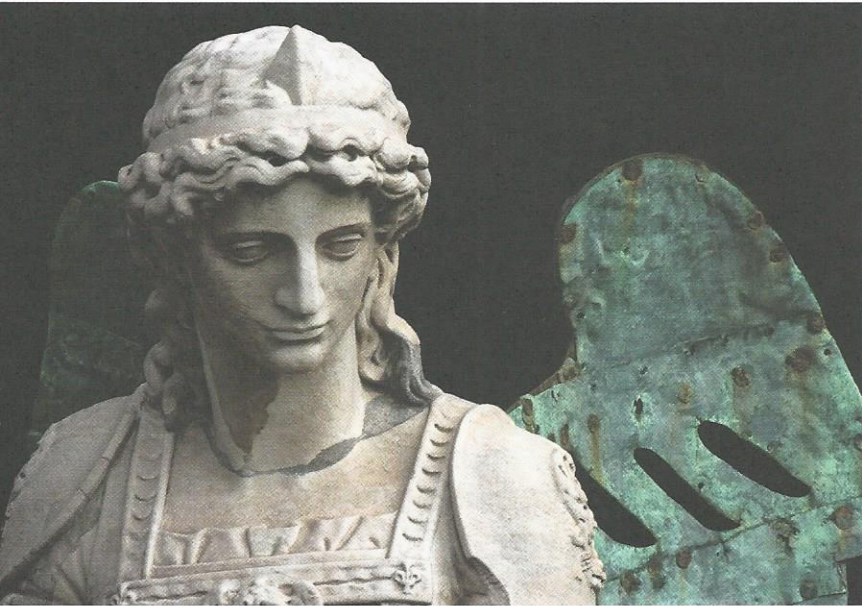


Concluding our series of special issues written by men about men and masculinity

Entertaining angels



Andrew Lyon *reflects on* Genesis 28:10-17; Revelation 12:7-12; Hebrews 1:5-end and John 1:47-end

The image of angels that we see represented on greetings cards and in popular culture are of the plump cherubim and seraphim of Michelangelo, or of a serene, elegant, clad-in-white female with long blonde hair and wings. At the risk of offending the modern, well-adjusted, twenty-first-century man, angels, in the Bible at least, all appear as men. Or I should say male, as they are not human, but another species in God's created order, in which humans were made "a little lower", as it says in Psalm 8.

Today's reading from Revelation gives a very masculine image of an angel. Michael is a warring angel, a fierce and victorious warrior working for God – a real man's angel, you might say.

These angels are sent to protect us and guard us, as we hear in today's reading from Hebrews.

The letter to the Hebrews also says that we might not always recognise angels when we meet them, entertaining angels unawares, as we read in Hebrews 13. Let today's feast of St Michael and All Angels be a reminder to us all that we are not alone, that God actively works within creation to be alongside us, to aid and protect us, and that we no longer need to shoulder the responsibility of that all by ourselves. ☺

Lord God, thank you for the presence of angels – both those we recognise and those we entertain unawares. Sharpen our awareness of your messengers, whatever form they take, and guide our words and deeds, to behave like angels towards others. Amen.

Jerome

Jerome (c. 347-420), translator and teacher of the faith, is commemorated tomorrow. Julian Smith looks at his life and legacy.

Jerome is a towering, influential figure in the life of the Church. He was, variously, a hermit (maintaining a lifelong leaning to the ascetic life), a monk, priest, papal secretary and spiritual director. He also served as spiritual guide to a group of influential Christian women.

Throughout his long life Jerome maintained a wide, often controversial, correspondence, translated theological writings and wrote commentaries; his work was based on rigorous scriptural scholarship. Jerome is best remembered for his widely used translations of the Old and New Testaments, known as the Vulgate. Though fluent in Greek he learned Hebrew to better understand Jewish scripture and its background.

Perhaps Jerome reminds us that if we want to understand what God is saying to us today, we need to understand what those who wrote scripture understood of God's word to them. ☺

Men and masculinity in the Bible

Trevor Dennis concludes his series by considering God.

The Bible always speaks of God as "he", never as "she". Most of the language it uses of God is drawn from the world of men of power. Sometimes "he" is portrayed as utterly ruthless, enabling Joshua and his men to wipe

out the population of Jericho, or as relishing the prospect of throwing the wicked into the fires of hell. There is enough in the Bible to put the fear of God into us.

But then we look again at Jesus in the Gospels, or at the exquisite poem of Hosea (11:1-4): "When Israel was a child, I loved him... I took them up in my arms... I bent down to them and fed them." God is pictured as a mother here, full of tenderness. Such a passage reminds us that God is not male (nor, of course, female), but a mystery beyond the human that calls us all, men and women, to share in a life of love. ☺

“ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.

John 10:14-15

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

Monday – 7pm Session meeting in the kirk hall

Tuesday - 8pm – Choir in the kirk hall

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

Sunday 6th October – 2.30pm St Peter's Service – come along and share the service and the singing

Readings: Luke 4 v 18-21 Isaiah 58 v 1 -14

Hymn 685 For everyone here, a place at the table

Hymn 253 Inspired by love and anger

Hymn 720 There is a longing in my heart

Hymn 251 I the Lord of sea and sky

Hymn: God's spirit is in my heart

God's Spirit is in my heart He has
called me and set me apart.
This is what I have to do, what I have
to do

**He sent me to give the Good News
to the poor
Tell prisoners that they are
prisoners no more
Tell blind people that they can see
And set the down trodden free
And go tell everyone the news that
the
Kingdom of God has come
And go tell everyone
The news That God's Kingdom has
come.**

Just as the Father sent me So I'm
sending you
out to be,
My witnesses throughout the world, the
whole of
the world

Don't carry a load in your pack, You
don't need
two shirts on your back
A workman can earn his own keep,
Can earn his
own keep

Don't worry what you have to say,
Don't worry
because on that day
God's Spirit will speak in your heart
Will speak in
your heart

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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.