

# Do we cling to the past or move on with the risen Christ?

LEADER COLUMN

## PETERVANNOZZI



*'Do not cling to me...'*

**W**ho said this? Someone on the tube to whom one stood too close? A person angry with us? Somebody frightened of us, for some reason? Or maybe just irritated by us, finding us too 'clingy.' Possibly, and we may have been in the same position ourselves with another person, for whatever reason.

These words were also said by Jesus to Mary Magdalen. St. John's Gospel tells the lovely story of the encounter between Mary Magdalen and the risen Jesus on the first Easter morning. Mary has come to the tomb early and has found the stone rolled away from the entrance to the tomb.

She runs to tell the news to the disciples and Peter and another disciple come to the tomb. They go in, and find the grave clothes, but not the body of Jesus. They then leave to convey the news to their fellow disciples.

Mary, though, remains at the tomb, weeping. She then, unknowingly, meets the risen Christ. He asks her why she is weeping and for whom she is looking. Mary mistakes Jesus for the gardener, and asks if he knows where the body of Jesus has gone. It is only when Jesus speaks her name that Mary knows that this is not the gardener, but Jesus himself.

What caused the penny to drop? Perhaps a familiar tone. It appears from what follows that Mary tries to grab hold of Jesus for he says 'Do not cling to me...' or 'Do not hold on to me...' Why not? It might not seem unreasonable for her to do this after all that she (and the other disciples) have been through.

This scene is often depicted in paintings of the resurrection of Jesus. One such depiction is that of the great painter and Dominican friar, Fra Angelico. In what was once the busy and powerful convent of San Marco in Florence, we find the friars' cells, each of which has a depiction of some scene in the Bible. In many cases they are exquisitely beautiful. A friar would retire to his cell for contemplation, and the scene on his wall would give him visual stimulation for his prayer.

Take a look at Fra Angelico's painting, reproduced on this page. It shows Mary Magdalen kneeling, her left hand stretched out towards Jesus. She looks as if she could stand

up at anytime and grab him!

Her face seems impassive - it's her body language that speaks. By contrast, Jesus' expression is almost a smile, and his hand is raised as if to avoid Mary's touch. It is no wonder that Mary mistook him for the gardener as he has a garden implement over his left shoulder!

In the picture Jesus is on the move - this is not a picture with static figures looking devout, but rather one of action. There is the attempt to cling to Jesus, but he is walking on.

What is the problem with clinging to Jesus? There is in the expression 'clinging' some hint of desperation. There could be a desire to hold on to what is passing. Mary Magdalen, out of sorrow, may be still stuck in the desperate immediate past of Jesus' arrest, trial and death. She will not let

him get away from her again. Now, though, things have changed. Desperation must give way to joy. Jesus is not present exactly as he was before. He is also moving on. He refers in the passage to ascending to his Father and his God, who is the Father and God, also, of Mary Magdalen.

On 1 May we mark the Feast of the Ascension when Jesus 'moved on' according to St. Luke in both his gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. For all its traditions, the Church is to be a body that 'moves on' and does not cling to what is passing.

It has a Lord who was not static, but in motion. His movement on is one that

people are called to imitate, both in their own lives individually and collectively, also. Where in life might we be stuck, clinging to the past? Perhaps clinging to the wreckage of the past. Or an imagined ideal past that never really existed.

**T**he invitation of the risen Lord is to move on with him and to know something new. The 'new' may be disconcerting, disturbing, disruptive. Yet the Ascension has Jesus returning to the Father in order for something new to happen - the gift of the Holy Spirit, the continuing presence of God in the world, fire and energy.

And on 11 May we mark the Feast of Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit to the first disciples. They move on - on and out of Jerusalem into the world. New things can now happen for the sake of the world.

Let's not, then, be clingy and tie ourselves down, but rather move on with Christ, relishing the unexpected and unpredictable.



## AROUND THE SPIRE

It was good to see so many people in church for the **Easter** services. We thank all those who helped with the spring cleaning, floral decorations, services and Easter garden or in any other way to ensure that everything was perfect for this great festival.

Three **grandchildren** have recently been born to families in our congregation. Liz Butler's first grandchild, **Elodie Aimée**, a daughter for Crispin and Karine Butler, was born on 21 February. James and Mel Robinson had a son, (not a daughter as expected!), **Charlie James**, on Easter Monday, an Easter bunny for sister Ella and a grandson for Coryn and Ian. Paul and Carol Fitchett's second grandchild, **Kayla**, a sister to Joshua, was born to Kelly on 17 February and was immediately faced with a challenge, having been born with Treacher Collins syndrome. She is now stable having successfully undergone her first operation, a tracheotomy to enable a clear airway, and is expected to have a second to improve her lower eyelids before hopefully transferring to Kingston Hospital and then coming home. Kayla faces some 18 years of treatment to give her the best possible future. Please hold Kayla and her family in your prayers.

**Mary Wigginton**, widow of William and mother of Bernard, died on 6 March. She was born in East Molesey in 1913 and, apart from a few years in Ewhurst, Surrey, during the First World War, lived in this area all her life. Her husband was a churchwarden at St. James's in the 50s and 60s and Mary often played the organ, once for five weddings in a day! For many years she accompanied St. James's Ladies Choir on the piano and they sang at her funeral.

Another recent funeral was that of **Florence Bull**, a resident of Laurel Dene, who died at the remarkable age of 106.

We send our congratulations and best wishes to **Suzanne Nunn** and **Daniel O'Connor**, who were married here on 5 April, a very happy family occasion.

## Registers

For February:

**Wedding**

9 Gerald Gary (Jed) Mercurio and Elaine Lesley Cameron

**Funerals**

6 Ronald Batten, 86, Hampton Hill.  
18 Raymond Albert Shard, 82, Hampton Hill.  
19 Michael Christian Butler, 59, Twickenham.

For March:

**Weddings**

28 Adrian James Mawson and Victoria Clare Eldridge.

**Funerals**

4 Terence George Cranston, 67, Hampton.  
6 Florence Ethel Bull, 106, Laurel Dene, Hampton Hill.  
10 Mark Pearce, 24, Hampton Hill.  
17 Bertha Mary Wigginton, 94, Hampton Hill.

**YOURS FAITHFULLY**  
WITH TINA BUNCE

Being asked to appear in this column is certainly a spiritual 'shake-up'. It made me once more examine my faith and the organised religion which accompanies it. Although I have questioned my faith because my various trainings have challenged me to do so, it has never been fundamentally shaken. When my second son died I wasn't berating God and asking why he had allowed such a thing to happen, I washed and ironed his clothes, sewed the buttons on as if preparing him for a journey and found myself asking God to 'please remember he doesn't like Brussels sprouts'. God the Father was now going to look after my son for me.



My faith was always there, internalized from the family influences surrounding me. My grandparents attended the Gospel Hall twice on Sundays, my parents didn't, but very definitely believed. The strongest influence in our village came from the practising non-conformist farming family whose members were large employers of local labour, and my sister and I were taken by them each Sunday to the Gospel Hall in the next village. A large shed filled with noise, warnings of hellfire and rewards of joy from the minister and participation from the congregation. This together with visits to the Bible Weeks held on Margate beach each summer, to Billy Graham meetings and membership of the Band of Hope cemented my early learning. My Anglican influence came from my 'Scripture Teacher' (as she was then known) at school. Religious Knowledge was one of my subjects at O- and A-level, and she took the two of us doing A-level to services at Rochester Cathedral. When I came to live in Central London I tried them all - what an opportunity - finding that the Anglican tradition most satisfied me. I needed the structure and the ritual and found it a great support through my life. That is not to say that I don't challenge; not the fundamental beliefs of Christian faith, but certainly sometimes the manner of their presentation and the tendrils that are allowed to engulf them. Sometimes I wonder if my faith is not too simplistic. I get very angry with the church as an organisational body, but so far haven't found anything better; and I love St James's. I value its people, the support they give and the challenges offered. If I think of going to another church I come up against the hurdle of leaving the family of St James and this I wouldn't want to do. Sometime in the near future I am going to explore Buddhism. I know nothing about it but am finding myself meeting a number of Buddhists and it interests me. As usual - I wonder what will happen!

# The long arm of the church

Part of our mission as church members is outreach, making ourselves known to all sections of the parish. This takes many forms: visiting those unable to get to church through sickness, or non-churchgoers who would like to know more about our activities, visiting for baptism or wedding discussion, visiting the bereaved. Another part of outreach is our parish magazine, which reaches people who may not often attend our services but respect the church and its work. We welcome all people as part of our community, and try to show that welcome. Our website can reach anyone connected to the internet.

**Parish Visitors**

The Visitors' work is two-fold - meeting the families of those who bring children for baptism and dropping in on elderly parishioners and those who are housebound. It is an expression of pastoral care following the example of Christ who said, 'I know my sheep, and they know me.'

The baptismal work involves a visit before the christening. The visitor may well not know the people, so it is an important link between the church and the family. The visitor may explain the service to the family to help them prepare for the day. If they can, the visitor then attends the baptism and welcomes the family. As a follow-up, a card is sent for two years after the baptism, around the time of the anniversary.

Also, each year there is a 'baptismal tea party' when the families of those baptised are invited back to St. James's for a social occasion to maintain a link with the church. The second aspect of the Visitors' work, visiting the elderly or housebound, is perhaps not so much reaching out as maintaining links. Not all of those visited regularly are housebound, but for those who are a visit can be the continuing expression of the Church's concern and care for that person. They are still part of the church



**BEHIND THE SCENES**

## CHURCHATWORK

**PART SIX: REACHING OUT**



Read all about it: The Spire delivery service!



community even if they can physically no longer attend. (People also have the option of receiving holy communion at home regularly, if they would like it.) Twice a year a tea party is held for those being visited so that again the continuing link with the Church is maintained. An opportunity for reaching out could come in the future as the Visitors have agreed that there could be people who live in the parish, but who do not regard themselves as church members, who nonetheless may value a visit and have come into contact with St. James's through the Vicar.

**The Spire**

The magazine is produced and distributed by a group of parishioners who believe that good communication is essential to the understanding and propagation of the Christian faith. Besides the magazine's necessary factual content - who to contact for particular needs and how to find them - there are features which we hope are helpful or at least interesting to as wide an audience as possible. The vicar addresses us in each issue with his reflection on matters of Christian concern. The Young Spire page may be instructive to people well beyond youth. Members of our community write of their personal beliefs and interests. Also covered are charities, both at home and abroad, as well as matters of community concern. Activities which help our local or distant communities also feature.

Each issue, 580 copies are delivered by Sue and Michael Horner to 19 distributors all around the parish and beyond. They also send out 40 copies each time by post to a wide variety of people - past clergy, former parishioners, local

churches, the Bishop of Kensington and Archdeacon of Middlesex, as well as the local newspapers, schools and hospitals. We know that there are many readers of the magazine, churchgoers or not, who have things to write which we would be helpful and interesting to others. Some have already contributed for us; we hope that future issues will contain many more articles of this type from a wide range of readers.

**Website**

The website is the latest tool in our armoury with nearly 10,000 visits a month. The Home Page is constantly updated with what is happening, with links to forthcoming events and notices. The Spire magazine and Pew Sheet are also available online. The online Calendar/Diary provides dates and times of all the services, as well as events in the church and hall. This feature is also increasingly popular with people wanting to hire the hall for events, such as birthday or anniversary parties.

There are informative and illustrated sections on Church & Grounds, Groups, Music, Past Events, Running the Church, St James's History, St James's Images, The Spire Magazine, Witness/Mission, Worship/Services and the recently updated Young St James's. The website is also an integral part of our church's outreach to the local community and beyond. More and more people are looking at the website to find out about baptisms, confirmations, marriages and funerals as well as graves in the churchyard.

The church website is a most effective way to let people know we exist. Many people never enter a church building, other than for weddings and funerals, so the website can be a powerful tool by explaining what goes on inside the church and providing an invitation to prospective members to come and enjoy our fellowship. If people are unsure of what to expect in a church, they can browse through the site anonymously to see if our church will fulfil their needs.

Descriptions and photos of services and events go a long way towards making a person feel secure enough to take the next step and make a first-time visit.

## Thank you for your help and friendship as churchwarden

By Liz Wilmot



Liz Butler stood down as churchwarden at the APCM after five successful years in the position. I did not know Liz well before becoming a warden myself but I was a member of the PCC and I saw how much she put into the role, especially during the interregnum when few of us could guess how much work and effort was involved for her and Rodney. She has been a tremendous strength to me on taking over as churchwarden from Rodney last April, and a great support for Peter in his first year at St James's,

easing us both into our respective roles despite it being a year filled with more family health problems than any one of us would want to face. Liz became a grandmother for the first time earlier this year, with a second grandchild due in the summer. I want to say a big thank you for the help and friendship she has offered me over the past year and to wish her a very well deserved rest from her church duties and the happiest of times ahead with her rapidly expanding family!  
**Full details of the new PCC and churchwarden next month.**

# A small gathering, God's gift, and the Church was born

Nine days after the Ascension of Jesus, and 49 days after his crucifixion, the Jews were doing what they always did at this time of year, preparing for the Feast of Ingathering, or Harvest. It was held 50 days after the Passover, and with it, life in Israel looked set to return to normal, with Jesus well on the way to becoming just a memory. So no one paid any attention to a small group of Jesus' disciples who had gathered in a house in Jerusalem. There were only about 120 of them, and they were quiet and kept to themselves. The Jews, if they thought about it at all, would have assumed they were still grieving their lost leader. But the disciples, far from grieving Jesus' death, were eagerly awaiting for him to send them a present - though they did not understand exactly what it might be.

All they knew was that Jesus was alive, and that before he had ascended to heaven, he had told them to go to Jerusalem and wait there together for 'the gift my father has promised' (Acts 1:4). These disciples, though they did not know it then, were already acting as the future church, the ecclesia, which literally means 'called-out ones'. As with them, so with us today: even though each conversion is intensely personal, we are not converted to be alone in our faith, but to a life in the fellowship of the Church. Jesus was ordained that his followers together be his family on earth, his witness to the world. But it has never been a family built on likeness. The believers in the house that day came from very different backgrounds - from right-wing conservatives (Matthew) to radical

left-wing zealots (Simon). There were some straight-forward fishermen and even women, for good measure. From the day of its birth, Jesus' family would include all kinds of people who would find their unity in him. The first thing the disciples did was to get down to the business of praying. They did not try to unite themselves by long discussions with each other. It was the 'joining together constantly in prayer' (verse 14) that brought them together. The 19th century London pastor FB Meyer expressed well what awaited those disciples. 'The task that awaited that little group was one of unparalleled difficulty. They were to disciple all nations, speaking different languages, scattered over the vast Roman Empire, which extended from the Atlantic to the Far East. They were to substitute Christianity for

paganism, as the foundation of a new type of civilization. In fact, humanly speaking and without exaggeration, it depended on that tiny group of unknown and ordinary men and women, whether the Incarnation and Death, the Resurrection and Ascension, of the Son of God would obtain the audience and acceptance of mankind.' Today the Church faces the same challenge of making Christ known. We can do 'business as usual' in our strength and by our resources. But great manifestations of God's saving, healing and restoring power come only as God's people 'stay for the Spirit' and 'wait for the gift' as Jesus commanded (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4). Each of us would do well to 'ask, seek and knock' for God's fullness day by day, if we are to enjoy his full anointing of power on our lives

and ministry. It was out of the context of prayer that this incipient church in Jerusalem was preparing for the coming of the Holy Spirit. For God's fullness in our lives and awakening in our church today we must believe that he is able and willing to fulfil his highest purpose for us. He wants to give us his 'good gifts,' namely, his Holy Spirit. That day in Jerusalem, when the Holy Spirit arrived in all his fullness, Peter stood up and preached the first ever Christian sermon to the astonished Jews in the city. So - the Jesus their rulers had crucified at Passover was not dead after all. That Jesus was the Messiah, and he was alive. Some 3,000 were converted that same day. In the power of the Spirit, the Church was born - and growing fast!

# YOUNG SPIRE

WITH PRILL HINCKLEY



## ASCENSION DAY AND PENTECOST



### Ascension Day

Ascension Day marks the day when Jesus Christ ascended into \_\_\_\_\_. It was forty days after his \_\_\_\_\_ from the dead on Easter \_\_\_\_\_. During the forty days which followed the first Easter, Jesus kept appearing to his followers and Ascension Day marks the last appearance of Jesus to the disciples. He told them that he would always be with them, and promised them the gift of the \_\_\_\_\_ (at Pentecost).

Ten days after Ascension Day is \_\_\_\_\_, which marks the coming of the Holy Spirit to the \_\_\_\_\_.

The name 'ascension' comes from the accounts in the \_\_\_\_\_ in Mark's Gospel and Luke's Gospel that tell of Jesus being taken up into heaven - he ascended. The disciples watched Jesus rise up in the cloud into heaven.



### Pentecost

Pentecost is a major festival in the Christian church. Christians celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit which is the \_\_\_\_\_ person of the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Pentecost is also known as \_\_\_\_\_. The church colour for Pentecost is \_\_\_\_\_. The frontal on the altar, the altar cloths, the pulpit fall and the Bible book mark are changed to match the colour of the priest's robes. Whitsuntide is the week following Whitsunday, which is always the seventh Sunday after Easter Sunday, the fiftieth day after the Easter festival. The name Pentecost comes from a Greek word which means \_\_\_\_\_.

Pentecost remembers the story of the Holy Spirit being given to Jesus's disciples so that they could spread the message of \_\_\_\_\_. The story is that, during the Jewish festival of Pentecost, a \_\_\_\_\_ blew through the house where the disciples were and \_\_\_\_\_ rested on their heads. When the disciples spoke, people of all nationalities could understand them.

The dove is a symbol representing the Holy Spirit. Where, in St James's Church, can you find the following dove images?



Pentecost is recognised as the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Christian church, and the start of the church's mission to the world. The Apostle \_\_\_\_\_ preached a sermon which resulted in 3,000 people becoming believers. Whit Sunday is a favourite day for \_\_\_\_\_. It is thought that because people are often baptised dressed in \_\_\_\_\_, Whit Sunday was probably originally known as 'White Sunday'.

- Fill the gaps with these words: Bible, disciples, birthday, Whit Sunday, flames, baptism, Holy Spirit, Sunday, white, Heaven, Peter, wind, fiftieth, resurrection, Christianity, third, red, Pentecost. You can check the answers on the Young St. James's section of our website.
- Colour in the pictures.

# CHARITIES AND LINKS

WITH ANN PETERKEN



## News in brief

### Journey to Justice

[www.journeytojustice.org](http://www.journeytojustice.org)



Ten years on from the life-changing human chain in Birmingham, Jubilee Debt Campaign is inviting campaigners back to Birmingham on **Sunday 18 May** - to celebrate what the debt campaign has achieved so far and demand that politicians finish the job.

Do please sign one of the postcards at the back of the church and place it in the box provided - and let me know if you would like any information about the current debt situation.

The 1998 human chain changed the lives of all who were there and changed the lives of countless people across the developing world.

### London Lent Appeal

Lent Appeal donations have raised £1,764 (including Gift Aid reclaim). Many thanks to all who gave. News on the sum raised across the diocese will follow.

### Green Tips for a better world

#### Fill it up

When using the washing machine or dishwasher, make sure you always have a full load and wash at the lowest temperature possible.

#### Drive sensibly

When driving your car, reduce pollution by reducing your speed. Driving at 70mph uses 30% more fuel than driving at 40-55mph. Incorrect tyre pressure increases consumption too.

## Christian Aid Week

Sunday 11 - Saturday 17 May

**together we can achieve amazing things**



Rekha Biswas from Bangladesh provides the most humbling and inspirational example for Christian Aid Week.

This courageous lady goes from house to house, talking to families about the problems they face getting water. And vitally, she challenges gender roles. She encourages women to come to meetings of the village pani parishad - the water council.

Getting clean water is a problem throughout Bangladesh. In the northeast, water scarcity and lack of infrastructure create difficulties for the many landless communities living there. In the central low-lying wetlands, the land is flooded for more than half the year and underground water sources can be contaminated with arsenic. In the southwest, the rise in sea levels, partly as a result of climate change, is making fresh water salty.

And when water's not on tap, it's women and children who suffer the most - they spend hours carrying heavy pots of water to their families. Rekha has voiced this injustice and given hope to the whole village. She believes it is through communities - and especially women - finding their voices that change can be instigated.

Christian Aid partner *The Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies* has set up pani parishads in villages throughout Bangladesh, which discuss and agree the best water supply solutions for their particular villages. These community organisations also provide a forum for addressing other issues, such as schools and roads, and the pani parishads encourage women to take an active role. Each council must have more than 50 per cent female membership and the president must be female.

Rekha tells people that if they come together, they can achieve things that they couldn't alone.

By giving up a couple of hours during Christian Aid Week, you are collecting so much more than money. Your gifts can mean water, rights and courage. By coming together, we can achieve amazing things.

£50 would pay for the monthly salary of a community pani parishad coordinator. Your gifts can help to give voice to a whole community.

■ **Help make 2008 a success - see Events listing on Page Eight.**  
[www.caweek.org](http://www.caweek.org)

## A new home for your old tools

From sewing machines to spanners, even bicycles are wanted by charity

Janet Nunn's friend at Whitton Baptist Church is a very enthusiastic collector of tools for the charity Tools With A Mission and he has inspired her to try to collect some.

The charity enables people to earn a living and to support themselves. In many countries of the world people have few skills, little education and no means of earning a living. A switch from aid dependency to self-sufficiency is impossible without help.

Tools with a Mission started officially 23 years ago and has since then given this help by collecting and refurbishing tools and equipment and sending it overseas. Last year they sent

out 3,300 sewing machines to developing countries. Archbishop John Sentamu has become their first patron.

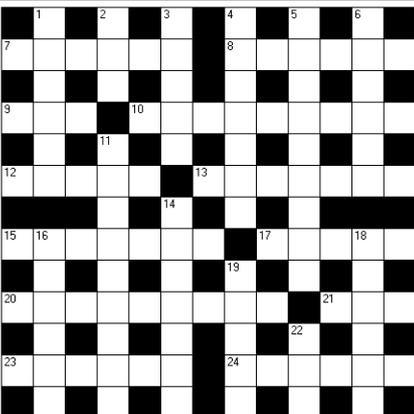
Janet's list of acceptable tools covers any tools in your garden shed or garage, including men's bicycles. They are particularly interested in sewing machines (either manual or electric) as they make up teaching aids to go with the machines (material, cottons, buttons, needles) so that people can be taught how to use the machines and then pass on their skills to others.

So when you are spring-cleaning this year perhaps you would consider donating any unwanted tools to this worthwhile charity.



Janet will act as a collection point for all the tools - just ring her on 020 8979 6325 to arrange collection or for more details.

■ [www.twam.co.uk](http://www.twam.co.uk)



## Crossword No 2008005

### Across

- 7 Fortifies building (6)
- 8 Moaning livestock in Joel ch. 1 (6)
- 9 Abijah's successor as king of Judah in 1 Kings ch. 15 (3)
- 10 Seventh Sunday after Easter (9)
- 12 Writer of 2 NT epistles (5)
- 13 .. their duties for seven-day \_\_\_\_ (1 Chr 9.25) (7)
- 15 Water shortage mentioned in Jeremiah ch. 2 (7)
- 17 Once more (5)
- 20 Badgering (9)
- 21 Strange (3)
- 23 Show (6)
- 24 Who \_\_\_\_ his ropes? (Job 39.5) (6)

### Down

- 1 Member of an Indian Zoroastrian sect (6)
- 2 Pig's home (3)
- 3 Precious stone on a necklace in Song ch. 4 (5)
- 4 ..strip off its leaves and \_\_\_\_ its fruit (Dan 4.14) (7)
- 5 Hosiery (9)
- 6 Shut, like certain ears in Jeremiah ch. 6 (6)
- 11 City besieged by Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel ch. 1 (9)
- 14 Thorny Lebanese plant in 2 Kings ch. 14 (7)
- 16 Person with a sickle in Jeremiah ch. 50 (6)
- 18 Certainly (6)
- 19 Proverbs ch. 11 compares a beautiful woman who shows no discretion to a gold ring in this part of a pig (5)
- 22 ..and he \_\_\_\_ locusts (Mark 1.6) (3)

### Answers to March/April Crossword (200803):

#### Across

- 7 Larger 8 Bishop 10 Capital
- 11 Naomi 12 Eden 13 Cross
- 17 Obeys 18 Pale 22 Tread
- 23 Antioch 24 Nation
- 25 Holier;

#### Down

- 1 Blacken 2 Dropped 3 Death
- 4 Lioness 5 Shoot 6 Spain
- 9 Clergyman 14 Abaddon
- 15 Canonic 16 Tethers
- 19 Stand 20 Deity 21 Stool.