to meet her?" Sheen replied: "This is Mother Teresa, a

living saint, there's only one in the world, we have a great opportunity here..." Emilio simply repeated his question: "But why do you want to meet her?" Becoming indignant, Sheen spluttered: "So I can tell everybody..."

Suddenly realising what he'd said, he stopped in his tracks, and later cancelled the visit to spend more time with his son.

Martin Sheen did meet Mother Teresa ten years later. It would of course have been an honour for anyone to have met her. But thanks to his son, Sheen realised that there are simpler honours that matter more, such as spending time with one's family. It's not known whether Mother Teresa ever heard this story, but doubtless she would have approved. 😊

**Lord God, teach us to be humble, seating ourselves low down the table and exalting and honouring all your children. Amen.**

## Walking with Poppy

*Pastoral care*  
by Gillian Cooper

Poppy's cuteness often attracts attention when we are out on our walks. Today it is an elderly couple who spot her. Their dog died a short while ago, and they are missing him. Poppy is not usually keen on petting, but she lets herself be stroked, and when

the man picks her up she licks him on the nose. "Thank you so much," they say, as they walk away smiling.

Unlike us, Poppy is not hampered by the need to say something. She does not try to fix things. She responds instinctively to sadness just by being. We joke about Poppy doing her pastoral care, but I could learn from her how better to care for people in need. Poppy's attention to people is like God's – instant, unconditional and uncomplicated, completely free of judgement and freely given. Though, being a dog, she expects a treat afterwards, of course. 😊

Martin Sheen with Emilio Estevez



## Trees of the Bible

*The cedar*  
by Caroline Fletcher

The cedar trees of Lebanon are mentioned more than seventy times in the Old Testament. Cedars are huge coniferous trees with massive girths. They can reach up to 121 feet in height and have horizontal branches with huge sweeping spreads. They are also extremely long-lasting, some living a thousand years or more.

Cedars were prized for their beautiful wood, which is strong,

aromatic and resistant to rot. Large amounts of it were imported from Lebanon to build King Solomon's Temple; Solomon being able to afford the very best materials.

Their size, strength and beauty are reasons why cedars are used to describe how the righteous flourish (for example, in Psalm 92). However, the proud cedar also has a negative image, representing haughty leaders who do not acknowledge God (Ezekiel 31:1-12). Such pride is always overcome: Psalm 29:5 tells us that, "The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars; the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon." 😊

**“God will meet you where you are in order to take you where He wants you to go.**

Tony Evans, pastor, speaker and author

## **Church of Scotland: Orphir and Stenness Parish**

**Interim Moderator:** Rev June Freeth 721449

**Locum Minister** Rev Martin Prentice    **Session Clerk:** Nicol 811242

There is a loop system. Adjust hearing aids to benefit.

**A warm invitation is extended to everyone to meet in the hall at the back of the church, after the service, for a cup of tea.**

### **Intimations**

**Tuesday - 8pm** – Choir in the kirk hall

**Thursday – 10am – 12noon** Community Café in the kirk hall

Blue Door – The kirk has a week in The Blue Door in January. It would be great if folk can gather and store their items for sale. There have already been some donations from the community, so if anyone has spare storage space, please speak to Carol or Nicol.

### **Readings:**

Isaiah 53 - The Suffering Servant of God

Matthew 18:19-20

Acts 2:37-47

### **Hymns**

Hymn 146 – From all that dwelt below the skies

Hymn 192 – All my hope on God is founded

Hymn 393 (read in silence not sung) We turn to God

Hymn 237 – Look forward in faith

Hymn 180 – Give thanks with a grateful heart

### **Doxology** Hymn 786

May the God of peace go with us, as we travel from this place

May the love of Jesus keep us firm in hope and full of grace.