

**Against the Odds**  
True stories of forgiveness and healing  
by Carmel Thomson

Eight inspirational stories have been beautifully written with honesty and clarity.

All individuals have been generous in sharing their positive experiences of forgiveness including their struggles along the way.

We are led step by step through the hurt, trauma or pain of damaged lives and how gradually the healing power of forgiveness transformed both their outlook on life and transmitted courage and strength to find success and fulfilment.

In part 1 we hear of Ray who came out of captivity breathing fire and vengeance against the whole Japanese nation and truly believed that it would be impossible to forgive them; Bill whose war injuries left him a wrecked man, blind with no hands and one leg amputated after damage caused by an exploding mine. The injection to help him to end his life was rejected and through ministering angels he turned his life around. A return to the Japanese War Cemetery proved a cathartic moment on his journey to forgive.

Two more stories of terrible tragedy follow and yet forgiveness manages to banish bitterness.

In Part 2 the stories of everyday forgiveness will help us to hold up a mirror and ask: where am I keeping a record of wrongs against those I love or have loved or against myself?

Throughout this captivating book the testimonies are followed by a short reflection which will open up

awareness of thoughts about the life just related.

Each chapter includes a series of questions to help us think about the issues raised.

This makes it a very suitable book for group work and discussion.

I found these prompts invaluable in thinking more widely about the benefits of forgiveness and how it can come about.

The final chapter introduces a personal touch again.

How have we felt when we have taken the step to forgive?

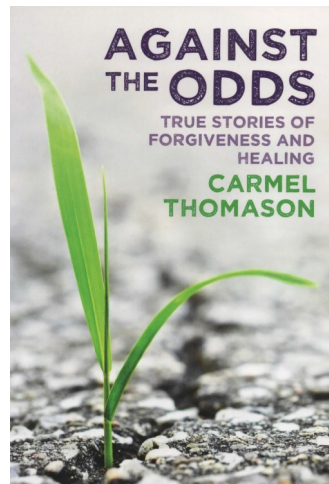
Do we feel pain and guilt as we yearn to forgive?

Forgiveness is central to the teachings of Jesus. Our relationships cannot be wholesome and fulfilling without the ability to forgive.

Wherever we are in our life right now this is an uplifting and practical book which will help us to think about our own experiences.

I highly recommend it and will be more than happy to lend my copy to anyone who is interested to read on.

*Mary Daw*



## St Cross Newsletter October 2023

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### *The Vicar writes...*

Last week as I was leaving the Vicarage early on a Thursday morning for Ministry Team Morning Prayer and was waiting patiently for the traffic to clear on the busy Mobberley Road, I could not help but notice the four young people nearby, waiting for their coach to take them to school. There were two people either side of the entrance to the car park all spaced out and their focus was almost completely on their mobile phones in their hands. They seemed to be completely unaware of what was going on around them and certainly were not keeping an eye out for their bus to arrive. On those rare occasions when I catch a bus, if it happens to be mid route, I'm always alert and ready to flag the driver down.

Likewise, when I go into Manchester from time to time, you can guarantee that many passengers on the train or the tram have their heads down, looking at their phones. There's a sense of complete oblivion of what might be going on outside, in the beautiful countryside or in the life of the city. On one occasion recently I had to step in to help a passenger who was struggling to get to a seat. Hardly anyone else had noticed the problem.

This lack of awareness and increasing resistance of people to refrain from communication made me wonder not just about interactions with people but also in seeking the Creator. If one is more connected to the outside world and the people within it, then somehow, we are coming closer to our Creator as well. But, at a personal level, is it possible that

modern devices of communication can drive an even deeper wedge between us and God?

Jesus, as we know, was a man of prayer and regularly sought solitude away from the crowds in order that he could be not only spiritually replenished but also better equipped to serve God's people and to spend the time he did with large crowds of needy people. He had a supreme awareness of others' needs.

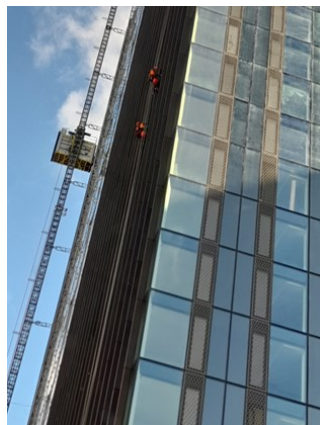
As we enter October, I'm preparing to go away on a four-day silent individually-guided retreat, and I will be visiting somewhere different for the first time: a Jesuit spirituality centre in North Wales. The phone will be left switched off and there will be no access to the outside world. The only communication will be with my guide for those four days as I ponder and pray over a text from the gospels which will be given to me on my arrival. I hope and pray this time will be a time of spiritual renewal for what lies ahead.

For we now enter a very busy time of year for the church, beginning with our Harvest celebration and culminating in Christmas, and there is so much busyness in between. The invitation in all our busyness is to try and carve out time in solitude on a regular basis to seek the living God through prayer and reading the Bible.

Yours, in Christ  
*Paul*

*The 'leaning tower of Manchester' (taken quickly from my camera in a moving tram).*

*I wonder how many people noticed these two cleaners and thought about people like them who contribute to the well-being of others?*



### Occasional Offices in September

**Funeral**  
**September 11th**      **Caroline Worrall**



### Readings for Eucharistic Services

	Morning Services	Evening Service
<b>Sunday 1 October</b> <b>Harvest</b> <b>Trinity 17</b>	Deuteronomy 8.7-18 or Psalm 65 2 Corinthians 9.6-end Luke 12.16-30	Ezekiel 37.15-end 1 John 2.22-end Mark 9.38-end
<b>4 October</b> <b>Wednesday</b> <b>St Francis of Assisi</b>	Micah 6.6-8 Galatians 6.14-en Luke 12.22-34	
<b>Sunday 8 October</b> <b>Trinity 18</b>	Isaiah 5.1-7 Philippians 3.4b-14 Matthew 21.33-end	
<b>11 October</b> <b>Wednesday</b>	Jonah 4 Psalm 86.1-9 Luke 11.1-4	
<b>Sunday 15 October</b> <b>Trinity 19</b>	Isaiah 25.1-9 Philippians 4.1-9 Matthew 22.1-14	
<b>18 October</b> <b>Wednesday</b> <b>Luke, the Evangelist</b>	Isaiah 35.3-6 2 Timothy 4.5-17 Luke 10.1-9	
<b>Sunday 22 October</b> <b>Trinity 20</b>	Isaiah 45.1-7 1 Thessalonians 1.1-10 Matthew 22.15-22	
<b>25 October</b> <b>Wednesday</b>	Psalm 124 Romans 6.12-18 Luke 12.39-48	
<b>Sunday 29 October</b> <b>Last Sunday after</b> <b>Trinity</b> <b>(Bible Sunday)</b>	Leviticus 19.1-2,15-18 1 Thessalonians 2.1-8 Matthew 22.34-end ----- Nehemiah 8.1-4a Colossians 3.12-17 Matthew 24.30-35	

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