

# The house that God is building

St Paul's Cathedral, London



God, who sustains all life, make us living stones. May we bring holiness and righteousness to each aspect of our lives, encompassing them within the house that you are building. Amen.

## English saints and martyrs of the Reformation Era

by Caroline Hodgson

The English saints and martyrs of the Reformation Era are commemorated tomorrow. Among them are Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley, who were burned together at the stake in Oxford in 1555.

Although I can't imagine dying for my faith, I can perhaps understand how someone of greater faith than mine could give up their life in the service of another. But I find it truly impossible to envisage how somebody could have felt so

strongly that their version of Christianity was the truth that they would die for it or, indeed, how anyone on the other side of the argument could put another Christian to death.

It's said that just before they died, Latimer said to Ridley: "We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace... as I trust shall never be put out."

That, for me, is the inspiration I draw from this story. I imagine that every word or deed brings darkness or spreads light, and I aim for the latter. 🌸

Heather Smith *reflects on* 1 Peter 2:2-10

The psychologist Carl Jung did extensive work on symbols and their meanings. Stones of all shapes and sizes are a major component of our planet, and humans throughout the ages have relied on them for tools, constructing houses and in many other ways. So perhaps it's not surprising that Jung found that humans attach great significance to this important commodity. In *Man and His Symbols* he wrote, "Men have collected stones since the beginning of time and have apparently assumed that certain ones were the containers of the spirit of the life-force with all its mystery."

Perhaps stones were and are given such significance in many cultures because they are permanent features which do not decay. They were thought to be ideal for holding the life-force. Peter's references to "living stones" in today's reading are metaphorical, but the idea of Christ as the living cornerstone and Christians as living stones built into a spiritual house resonates with Jung's idea. We are not built to be mud houses that could be washed away, but to be strong and resilient, and to stand the test of time.

All around us, buildings hold the spiritual, the domestic, the world of work, justice, culture and recreation. As living stones, there is much to be built, encompassing all these aspects of human life and drawing them into the spiritual building that God is constructing. And the cornerstone, the strength of the whole building, is Christ. 🌸

## Finding God on the smallholding

by Jeni Parsons

Much activity on smallholding is the same as prayer – "noticing" and "showing up". As a shepherd, a grower, a carer for the health of the soil I need to notice what's happening in fine detail. Is that sheep moving in a way because it's uncomfortable? Is that broad bean plant thriving here, or do I need to plant it elsewhere? Are these molehills a sign of soil health?

Noticing is very important, but then showing up means being willing to be involved here. So praying for people and places you know or have seen on the television is really important – that's the "noticing" bit, but the "showing up" bit is more than prayer, it's aligning yourself and your life towards those whom Jesus cared for – the ones who are bullied, hurt or impoverished by others more powerful.

That's living a Christian life, so go to it! 🌸

“Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ.”

Ephesians 3:8