

InTouch

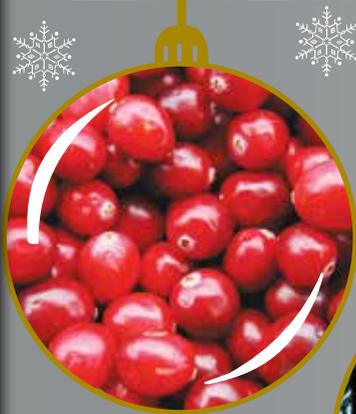
ISSUE 4 2012
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In Touch is the parish magazine of the parish of St Thomas of Canterbury, Woodford Green, Essex (Served by the Order of Friars Minor). The parish includes Chigwell Convent Mass Centre & a Mass Centre at St James, Palmerston Road, Buckhurst Hill.

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PRINTED BY

Promoworx Ltd
28 High Road,
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London, E18 2QL
020 8530 1500
www.promoworx.co.uk

This is issue 75 of In Touch
First published July 1992

In Touch

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



Writing on the 1st day of December, the last day of the Church's year, I steal myself from a tendency to prophesy. It is difficult not to sound prophetic having regard to the events of 2012 in the UK, in the Church and in the wider Universe. It is the eclectic nature of the contents of this issue that have drawn me to muse on the changing face of the Church, of society and indeed of mankind in an ever-shrinking world.

I doubt if anybody can honestly say there is not something for everyone in this issue and indeed I hope that could be said of all issues. The highbrow scientific articles of the past issues have been both derided and praised; they can be read by those who wish to read them or ignored. The letters' page again covers a wide range of comment about this magazine as well as about the Church and society at large.

October 11th marked fifty years since the opening of the Second Vatican Council, a Council that brought the church, eventually I might say, screaming and kicking into a new way of seeing all of mankind as the treasured possession of God and accepting, excuse the over-simplification of *Nostra Aetate*, that Heaven is not populated solely by Catholics. Mind you, this grudgingly accepted doctrine was somewhat watered down by the then Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in August 2000, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, in the declaration *Dominus Iesus* which seemed to suggest, once again excuse the over-simplification, that only the

Catholic Church was the true way; 'it must be firmly believed that "the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation: the one Christ is the mediator and the way of salvation'. Well, at least that is how the other churches and other faiths read it!

But perhaps all was forgiven when the same Cardinal, now as Pope Benedict XVI, in the first encyclical of his pontificate in 2005, surely the most beautiful encyclical ever, expresses a God of Love that extends equally to all mankind.

So it is that we see at last an ever increasing tendency toward living interfaith, as opposed to Interfaith Dialogue; a term I have chosen to avoid since it has been reduced to merely drinking tea with those of 'other' faiths, in the witness of such as His Beatitude Gregorios III see right.

And if the Holy Family Sisters can be regarded as witnessing to the Church's changing stance on the role of humanity in the Universe, Kathy Howes' report of their General Assembly of Lay Associates on page 28 is something of a revelation for in it we hear the voice of the Vedic/Hindu traditions that pre-date Christianity, 'When we look at Cosmology related to God we see that all are interrelated, God, Earth, creatures, everything...all evolving and changing. A new way of seeing all as interconnected, interrelated and interdependent.' The Sanskrit word for this expression of oneness is *Pratityasamutpada*, straight from Buddhist sacred writ.

So I wonder, what will the Bishop's Advent letter have to say tomorrow, the first Sunday of Advent, and what about 21st December, the last day of the Mayan 5000 year calendar and the day for the publication of Osman Özters first book? Will either demote Church, Religions and indeed Mankind from their egotistic conviction that the Universe revolves around them?

LEON MENZIES RACIONZER

Patriarch Gregory III Laham of Antioch

The Melkite Church, leaven to all faiths and cultures

by Leon Menzies Racionzer

His Beatitude Gregorios III, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, of Alexandria and of Jerusalem, having just left the first assembly of European Melkites which was held from 1st to 3rd November 2012 in Saint Stephen's convent at Aubazine in Corrèze (France), on the 6th November gave a talk at Heythrop College, University of London, titled 'The Melkite Church: living with and for others: dialogue of civilizations, dialogue of life.'

Gregorios III, Patriarch of the largest Christian community in Israel and all the Middle East, whose title was not conferred by Rome but by the Sultan, unlike the Patriarchs of other Eastern Rite Oriental churches who have fled to the West with hundreds of thousands of their flock, is based and is determined to remain in Damascus, Syria, the birthplace of Christianity according to Bashar Hafez al-Assad the besieged Syrian president who said as much to the Patriarch.

Of the 265 recognised Popes, no fewer than 9 were Arab from Syria. Indeed, the Patriarch explained the considerable debt owed to the Church of the Arabs who translated Arabic to Greek and taught Greek culture in Spain. The Patriarch remains in Syria, a very visible and active ecumenical presence in Damascus in spite of the current difficulties that Christians and other minorities are facing there. He is the leader of the world-wide Melkite Church estimated to have 1.6 million worshippers which in the Middle East is mainly concentrated in Lebanon

and Syria, although large communities live outside of the Middle East region, particularly in Europe, the United States and Canada, and also significant communities in Argentina and Brazil. Gregory III was elected patriarch on November 29, 2000, and might be considered one of the most important Christian leaders in Syria, the Middle East and in the Catholic Church. He jokingly told of how on his election he banned all emigration of Christians from the Middle East but was aware that such a ban was futile. However a ban that has not been futile and effective is his ban against Christians bearing arms. If the Christians were to bear arms it would be the end of Christianity in the region.

He gave an account of the Melkite Catholic Church, of its Byzantine roots and liturgical practices rooted in those of Eastern Orthodoxy and explained his own identity as Arab but not Muslim, Catholic but not Latin i.e. Roman, and Oriental but not Orthodox and in full communion with Rome in obedience to the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI, at least since the Melkites split with the Greek Orthodox Church of Antioch in 1729. According to Church tradition, the Melkite Church of Antioch is the "oldest continuous Christian community in the world". The traditional

languages of worship are Arabic or Greek, but today, as in the West, services are held in the vernacular of the country where the Church is located.

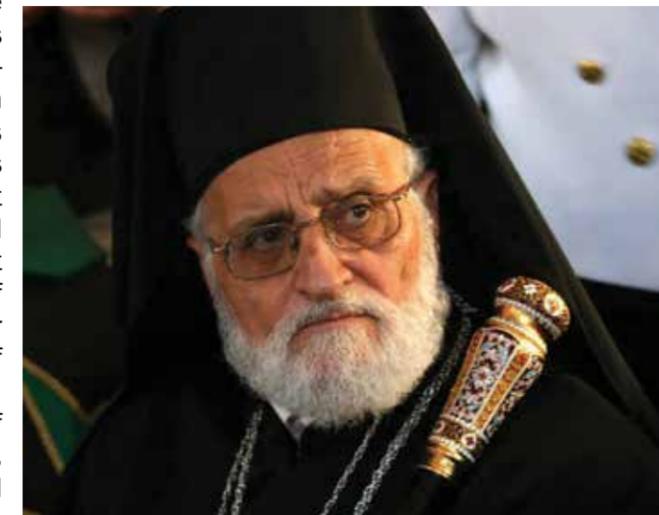
Gregorios III spoke of a different ecumenism than that which we are accustomed to hearing. There is no doubt that the problems in Syria and the whole of the Levant have

but one of giving, for Christianity is the leaven that can unite the Islamic world. The Melkite Church, without borders, (although minute in terms of numbers, of the 360million Arabs only 16 million are Christian), must remain present in the region to give testimony by living with and for those who are not Christian. Christians celebrating the Islamic feasts with Muslims and Muslims celebrating the Christian feast with Christians is a dialogue of living that does not require the less effective verbal dialogue that can lead to discord.

This dialogue of life is being lived out now in the recently opened three faiths centre, 'Encounter', in Lebanon that the Patriarch has been instrumental in setting up. The centre has been fully funded by the Sultan of Oman in which celebra-

tions, meetings and conferences by and between the three Abrahamic faiths are taking place and the Patriarch hopes will continue to take place and to prosper.

The role of the Melkite Church can perhaps be best summed up in the words of the Patriarch at the close of the Aubazine gathering "Fear not." The little flock must not be afraid... It is salt, light and leaven. That is its mission, its great mission, for the big flock, wherever it may be. In the East for Islam; in the West for a totally secularised society that has lost its values. Wherever God has placed it, it is in communion and witness of faith in Jesus Christ, in order to walk along a road of faith with everyone.



Beatitude Gregorios III, Patriarch of Antioch

Christians celebrating the Islamic feasts with Muslims and Muslims celebrating the Christian feast with Christians

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A sticky situation

By Ann Farmer

Most of us are familiar with sticky tape; indeed, too familiar - I have had a small sliver of it stuck to my finger since last Christmas. That is the problem with sticky tape; but also, it has to be admitted, its most useful feature. Un-sticky sticky tape is about as useful as salt that has lost its saltiness, and we know what happens to that.

My sense of grievance may be rightly criticized as the equivalent of complaining about the hotness of fire - but let's stick (pun intended, and more to come) with the problem of sticky tape. Roughly stated, you believe you have found a foolproof method of wrapping presents, especially when confounded by the mysteries of string; but just as the string has you tied up in knots, the sticky tape refuses to stick to the parcel and instead prefers to stick to you. The fingers intended to do the sticking end up being stuck; the present you intended to wrap remains unwrapped, while you end up wrapped in sticky tape. The faithful servant becomes a malicious master, and even when - if - you detach it from your fingers and it becomes attached to the wrapping paper, it is always crooked, and always in the wrong place.

But that is not the worst of it: you think that if you act swiftly you will be able to detach it without damaging your expensive wrapping paper. You are swiftly proved wrong. You discard the paper; sticky tape still attached, and start over again. As midnight approaches, you suspect a sinister plot on the part of sticky tape manufacturers to increase sales. As 1.00am approaches, you suspect an even more sinister sticky tape/wrapping paper manufacturer plot

to increase sales. At 2am you start to hallucinate that if you run out of paper, at least you will be able to wrap the presents solely in sticky tape. Three rolls of sticky tape later - and with no paper - you start looking for a ball of string, desperately calculating the exact length required to cover a present. For future reference, it's as long as a piece of string.

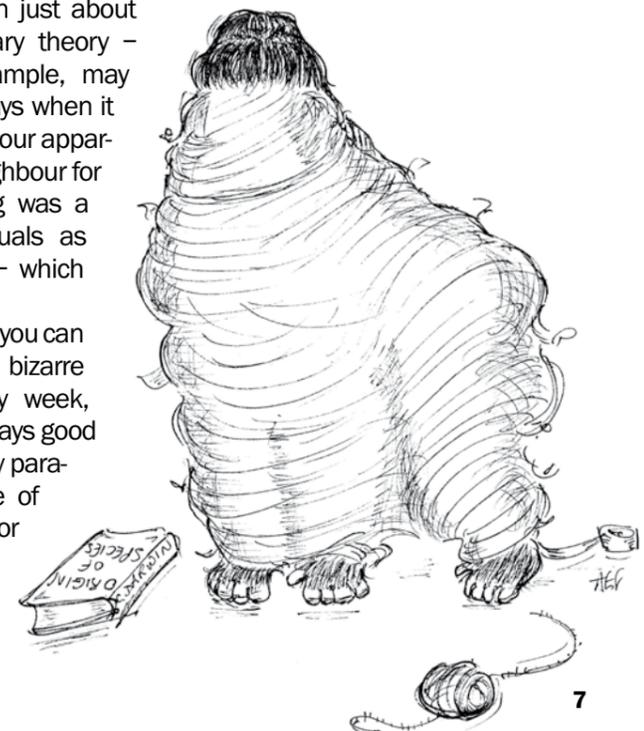
At this point, you may be suffering from what is known among scientists as STR - sticky tape rage; although psychologists may diagnose you as suffering from a childhood attachment disorder. However, the evolutionary theorist would interpret your rage as an evolutionary left-over from more primitive times, a remnant of the Stone Age; a primitive reflex action imprinted on the genes; the race memory of the stickiness of your adversary's blood, famously recalled by Lady MacBeth's somnambulatory attempts at washing her hands after poor Duncan's sudden enforced exit; in short, evolutionary frustration at not being in control.

Admittedly there is no such thing as being in control of sticky tape - rather, the sticky tape is in control of you. But you can explain just about anything with evolutionary theory - shaking hands, for example, may be a leftover from the days when it was necessary to check your apparently mild-mannered neighbour for concealed clubs; kissing was a way of marking individuals as trustworthy, with saliva - which explains the French.

OK, I made that up, but you can read something equally bizarre in the newspaper every week, usually on a Monday. Always good for filling that small empty paragraph, even if incapable of proof they are useful for breaking the ice at parties. But when it comes to all-too-frequent studies that purport to show

Admittedly there is no such thing as being in control of sticky tape - rather, the sticky tape is in control of you

adultery as the leftover of primitive gene spreading, amusement evolves into irritation. This sort of evolutionary theory begins by explaining human behaviour and ends by justifying it, attracting the sort of readers who have no interest in history, let alone pre-history, but who merely want to justify their shortcomings. Recently, a prominent individual excused his taking too close and personal an interest



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in a colleague after an alcohol-fuelled celebration by commenting 'We are a clever ape' – not only insulting to teetotal apes, but to apes that are too clever to allow photographers catching them not being clever. If we aped apes it might be an improvement; being human, we look for justification, if not before the Lord, then before science and our own ill-formed conscience; also being human, we must have a standard - however low - to stick to.

Well, the evolutionist has found a low standard, and has raised it high - and is sticking to it. It is the evolutionary theory of everything, but like sticky tape it is a bad master: you think you have it taped, but the tape has you taped; the theory will control the theorist, rather than the other way round. Having explained one aberration as natural and value-free, he is forced to explain away innumerable unnatural negative consequences. Moreover, not content simply with 'explaining' vice, evolutionists are keen to explain away virtue: altruism is an enduring puzzle to those convinced that it can have served no purpose in Man's evolution – think Richard Dawkins' 'selfish gene'.

But perhaps in seeking evolutionary 'explanations' for immorality, morally speaking we haven't evolved very much at all: history – if not pre-history – shows that people have always sought to escape from sticky situations - conscience, commitment, compassion – but that they fail dismally to extricate themselves, simply becoming more firmly enmeshed. As with sticky tape, we refuse to admit defeat, insisting that we are simply sticking to our principles. In the Greek myth, Arachne is turned into a spider after offending the goddess Athena by boasting of her superior spinning powers; she ends up catching insects in her web, and there is no shortage of victims. Likewise, evolutionary theory attracts a growing number of adherents - like sticky tape, but (sadly) unlike my Theory of Sticky Tape. But that's still evolving.

Lenten Lunches

By Sheelah Hunter and Diana Turpin



Raising funds for Mary's Meals

ing floods have added to their problems.

Mary's Meals is the brainchild of a UK businessman, Tony Smith, and owes its name to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Smith was influenced by the world food programme and its co-founder Senator James McGovern. When the businessman met Magnus Macfarlane-Barrow, Director of Scottish International Relief, a charity distributing millions of pounds worth of aid in many poor countries, the two men recognised the similarities of their aims, and Mary's Meals came into being. It now feeds 650,000 children every school day in sixteen countries. In Haiti, it provides daily meals in the largest and poorest slum, Cite Soleil, and in the Gonaives and Hinche region. For some children this is the only meal that they will have during the day.

During Lent 2013 we intend once again to support Mary's Meals and their work in Haiti. The lunches begin at 12:30 pm on the 19th of February and our wonderfully inventive team of soupmakers from the Woodford Churches is ready to provide a tasty treat for one and all. The meals consist of soup, home-made of course, and some French bread and costs £2:50 per head. Do please make a note of the date and come along, we would be delighted to see you and you can help us raise even more money to support Mary's Meals in Haiti.



You probably remember reading about Martha Payne, the nine-year old Scottish schoolgirl whose blog about school dinners, Neverseconds, raised £100,000 for Mary's Meals. What you may not know is that, for the past two years, the parishioners of St Thomas of Canterbury, together with those from the local churches, have also been supporting this small but dynamic charity. Lenten lunches held at the Becket Centre over the last three years on the six Tuesdays of Lent, have raised almost £2,000. All that money has gone to help the people of Haiti; in the first year with donations to the earthquake relief fund, and then, for the last two years, directly to Mary's Meals.

On 12th January 2012, a massive earthquake, magnitude 7.0, struck Haiti, killing an estimated 200,000 people. Over 188,383 houses were badly damaged and 105,000 were destroyed by the earthquake, leaving 1.5 million homeless. Haiti was already the poorest nation in the Americas and Mary's Meals worked there before the disaster. Nearly three years later, many people are still living in slum conditions, and this autumn's Hurricane Sandy and the accompany-



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Cranberries not just for Christmas!

A glossy, scarlet red, very tart berry, the cranberry belongs to the same genus as the blueberry,

Vaccinium. (Both berries also belong to the food family called Ericaceae, also known as the heath or heather family.) Like blueberries, cranberries can still be found growing as wild shrubs in northern Europe, northern Asia, and North America. When cultivated, however, cranberries are grown on low trailing vines on top of great sandy bogs.

Cranberries have also been called “bounceberries,” because ripe ones bounce, and “craneberries,” a poetic allusion to the fact that their pale pink blossoms look a bit like the heads of the cranes that frequent cranberry bogs. The variety cultivated commercially in the northern United States and southern Canada, the American cranberry, produces a larger berry than either the Southern cranberry, a wild species that is native to the mountains of the eastern United States, or the European variety.

Cranberries have long been valued for their ability to help prevent and treat urinary tract infections. Now, recent studies suggest that this Native American berry may also promote gastrointestinal and oral health, lower LDL and raise HDL (good) cholesterol, aid in recovery from stroke, and even help prevent cancer.

Fresh cranberries, which contain the highest levels of beneficial nutrients, are at their peak from October through December, just in time to add their festive hue, tart tangy flavour and numerous health protective effects to your holiday meals. When cranberries' short fresh season is

past, rely on unsweetened cranberry juice made from whole berries and dried or frozen cranberries.

History

American Indians enjoyed cranberries cooked and sweetened with honey or maple syrup—a cranberry sauce recipe that was likely a treat at early New England Thanksgiving feasts.

By the beginning of the 18th century, the tart red berries were already being exported to England by the colonists. Cranberries were also used by the Indians decoratively, as a source of red dye, and medicinally, as a poultice for wounds since not only do their astringent tannins contract tissues and help stop bleeding, but we now also know that compounds in cranberries have antibiotic effects.

Although several species of cranberries grow wild in Europe and Asia and have always been enjoyed in these parts of the world, the cranberry most cultivated as a commercial crop is an American native, which owes its success to one Henry Hall, an observant gentleman in Dennis, Massachusetts. In 1840, Mr. Hall noticed an abundance of large berries grew when sand was swept into his bog by the prevailing winds and tides. The sandy bog provided just the right growing conditions for the cranberries by stifling the growth of shallow-rooted weeds, thus enhancing that of the deep rooted cranberries.

Buying & Storing

Choose fresh, plump cranberries, deep red in colour, and quite firm to the touch.

Firmness is a primary indicator of quality. In fact, during harvesting, high quality cranberries are often sorted from lesser quality fruits by bouncing the berries against bar-

riers made of slanted boards. The best berries bounce over the barriers, while the inferior ones collect in the reject pile.

The deeper red their colour, the more highly concentrated are cranberries' beneficial compounds.

Fresh ripe cranberries can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks. Before storing, discard any soft, discoloured, pitted or shrivelled fruits. When removed from the refrigerator, cranberries may look damp, but such moistness does not indicate spoilage, unless the berries are discoloured or feel sticky, leathery or tough. One of the remarkable properties of fresh cranberries is their ability to keep for months on end in a cool place. This is because they contain large amounts of benzoic acid, which is a natural preservative.

Once frozen, cranberries may be kept for several years. To freeze, spread fresh cranberries out on a baking sheet and place in the freezer. In a couple of hours, the fully frozen berries will be ready to transfer to a freezer bag. Don't forget to date the bag before returning to the freezer.

Once thawed, frozen berries will be quite soft and should be used immediately.

Dried cranberries are sold in many groceries and may be found with other dried fruits.

Preparation

Cranberries are simmered in sauces, mixed into bread- or meat-based stuffing for turkey, added to muffins and baked in fruit tarts and pies. Their astringent taste also makes them a good addition to naturally sweet puddings: orange or lemon zest bring out the floral notes of the fruit, while vanilla and cinnamon enhance their sweetness.

Christmas chocolate and cranberry sponge pudding with orange cream

For the sponge pudding

- 100g butter
- 100g sugar
- 2 free-range eggs
- 85g self raising flour
- 25g cocoa powder
- splash of milk

2 oranges – juice of one, the other in thin slices

2 tbsp cranberries – fresh or frozen

2 tbsp sugar

For the orange cream

1 orange, zest only

2 tbsp double cream

2 tbsp yoghurt

1 tbsp caster sugar

1 Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/ Gas 4.

2 For the sponge, cream the butter and sugar and beat until pale and fluffy. Add the egg and continue to beat until well combined. Add the flour, cocoa powder and a splash of milk and mix together until smooth.

3 In a small ovenproof frying pan, add the juice of one orange, the cranberries, sugar and three thin slices of the second orange. Cook over a low heat until the sugar has dissolved, then bring the mixture to a boil. Cook until the liquid has reduced by half.

4 Working quickly, spoon the sponge mixture on top of the orange mixture so that it is completely covered (ensure there are no spaces or gaps for the orange mixture to escape).

5 Bake the pudding in the oven for 10-12 minutes, or until the sponge is risen, golden-brown and feels springy to the touch.

6 For the orange cream, place all of the orange cream ingredients into a bowl and whisk until thickened.

7 To serve, carefully turn the pudding out onto a plate and serve with the orange cream.

8 If you haven't got an ovenproof frying pan transfer the oranges, once cooked, to a 20cm cake tin, cover

them with the sponge mixture and bake until sponge is firm to the touch.

Serve warm with the orange cream. Decorate with remaining orange slices.

Yule fizz Serves 4

100ml chilled cranberry juice

100ml chilled freshly pressed apple juice

Chilled champagne, to top up

Few frozen cranberries

1 Pour the cranberry juice into a champagne flute glass.

2 Add the apple juice, and top up with champagne.

3 Add the frozen cranberries and serve.

Cranberry mincemeat

100g butter

200g soft dark brown sugar e.g. unrefined muscovado

250ml orange juice

2 tsp ground mixed spice

1/2 tsp ground cinnamon

1/2 tsp ginger

pinch of grated nutmeg

250g Bramley apples

200g sultanas

200g currants

100g dried cranberries

200g mixed peel finely chopped

1 tbsp grated orange zest

150ml brandy, cognac, rum or whisky

1 Combine the butter, sugar, orange juice and all the spices in a saucepan, and leave on a gentle heat, stirring occasionally, until the butter has melted and the mixture is smooth.

2 Peel, quarter, core and finely chop the apples. Add the chopped apples to the pan, along with the sultanas, currants, cranberries, candied peel and orange zest, stirring well.

3 Bring to the boil, and simmer gently for 10 minutes or until the apples have softened, then set aside.

4 Add the brandy or other alcohol and allow to cool.

5 When cold, spoon into clean, dry jars, and seal tightly and refrigerate for up to a month until required.

6 To keep for up to six months, double the amount of alcohol.

Mary Knights FOOD PAGES

Please send in any recipes of your own making that you have enjoyed. See that the quantities of ingredients are clearly stated and only send in recipes that you have tried and tested. Submissions to Mary Knights c/o the editor 72 Malvern Drive IG8 OJP or email recipes@myintouch.co.uk

Traditional cranberry sauce

225g Fresh cranberries

Grated zest and juice of 1 orange

4 Tablespoons fine cut marmalade

125g light muscovado sugar

50ml port

1 Put all ingredients into a pan, mix together well and bring to the boil. Simmer for 5-10 minutes until the cranberries have softened and the sauce has thickened. The sauce can be made a few days before Christmas and kept in the refrigerator – if there's room!!

2 To freeze – tip into a freezer proof container and cool. Can be kept in the freezer for up to one month.

3 To serve thaw overnight at cool room temperature

Cranberry Stuffing balls

8 good quality pork and herb sausages

25g dried cranberries

50g fresh breadcrumbs

1 medium egg – beaten

Small handful of chopped fresh parsley

1 Peel off sausage casings and discard.

2 Mix meat with rest of the ingredients shape into small balls and place on a baking tray.

3 Bake in a pre-heated oven 200C/180c fan/ mark 6 for 25 – 30 minutes until golden and cooked through.




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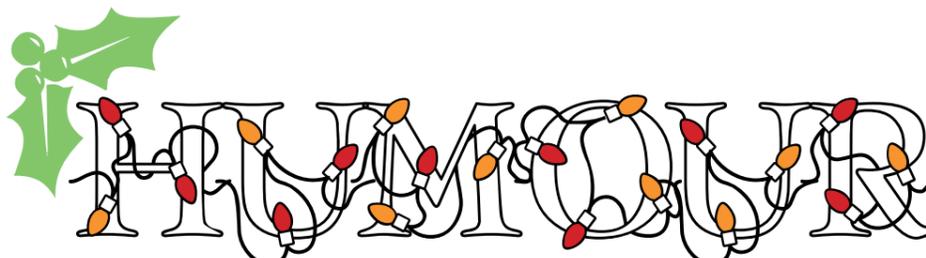
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By Jo King

An elderly driver has been stopped on the Motorway for driving too slow.

Waiting on the Motorway flyover on the Golden Valley bypass, to catch speeding drivers, a police officer sees a car – a Bugatti Veyron no less – pottering along at 5MPH.

Says he to himself: “This driver is just as dangerous as a speeder.” So he turns on his lights and pulls the driver over.

Approaching the car, he notices that there are two old ladies in it and the passenger is wide eyed and white as a ghost.

The driver, obviously confused, says to him: “Officer, I don’t understand, I was doing exactly the speed limit. What seems to be the problem?”

“Madam,” the officer replies: “you

weren’t speeding, but you should know that driving slower than the speed limit can also be a danger to other drivers.”

“Slower than the speed limit? No sir, I was doing the speed limit exactly... five miles an hour,” the old woman says a bit proudly.

The police officer, trying to contain a chuckle explains to her that M5 is the road number, not the speed limit.

A bit embarrassed, the woman grins and thanks the officer for pointing out her error.

“But before I let you go, Madam, I have to ask...is your friend OK, she seems awfully shaken, and she hasn’t made a sound the whole time,” the officer asks.

“Oh, she’ll be all right in a minute officer. We’ve just come off the A417.”

Say a prayer

A priest said to a precocious six-year-old boy, “So your mother says your prayers for you each night? That’s very commendable. What does she say?”

The little boy replied, “Thank God he’s in bed!”

Little Johnny and his family were having Sunday dinner at his Grandmother’s house. Everyone was seated around the table as the food was being served. When little Johnny received his plate, he started eating right away. “Johnny! Please wait until we say our prayer.” said his mother. “I don’t need to,” the boy replied. “Of course, you do.” his mother insisted. “We always say a prayer before eating at our house.” “That’s at our house.” Johnny explained. “But this is Grandma’s house and she knows how to cook!”

The vicar’s 5 year-old daughter noticed that her father always paused and bowed his head for a moment before starting his sermon. One day, she asked him why.

“Well, Honey,” he began, proud that his daughter was so observant of his messages. “I’m asking the Lord to help me preach a good sermon.”

“How come He doesn’t answer it?” she asked.



After the Turkey and Christmas pudding dream up some more **PARAPROSDOKIANS** (Winston Churchill loved them). They are figures of speech in which the latter part of a sentence or phrase is surprising or unexpected; frequently humorous.

1. Where there’s a will, I want to be in it.
2. The last thing I want to do is hurt you. But it’s still on my list.
3. Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
4. If I agreed with you, we’d both be wrong.
5. We never really grow up; we only learn how to act in public.
6. War does not determine who is right – only who is left.
7. Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.
8. They begin the evening news with ‘Good Evening,’ then proceed to tell you why it isn’t.
9. To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.
10. Buses stop in bus stations. Trains stop in train stations. On my desk is a work station.
11. I thought I wanted a career. Turns out I just wanted paycheques.
12. In filling out an application, where it says, ‘In case of emergency, notify.’ I put ‘DOCTOR.’



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I was visiting my son and daughter-in-law last night when I asked if I could borrow a newspaper.

“This is the 21st century, old man,” he said. “We don’t waste money on newspapers. Here, you can borrow my iPad.”

I can tell you, that fly never knew what hit it...



Monopoly You'll never look at the game in the same way again!



Starting in 1941, an increasing number of British Airmen found themselves as the involuntary guests of the Third Reich (as POWs), and the Crown was casting about for ways and means to facilitate their escape...

Now, obviously, one of the most helpful aids to that end is a useful and accurate map, one showing not only where stuff was, but also showing the locations of 'safe houses' where a POW on-the-run could go for food and shelter.

Paper maps had some real drawbacks – they make a lot of noise when you open and fold them, they wear out rapidly and, if they get wet, they turn into mush.

Someone in MI-5 (similar to America's OSS) got the idea of printing escape maps on silk. It's durable, can be scrunched-up into tiny wads, can be unfolded as many times as needed, and makes no noise whatsoever.

At that time, there was only one manufacturer in Great Britain that had perfected the technology of printing on silk and that was John Waddington, Ltd. When approached by the government, the firm was only too happy to do its bit for the war effort.

By pure coincidence, Waddington was also the UK licensee for the popular American board game, Monopoly.

As it happened, 'games and pastimes' was a category of item qualified for insertion into CARE packages, dispatched by the International Red Cross to prisoners-of-war.

Under the strictest of secrecy, in a securely guarded and inaccessible old workshop on the grounds of Waddington's, a group of sworn-to-secrecy employees began mass-producing escape maps, keyed to each region of Germany or Italy where Allied POW camps were located. When processed, these maps could be folded into such tiny dots that they would actually fit inside a Monopoly playing piece.

As long as they were at it, the clever workmen at Waddington's also managed to add:

1. A playing token containing a small magnetic compass;
2. A two-part metal file that could easily be screwed together; and

3. Useful amounts of genuine high-denomination German, Italian, and French currency, hidden within the piles of Monopoly money! British and American air crews were advised, before taking off on their first mission, how to identify a 'rigged' Monopoly set by means of a tiny red dot, one cleverly rigged to look like an ordinary printing glitch, located in the corner of the 'Free Parking' square.

Of the estimated 35,000 Allied POWs who successfully escaped, an estimated one-third were aided in their flight by the rigged Monopoly sets. Everyone who did so was sworn to secrecy indefinitely, since the British Government might want to use this highly successful ruse in still another, future war.

The story wasn't declassified until 2007, when the surviving craftsmen from Waddington's, as well as the firm itself, were finally honoured in a public ceremony.

It's always nice when you can play that 'Get Out of Jail Free' card!

POETRY CORNER By Ann Farmer



Terrence Trent d'Arby
Todmorden de Thame
Was burdened with a most magnificent name;
But over time this young man became a bit of a hermit;
He'd rather have been christened Kermodious Kermit;
But Terrence Trent d'Arby Todmorden de Thame,
He dreamed of igniting the Olympic flame.

He practised in private, in his luxurious home,
With a rolled up newspaper and a garden gnome
That Terrence precariously perched on the top,
And thus was obliged to frequently stop;
All in all, his performance was a dismal disaster -
Not to mention the great quantity of broken plaster

That was destined to end on the quarry-tiled floor;
To his shame,
Terrence had to admit he'd never carry that flame.
Yet still in his heart he

cherished the hope,
Practised running up stairs and sliding down slopes,
Till that fateful day when Todmorden de Thame
Learned we were hosting the Olympic Games.

A great wave came over him – he forgot all his shame
And rushed to the website and put down his name.
Now this took some time, as you can imagine,
But it wasn't long before he was handing his badge in
As senior prefect, to hold his imaginary torch aloft;
He did it quite openly, and my how they scoffed
At the preening pretensions of Todmorden de Thame
In thinking he'd carry the Olympic flame;
They thought the idea was incredibly rum -

He couldn't pat his own head and massage his tum
Simultaneously; and in truth, it did prove quite trying
To run and to carry; it may look like flying

When done on the telly
But try doing the trick with your head and your belly
And you'll get the picture; and soon Todmorden de Thame
Had practised so hard that he made himself lame;
But done up in plaster and bandage and splint,
Terrence Trent d'Arby still dreamed of the sprint

He would do to the cauldron, wherein awaited
The flame to be lit; he just concentrated
On getting better, convinced he could do it;
Never dreaming his dream would have anything to it.
Until came that day when the Olympic authorities
From millions, selected one name; and among their priorities

Was choosing a candidate with an impressive name:
Step forward Terrence Trent d'Arby Todmorden de Thame.
And he did step forward – and he sprinted those

paces;
But in his excitement forgot to do up his laces;
And in front of everyone, Todmorden de Thame
Fell up the podium and into the flame.

Now, though this sounds dreadful, modern Olympic torches
Are designed to produce the lightest of scorches;
And though he was heard far and wide with his wingeing,
That most hapless of athletes got the mildest of singeing;
Thus Terrence Trent d'Arby gained Olympic fame
For being the only torch-bearer to put out the flame

The only one who managed to set light to himself;
But he had much to be grateful to Safety and Health
Though to this very day his most cherished of things
Is the mark on his chest of five brownish rings.

Local Catholic History and a bit of nostalgia

As a seven-year-old boy I always dreaded the outdoor Corpus Christi Procession. The nuns educating me checked on attendance at this public show of piety, as well as attendance at Sunday Mass and Holy Communion. Any failure to participate required a medical certificate, or a parental letter citing an infection, real, imagined or contrived, to avert a distinct impediment to scholarly progress.

This outdoor procession required police permission and presence along its permitted route. On the outbreak of war, 11am, the third of September

1939 all processions were forbidden. I was very pleased..... for the wrong reasons.

My father was, at that time, MC at Mass and Benediction at St George's Walthamstow. We had a wartime allotment on property that belonged to The Catholic Church of Our Lady and St. George, Shernhall Sreet, Walthamstow. I grew potatoes, peas, "scarlet -runner beans", onions, which were in very short supply between 1939 -1946, and celery.

My brother, Anthony Francis and I were instructed by our father to clear the presbytery back garden at St George's for the outdoor Corpus

Christi assembly to be held there. Dad asked us to "tidy-up" the venue as we were on holiday from the Jesuit St. Ignatius College, Stamford Hill. While we were picking up litter, leaves, sticks etc. a presbytery rear sash window was opened and the stentorian Monsignor William O'Grady PP VG bellowed: "Who are you?" "We are Archie Walsh's sons, Monsignor," "Why aren't you at school?" "We are on holiday Monsignor" "Where do you go to School?". St Ignatius College, Monsignor". "Is that a Catholic School?" "Yes ,Monsignor, it is run by Jesuit Fathers - Fr, Guy Brinkworth SJ is our Headmaster." "God Bless

youse!" said the Monsignor.

An earlier "In Touch" edition, then under its Founder-Editor, Brian Howes - of happy memory - published some of my recollections of the remarkable "Priest of God", Mgr. William O'Grady - with a photograph. "Big Bill" was an irreverent, but affectionate soubriquet for this huge man - physically and actively. He was in some way involved in the setting-up of the, in-their-time, satellite parishes: Our Lady of Lourdes, Wanstead: St Patrick's, Walthamstow: Christ the King, Crooked Billet, Walthamstow: Our Lady of Grace and St. Teresa of Avila, Chingford.

Mgr O'Grady was distinctly associated with St Joseph's Hospice, Hackney by dint of its setting up by

the Irish Sisters of Charity, founded by Mother Mary Aikenhead. The Monsignor, tall and gaunt, would be seen in the great corridors of Whipps Cross Hospital and a Northern Ireland Ward Sister would be near her ward entrance as the "Big Man" went by: "Ah, Monsignor, will ye come and have a cup of my Protestant tea?... or will you be after having Catholic coffee wit' one of the Cat'olic Sisters?"

Typical of the "Big Man" was an occasion when there was a "fracas" in "The Hall" at St George's Church. An alarmed parishioner summoned The Monsignor to the scene. The situation was swiftly managed: "If you're Catholics - Get Out! If you're Non-Catholics I'll throw you out!"

Peter Walsh

Pius XII A Ceaseless Quest for the *Least-Worst* Option

Facing up to the Facts of the Dilemma. **By Jerry Crowley**



You are leader of a global religion, with unparalleled influence over the minds and hearts of some 500 million souls. Having been powerless

to prevent the outbreak of war, you must now defend your Church against the excesses of the aggressor - a brutal, ruthless and routinely lying regime with no respect whatever for religion or human life; and which, aided by the most powerful (and so far undefeated) military force and most effective propaganda machine in history, has now overrun most of Continental Europe and plunged it into a new Dark Age.

You have long been aware of the growing persecution of the Jews, initially in Germany but now right across the Continent. It is now slowly becoming clear that this is no longer just the latest instance of the sickeningly familiar brutal persecution endured so many times throughout Jewish history, but has progressed into outright genocide on an industrial scale. You are accordingly under pressure, not only from many of your own churchmen, but also the media, the Allied powers and a whole array of other countries, many with a history of active aversion to Rome, to condemn, explicitly and unequivocally, both the Nazi regime itself and what is happening to the Jews. But you fear that doing so, while earning you the respect and applause of the civilised world, will merely make matters worse, both for the victims and your own church, and you have no shortage of evidence supporting this. You also know that in so doing, you will be sacrificing the formal neutrality of your office, the essential pre-requisite to your ardent efforts to restore peace.

But equally, you must be faithful to the Church's divine mission, which demands speaking out at all times in defence of justice and the oppressed, regardless of the consequences. How do you square the circle?

By any standard, the maelstrom of competing pressures confronting Pius XII was overwhelming. Could he have protested more vocally, and condemned more strongly all that the Nazis were doing? Undoubtedly! Would it have saved more lives? Unlikely! The reality is that, for all the imperfections of both man and Church, he was forced time and again to choose between the borderline unpalatable and the far worse. To borrow from Churchill, there were no good options; it was a question of finding the least worst option.

The accusation that Pius was indifferent to the fate of the Jews, is founded primarily on the fact that none of his pronouncements during the War/Holocaust period ever referred to the Jews specifically, with his condemnations instead being couched in at best bland and rather convoluted language. The fiercest controversy concerns his Christmas 1942 broadcast, made at a time of growing evidence that the masses of Jews deported to the East were being murdered under a deliberate programme. Not only did the broadcast fail to put the genocidal programme centre stage, it also appeared to downplay the numbers involved, referring to "the hundreds of thousands of innocent people put to death... sometimes merely because of their race or descent", when even at this stage of the Holocaust, it surely merited the description "millions". Even so, the New York Times was able to depict Pius' words as "this lonely voice crying out in the silence of a

Continent", suggesting that here Pius' detractors have overreached themselves.

It is generally accepted that from "Mit Brennender" onwards (1937), the Nazis knew perfectly well that the Pope's condemnations were aimed at them. But far more important was whether Catholics in Germany and those elsewhere in Europe now living under the Nazi yoke, understood the targets of the Pope's strictures clearly and unequivocally. Here his reticence was less than helpful.

One key fear was of provoking a schism in the German Church: there were 1.6 million Catholics in the German army, and once war broke out, it seemed inevitable that large numbers of German Catholics, including some bishops, were going to support their country on patriotic grounds, whatever their reservations about the Nazis. But in Christian minds, the high-profile exposure of a major genocide being perpetrated by their rulers, would surely have trumped simple patriotism, and therefore the correct policy should have been to impress upon the faithful the full horror of what was happening, not to step around it. After all, through its diplomatic presence on the ground in most European countries, the Vatican had far better insights into what was really happening to deported Jews, than the average German citizen.

Against this, it is vital to understand the halting pace at which news of the Holocaust unfolded. The Final Solution was only agreed upon in January 1942, and then kept resolutely secret from the world, accompanied by a black-out concerning the destinations of deported Jews. Then there were big problems distinguishing between fact and rumour,

not helped by the routine exaggeration of enemy atrocities that always drives combatants' propaganda campaigns. The Jews themselves were still struggling to grasp the enormity of what was happening to them. Only in August did the first rumours of an organised genocide programme reach the US, whereupon it chose to wait four months for independent intelligence confirmation. So it is hardly surprising that information being received by the Vatican was similarly patchy. But none of this explains the continuing lack of clarity in all subsequent Papal addresses.

Rather, Pius feared making matters worse, a fear he expressed many times privately. Much of this stemmed from Hitler's belligerent response to any criticism: just redouble your ruthlessness. One key instance of this was the Warthegau, a huge artificially created region of Poland now transformed into a laboratory for visionary Nazi ideology, including the total replacement of the churches by a national German church with allegiance solely to the Nazis. The protests of the local bishops, who correctly saw this as a harbinger for the future of the Church as a whole, led directly in October 1941 to the rounding-up of those Polish clerics who had escaped the mass shooting of the Polish elites. A total of 2,700 Polish priests were detained at Dachau, where nearly half of them died, while a special concentration camp was set up for nuns. Later, when three Polish bishops received a letter from Pius deploring Nazi atrocities, they all replied that they could not publish without making matters worse. Yet in the midst of all this, prominent Polish exiles in London were berating the

Holy Father for failing to condemn Nazi atrocities in their homeland, accusing him of putting the Jews first.

Again, when the Dutch bishops protested loudly in July 1942 against the deportation of Dutch Jews, this merely led to the deportations being extended to all Jews baptised as Catholics, while those baptised as Protestants continued to be spared. It is tempting to conclude here that Pius was motivated solely by protecting Catholics. But that is too neat. Rather, his thinking seems to have been: it will make things worse for Catholics, without saving a single Jewish life; a subtle difference.

It wasn't just the Vatican that feared making matters worse. So did the Red Cross, carefully avoiding any protest that could prejudice its work. It faced an agonising choice between remaining silent, or forfeiting its access to



Dachau - Memorial to Polish Priests

refugee centres and concentration camps. It therefore comes as little surprise that its public statements from the period are full of the same kind of convoluted language used by Pius.

A small number of interventions where the Vatican did achieve tangible success in alleviating the lot of the Jews are often wheeled out to argue

that a more vocal policy of protest would have made a major difference. The key instance here is Hungary, where following Nazi occupation, the Vatican intervened successfully with the Regent, Admiral Horthy, to discontinue deportations to the death camps. But this owed far more to delicate diplomacy than loud protests; it was facilitated by the rare autonomy granted to Horthy by his occupiers; and the Vatican's pleas bore fruit only after a massive deportation programme had already been carried out.

There remains the view that a more forceful personality, like John Paul II, would have taken a tougher stance and thereby achieved more. But effective as JPPI's broadsides against the evils of the Soviet regime were, in galvanising opposition to them in Poland and beyond, ultimately he was dealing with a regime less evil than Hitler's. By the 1980s, the Soviets had become far more sophisticated in dealing with outspoken opponents, preferring to hospitalise them on trumped-up diagnoses of mental illness, as opposed to just gunning them down, alongside the occasional well-disguised assassination (the KGB, operating via the Bulgarian secret police, remains suspected of complicity in the 1981 attempt on JPPI's life by a supposedly lone gunman).

Finally, it is clear from the recorded criticisms of Vatican policy by Nuncio Angelo Roncalli, the later Pope John XXIII, that he would have deployed a more robust approach. Certainly he proved admirably resourceful in organising relief efforts for Jews; but whether this could have been successfully extended to vociferous condemnations which actually produced results, remains an open question.

"the hundreds of thousands of innocent people put to death... sometimes merely because of their race or descent" when even at this stage of the Holocaust, it surely merited the description **millions**



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Chronicle of Parish Events By PA Nache

The Transitus and Feast Day of St Francis of Assisi.

Wednesday October 3rd saw, once again, a performance of music and mime by the pupils of Trinity RC High School to commemorate the passing of St Francis of Assisi. This year there was a difference in that instead of solo instrumentalists performing from the front of the church a massive choir crammed into the choir loft providing a banquet of choral music of which the students should be proud. By the big smiles on their faces it was obvious they were enjoying the occasion.



On Thursday 4th, the feast day of St Francis, there was an extra evening Mass with refreshments, as usual provided by the CWL, in the Becket Centre. Both occasions were well attended but more so the transitus when the congregation consisted largely of proud parents anxious to see their offspring perform what they had obviously been rehearsing for weeks at home as well as in school. In his summing up speech Dr Doherty paid particular tribute to that fact that nobody muffed their lines.

Dr Doherty's Ghost stories

On the 18th October over £500 was raised by a large crowd of around 200 people on a cold blustery evening to hear Dr Doherty, in preparation for Halloween, tell stories of ghosts, witches and warlocks. Some of the ghosts are known to him personally and others dug up from graves and crypts that he had entered and researched in order to relate his convincing tales of corpses, not yet dead, ringing the bells in their coffins only to be ignored by a wicked night watchman who smiled laconically as the sound of the bells weakened and

died away, with the poor victim slowly dying of suffocation six feet under.

Beware of sitting in the front row or next to the aisle where the good doctor prowls up and down, speaking in a soft yet menacing voice before turning with a shout on a listener in the end seat, his face inches from theirs as his voice again returns to a threatening whisper, 'Beware of the Harrower of the Night'.

When he takes to his dramatic turn, some knowing what's to come, laugh and snigger but not the poor end-of-pew victims who smell the pipe-smoker's breath on their faces, see the staring eyes and hear the

bers seem to have done likewise, all for the good.

Presentations were by Patricia Donald, who appealed for new vocalists and instrumentalists, particularly another key board player, for the Music Group at the 10 am Masses. Brian Martin, the current Chair, spoke enthusiastically about the youth trip to Lourdes and Steve Kerr, Vice Chair, spoke about the messenger initiative which Fr Brian has worked very hard to revive in the parish.

Steve mentioned that the current service provides cover for only 30% of our sprawling parish and appealed for more messengers who should contact him or Fr Brian in the first instance. There is no doubt that this initiative is helping to create an improved congeniality among Catholics and in many

hiss of his voice less than an inch from their ears. When they waken in the night, do they fear the pressure of the Harrower of the Night pressing the air out of their lungs or is it the face of Dr Doherty that makes them scream out and awaken the sleeping children in the next bedroom and the spouse beside them?

In his parting shot he bids his listeners goodnight and warns. 'Sleep well but don't lie on your back lest the Harrier of the Night comes upon you.'

Make sure you come next year but don't sit in the front or at the end of the pew if you want to sleep peacefully in your bed afterwards.

The Christmas Fayre

Although the fair was advertised in the archaic spelling of the word, as noted by Fr Michael Copps on the preceding Sunday, there was nothing archaic about the event. It was a wet and windy day on Saturday 24th November and expectations of success were not high. Mark O'Neill, who



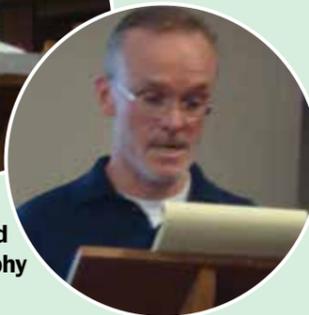
The Parish AGM.

In sad contrast to the large attendance on the 3rd and 4th October as reported above, the AGM on Sunday 14th October attracted less than a dozen non-parish-council members. This is very much par for the course and extremely surprising in a parish containing a great many vociferous and intelligent people who are not reluctant to make their views known over tea and coffee in the Becket Centre after Masses and at the door of the church as they make a quick exit on Sundays.

Yet, on this regular annual event, arranged specifically at a convenient time for all and to provide an opportunity to voice opinions, the lack of attendance



Patricia Donald and Mike Murphy



and silence is deafening.

Much is being done by the Parish Council which over the past ten years has seen a three year rotation in Chair person and members. There was a time when the chair of the Parish Council could not be ousted with a tin opener and it is refreshing to see this change. There are members who have put their particular stamp on the parish council and the present mem-

Whilst offerings were very slightly down on last year if the appeal sum and the offerings are added together there is an increase of 10%. Fintan Cavanan, reporting on the accounts as stand in for the chair of the finance committee, made specific mention to the income from Gift Aid of £62,981 which represents the tax paid on £315,000 of offerings. Obviously a fair amount of this represents the recovery of a backlog of tax from previous years. Fintan pointed out that in spite of this figure a further £12,000 per annum could be recovered if all offerings were Gift Aided; an unachievable ideal situation. Nevertheless if more people could overcome the embarrassment of passing the plate on to their neighbour without putting anything in it and using a monthly

Standing Order instead, the ideal may become a little nearer.

In the past three years investment income has been so minimal as to raise eyebrows; there must be at any given time something in the region of £250,000 languishing at nil or half a percent on current account raising a mere £150 per annum. The finance committee was asked to look at this situation and consider over night deposits which could potentially boost investment income to around £2,000 per annum.

The net 9% (£19,625) of total income from Social Events was highlighted as an important part of the parish's income. Hopefully this summary will encourage others next year to turn up to the AGM and show support for the work of the PPC.

LETTERS

Please send your letters to The Editor, Idvies, 72 Malvern Drive, Woodford Green, IG8 OJP or email leon@racionzer.net

does the count all on his own with the help of Adrian Lee acting as runner, commented that 'if we top £3,000, I will call it a success.' However, in spite of the inclement weather there was a long queue already snaking out of the school gates before the one o'clock opening time and the girls collecting the £1 entry fee were besieged as soon as the doors were opened.

There were the usual stalls and a few children's entertainments that had not appeared in previous years. Chris Curtis stood behind a more than usually heavily laden bottle stall selling tickets at a pound a time and raised over £600 before the show was really underway. Toffee apples and cup cakes, advent wreaths and Christmas bunting all featured in the over-crowded hall Trinity lower site.

Coleen Carlile and Mark Archer (below) barred the entrance to the corridor leading to the treasury selling their jointly produced children's book 'Biscuit's New Adventure', which



many adults remarked, buying their second copy, was a marvelous book for bereaved adults and children.

And when the count was finished, to everyone's surprise, no less than a net record profit of £5,438 was made, much deserving of the applause granted at 11:30 mass on the 25th when the figure was announced by Fr Austin. He thanked all the hard workers and all those who braved the wintry weather to be there.

From Peter Leahy

Dear Editor,

I would like to make some observations concerning the article, 'Proving God' (Issue 2), and the related segments in Issue 3 of the IT.

You say that you've had verbal feedback concerning the article, some verging on abuse. That's a shame, and I agree it would be more constructive for readers, with these views, to write to the IT letters page, so it can be calmly aired and possibly resolved.

For myself, (with a physics background), I have absolutely no problems with scientifically based articles being published in the IT, but there are two strong provisos: firstly, that the articles reflect the correct science, and secondly that they are written in such a way that complex topics are de-mystified and explained in terms that are appealing and understandable to what is probably a non-technical majority of readers. I know that this is challenging, but it's by no means impossible. To make exaggerated claims and wrap articles in physics mumbo – jumbo is unacceptable, and may detract from the essence of the article's actual scientific claims. I could comment upon some of the article's scientific content, but as yet Mr Özter's work is unpublished and unaccredited, and moreover – this level of detail is inappropriate for a parish magazine.

There is also one considerable flaw that pervades the "Proving God" article – and that concerns the matter of 'faith'. You cannot prove the existence of a God by any method of scientific analysis, however elegant the mathematics. In my view His existence is largely a matter of faith. Great scientists like Michael Faraday, Einstein and Sir Isaac Newton never claimed that any of their mathematical derivations actually 'proved' the existence of God. Newton constructed a whole



new branch of mathematics (the 'calculus') to explain the movement of objects and planets/stars in our universe. And while there is the natural tendency to admire the precision and elegance of the mathematics that Newton derived (and quite rightly so), only a layman would present this as a proof of the existence of God. Any first year philosophy undergraduate or semi-skilled atheist could drive a coach and horses through this argument. You have to separate the excitement of a new theory, from the cold, rigorous, forensic requirements of the scientific proving room. To do otherwise is nonsense.

To my knowledge, no scientist working (at Cern) on the discovery of the Higgs Boson has claimed this proves the existence of God. In fact many of them hate the term 'God Particle' which has been drummed up by pop-science media, and has nothing to do with the existence of a God. And I suspect that the scientists at Cern have worked at least as hard as Mr Özter and spent at least as much money as him, funding their discovery, without making any claims regarding a divine proof.

Lastly, I must admit to having some accord with the letter written by Philip Racionzer in Issue 3 of the IT. As an aside, Douglas Adams wrote a humorous book that centred upon answering the question, 'what is the meaning of life, existence, the universe...etc?'. Adams came up with the answer '42'. And I, like Mr Racionzer, am inclined to agree with this answer. Put another way; without faith; '42' is as good as it gets.

Excerpts from a letter of Christel Engler an octogenarian plus, writing from Berlin.

It was lovely to read the Florida story of a place of worship from the other side of the world in the same pages as the article on Anti-Semitism which after all the unbelievable things that men did, and some women as well, is raising its ugly head here again. Once you have cut the head off the beast two more seem to grow.

On Page 24 Phillip Henry Racionzer's sentiment 'I can't see any sense in such futile expense' is well worth noting for there is much of that in our contemporary lifestyle. Or is it that I am just too old?

From Peter Walsh

Dear Editor,

The protracted concern about paedophilic priests and the vilification of the Catholic Church, its Pope and its Bishops may be moderated now that paedophilia has critically emerged in the entertainment industry and particularly at the BBC in the case of Jimmy Savile.

We are seeing the indifferent inertia vehemently attributed to the Catholic Bishops now replicated by BBC Programme Managers, the Police, Hospital Managers and others evading action on abundant information relating to the incidence of paedophilia within their purview. Late reporting by paedophilia victims features in the present entertainment rampage as it did in the Massachusetts and California paedophilic priest crises in which senile septuagenarian altar boys, remembering the offence, became a significant, lawyer-assisted, complainant and compensation-seeking cadre.

Of all the numerous and outlandish sexual aberrations, paedophilia is rightly regarded as virulently heinous by dint of the injury it inflicts on the young of both sexes.

The most important aspect of paedophilia is its facility for access to its victims. This is manifest in the pederast's covert resort to professions serving the young; teaching, clergy, youth work, and, as we are seeing in the present expose, healthcare. These vocations innocently and accidentally, by default, enable the access covertly and cunningly sought by paedophilic

From Lisa Barden

Dear Editor

Can it be right to come between an individual and God? Can it be right to say to an individual "You can not receive Christ today?" Can it be right that individuals should be prevented from receiving Christ in Holy Communion because their marriage has sadly failed and they have remarried?

I felt uncomfortable listening to this message in mass today Sunday October 7th 2012. I went home and read a little more about it.

There is growing concern around this ban and it is a matter close to the Pope's heart. In the past he has called for a greater openness on this issue. He addressed it in an essay in 1998 and called for it to be reprinted last November. The complete text of the essay by Joseph Ratzinger on communion for divorced and remarried Catholics from 1998 has been on the website of L'Osservatore Romano since November 30th. <http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/1350098?eng=y>

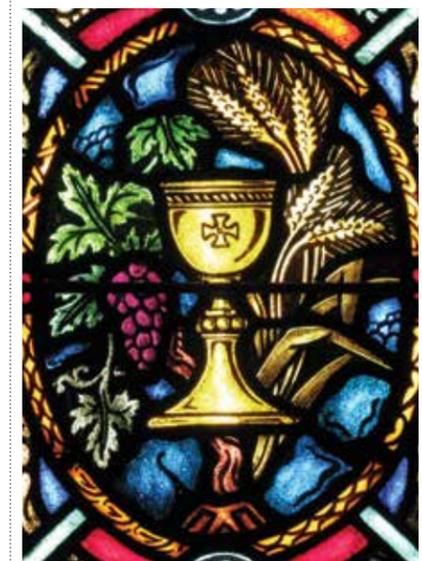
It seems the openness has at least 2 parts:

1. To expand the nullity of marriages celebrated without faith by at least one of the spouses, although baptised.
2. The possible recourse to a

decision (in the internal forum) to receive communion by a divorced and remarried Catholic if the lack of recognition of the nullity of the previous marriage (because of a verdict held to be erroneous or because of the impossibility of proving it's nullity in procedural form) were to contrast with the persons firm belief that the marriage was objectively null.

The Pope is making it known that he hopes for a positive result in both cases.

For all the divorced and remarried Catholics currently excluded from receiving The Body of Christ this matter should move forward with urgency.



psychopaths.

Since it is impossible to symptomatically diagnose paedophilia, the first reported and authenticated incident, appropriately investigated, provides the diagnosis.

There is presently, no known treatment, let alone cure for paedophilia. Modern communications, notably the Internet, affords remote approach other than physical contact and allows for greater proliferation of these offences than ever before. This situation presents an ever increasing threat for which detection and conviction are entirely inadequate. When cases are discovered, and the child pornography disclosed, public revul-

sion at the offence is expressed with intense, disgust, horror and anger. The victims' self-esteem is harmed, in most instances permanently. Their innocence and trust shattered and their lives may be permanently blighted.

We all have a duty of care to report the incidence of such heinous crimes but a question remains; how does one avoid a witch hunt of the innocent? This I dare to suggest can only be avoided by absolute secrecy of investigations until proven without any margin of doubt. But it is the publication of one offence that emboldens others to come forward. It is no surprise therefore, that many cases will

go unchallenged until the perpetrator is aged or dead along with many of the victims.

From Jerry Crowley

Dear Editor,
One of the benefits of attending the Parish AGM, is the insight it provides into the important work of our Parish Council, which normally tends to be near-invisible to the average parishioner. This consists of seven parishioners, who give up their time to advise Fr. Austin and ensure the Parish runs smoothly. It was the Parish Council that organised this year's successful church redecoration programme, from defining the project, seeking and vetting bids, to supervising its execution so meticulously that from start to finish, there was virtually no disruption to Sunday Masses. Warm congratulations are in order here.

One source of concern, however, lies with the very low investment income achieved for the third year running. This of course reflects the current unprecedentedly low level of interest rates. But even so, £150 annual income earned on what appear to be average funds of well over £200,000, seems surprisingly low, and especially in the context of the major contribution sought (and achieved) from parishioners towards the redecoration programme.

With many term deposit accounts presently offering an interest rate of 2%, it should surely be possible to produce an income which would at very least be in the thousands rather than hundreds of pounds. Granted, the ups and downs of Parish cash flow no doubt require ready access to a substantial proportion of funds at any one time, to meet lumpy expenses. But making due allowance for this, perhaps half the overall funds could still be placed on term deposit.

Letters published do not reflect the opinion of the editor nor will the editor comment upon their content.



On 5 June, the Church celebrates the Feast day of St Boniface often known as the Apostle of Germany. We know the name well since one of our friars bears this name probably not entirely by chance. So who was St Boniface?

He was in fact an Englishman or rather an Anglo-Saxon born about 674 AD in Crediton, in Devon. He was christened Winfrith which meant Friend of Peace perhaps because the Anglo-Saxons hoped to live in peace with the local Britons of the Devon area which they had only very recently won. The Anglo-Saxons had only arrived in Britain about two

Who was St Boniface?

By Patricia Donald

hundred years before from what is now Denmark and North Germany and had only gradually accepted Christianity after the arrival of St Augustine at Canterbury sent by Pope Gregory I in 597AD.

Nevertheless Benedictine monasteries had already been established and Winfrith chose to become a monk, acquired a good education and became a priest. He was marked out to become Abbot but he felt inspired, on hearing about a Northumbrian monk Willibrord who had gone to evangelise the Frisians of the Netherlands, to become a missionary to the peoples from whose lands his forbears had come. These people lived beyond the old Roman Empire and had remained pagans worshipping gods such as Thor.

In 716 AD Winfrith went to the kingdom of the Frisians but he had a frosty reception from its king, Radbod. He returned home but vowed he would return one day. He left again in 718 this time for good. With a small party of monks he went directly to Rome, walking all the way. The Pope, Gregory II authorised his work and gave him a new name, Boniface (which means 'speaker of good').

He returned to Germania, an area rather than a political unit, and spent the rest of his long life there working in many different parts with many different rulers. Hearing that king Radbod of the Frisians had died, he remembered his vow and went and worked there with Willibrord for three years. After a second trip to Rome he was made bishop of all the German lands and returning to Germany set about his mammoth task. He visited Bavaria and Hesse frequently but centred his work largely in the area of Thuringia which is the very heart of Germany. He established a monastery at Fulda

but criss-crossed Germany evangelising, attacking pagan idols and symbols such as Thor's Oak which he famously cut down, preaching, baptising and building churches. With authority as Archbishop from a new Pope, Gregory III, he set up new dioceses and organised synods, often working with secular rulers such as Charles Martel ruler of the Franks. Altogether this Englishman laid the foundations of the spiritual, political and ecclesiastical shape of Germany, a fact which is far more recognised by German historians than British. In Church history, he is known as 'the Apostle of Germany'.

Nor was that all since he died a martyr's death. As an old man in 755AD he went again to try to convert the Frisians. There he and his companions were attacked by pagans and hacked to death. His body was brought back to Fulda and his tomb and relics are there in Fulda Cathedral, which is now a Baroque building replacing an earlier one. It is regarded as the centre and heart of Catholic Germany and is the place where the Catholic Bishops of Germany hold their annual conference.

I visited Fulda this summer on a pilgrimage led by Canon Christopher Tuckwell of Westminster Cathedral. I was interested in St Boniface but the real attraction for me was that the trip included a visit to Erfurt. Boniface had a strong connection with this city having founded a chapel there which is now below the Cathedral in the crypt. But Erfurt has a later claim to fame as the town where the Protestant Reformer Martin Luther lived and worked. We saw the University where he had been a stu-



Erfurt: Kramerbrücke, a bridge covered in old houses and shops

dent and the church which was part of the Augustinian monastery which he entered and lived as a monk and where he said his first Mass after his ordination to the priesthood. We walked in the cloisters and sat in the chapter house where the present Pope Benedict met with the leaders of the German Protestant churches only a year ago, in September 2011.

In addition, Erfurt is a historic town of great interest with its splendid Cathedral, the Mariendom, its historic churches, the Alte Synagoge and



Statue of the Protestant Reformer Martin Luther in Dresden

the Kramerbrücke, a bridge covered in old houses and shops like the old London Bridge.

The third city on this tour was Dresden, not that it had a particular connection with either St Boniface or Martin Luther, although as a traditionally Protestant city it has a statue of Luther outside the main Lutheran church, the Frauenkirche. Like much else in Dresden this had been rebuilt after its destruction in the Second World War and only quite recently finished. Before I went, I had not realised how great a city Dresden was. However, built largely in the eighteenth century by the wealthy and ambitious Electors of Saxony (one of whom, Augustus the Strong converted to Roman Catholicism in order to be elected as King of Poland, much to the indignation of his Saxon subjects) it is indeed a very splendid city. It is very well worth a visit in its own right or as in this case to complete a pilgrimage to the heart of Christian Germany.

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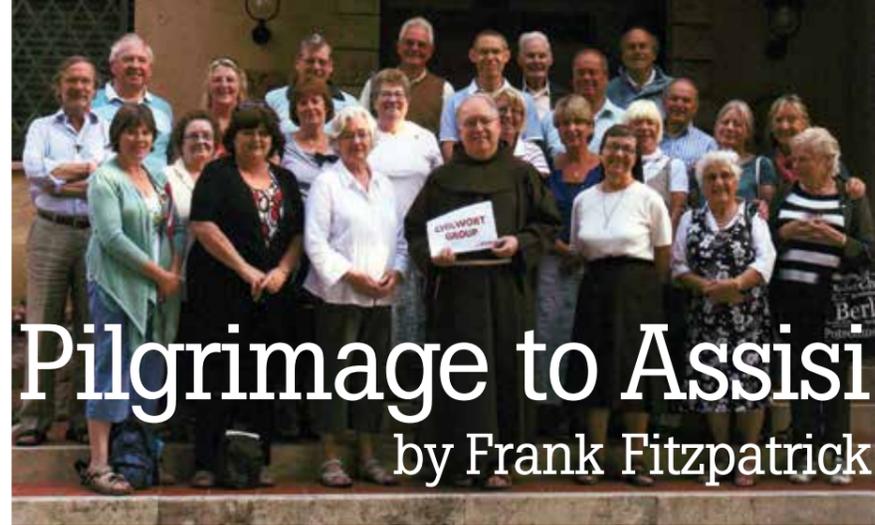
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Pilgrimage to Assisi by Frank Fitzpatrick

At the end of September Rosa and I joined a pilgrimage group from the parish of Chilworth, Surrey and spent eight days following St Francis. It was our third visit to Assisi and we both thought it was the best. The spiritual director was Fr Patrick Lonsdale OFM; older parishioners will remember Fr Patrick who was here in Woodford some thirty years ago.

We spent the first two nights at Greccio, a village between Rome and Assisi. This was the place where the first ever Christmas crib was set up by St Francis in 1223 with live people and animals. The country folk from around took part in the tableau and brought an ox, ass, and some sheep to enact the birth of the Saviour. The cave that was used for this first portrayal is still in use at Greccio and now there is also a lovely church in a spectacular setting which celebrated a wedding while we were there.

Attached to the church is a museum of cribs. There must be upwards of 100 cribs sent from all parts of the world. We saw an Eskimo Jesus, an Indian Jesus, a Chinese Jesus and many others all depicting the holy family in their own garb and traditions.

We spent two quiet days in Greccio before moving on to Assisi where we lodged in a convent in the centre close to the Bishop's palace. From there we visited all the Franciscan sites of the city – the Basilicas of St Francis and St Clare, the fortress at the top of the hill, and the Bishops' cathedral of San Rufino. At the Basilica of St Francis we celebrated Mass in the crypt around the tomb of the saint; at the cathedral we gathered round the font in which

the two saints were baptised and renewed our own baptismal promises.

The other two important places in Assisi are the church at San Damiano in which St Francis heard Christ speaking to him from the cross, a cross that can still be seen in the Basilica of St Clare, and the 'portiuncula' or 'little portion' – a tiny chapel given to the Franciscans in the early days by the Benedictines which had a special place in St Francis' heart and was the place where he died. This chapel is inside and dwarfed by the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli which was built over it after his death. We had our last Mass here on the day we left; there was just enough room for the 26 pilgrims to fit into the space available.

In addition to these visits to magnificent buildings within Assisi itself our pilgrimage took us to other very different places. In contrast these were small humble places far away from the crowds, the places which St Francis himself loved to visit and from which we could better discern the true spirit of the saint. After his 'conversion' he spent very little time in Assisi but rather wandered around

the Umbrian countryside staying in tiny hermitages high up in the wooded hills. Here he could enjoy the natural surroundings and the complete silence which drew him closer to God.

We thus saw Fonte Colombo where he drew up the rule for his brethren; La Foresta in the Rieti valley which is now used as a rehabilitation centre for drug addicts; the retreat house or 'Carceri' high up Mount Subasio where Father Patrick celebrated a wonderful Mass under the trees; the mount of 'La Verna' in Tuscany – here we celebrated Mass around the spot where St Francis received the stigmata towards the end of his life. As we visited all these inaccessible and lonely places in our coach, we were very conscious that the saint travelled everywhere on foot through rough woodlands and not along proper roads!

Close as he was to the natural world and to God he was able to compose the sublime 'Canticle of the Creatures' praising God for all the benefits enjoyed by his creatures. Of course we gained greatly from the churches and frescoes and statues on view in Assisi but it was in the silence and natural surroundings of these hermitages that we gained the fullest benefit from the pilgrimage and were able to better appreciate the spirituality of St Francis.



General Assembly of Lay Associates

Martillac by Kathy Howes

On Sept 24th 2012 at 5 am I met Jo, another Lay Associate like me, at Luton Airport. We flew together to Bordeaux Airport where we were met by two Holy Family Sisters, Sister Mary Slavin and a Spanish Sister who drove us to la Solitude in Martillac where we were welcomed and given coffee and French bread to sustain us until lunch. We were then shown to our rooms which were en-suite and quite large and airy. Jo and I then took the opportunity to visit the island which is where the founder of the Holy Family Association, Pierre Bienvenu Noailles, spent time in prayer and contemplation.

We were at La Solitude to attend the General Assembly of Lay Associates which was a follow on from the Holy Family Congress. The theme of the Congress and the Assembly was 'Family on Mission, Gift in a Changing World'. There were representatives from France, Spain, Italy, Canada, England, Ireland, Asia, and Africa.

Jo from Milton Keynes, Marylyn from Skegness and me from

Woodford made up the English contingent. There were about thirty four Lay Associate Representatives and about twelve Priest Associates.

As we sat at our small individual tables, ready to start at 9 am each morning, complete with microphone, headphones, pads and pens each day, we listened to Sisters conducting the Assembly as well as listening to the responses, comments and reflections of the Priests and Lay Associates. Simultaneous translation was being relayed to us via our headphones.

The Holy Family is a family of five vocations Apostolic Sisters, Contemplative Sisters, Consecrated Seculars, Priest Associates and Lay Associates, but at the time of the founder all were Lay Associates, all were one before it became diverse.

The AIM of the General Assembly was to share the results and fruits of the Holy Family Congress; how to go forward in the light of the New Story of the Universe.

With the new vision of the Cosmos and our place in it we need to look with new eyes, to see afresh. When we look at Cosmology related to God we see that all are interrelated, God, Earth, creatures, everything; all evolving and changing. Change is unavoidable! We were shown a most impressive power point presentation of creation, 'The Gift You Are'. It depicted a new understanding of the world and our place in it. It portrayed a new idea of 'Oneness' with each other and the whole of creation. A new way of seeing all as interconnected, interrelated and interdependent. The Universe has been billions of years evolving, changing, expanding and we need to connect with it and be aware of how we abuse the earth instead of looking after it and respecting it for future generations. I found the power-point presentation magnetic and truly inspirational.

There were times during



the four days when we would break up into small groups to reflect on points that had been raised and on what our thoughts and feelings were about them. We would then relate the results of these reflections back to the Assembly. We discussed Creation in the light of the New Vision of the Cosmos, our statutes, inter-vocational dialogue, inter-continental dialogue and how we can best communicate with Associates in other parts of the world.

It was quite an intense four days of work but we did have some breaks where we were able to walk in the grounds and through the grapevine growing areas, sometimes without seeing a single person. It is such a peaceful and uplifting place to be.

One evening we visited the Hermitage which now houses some of Pierre Bienvenu Noailles' books and other memorabilia. It was the house which Fr Noailles found for about four Sisters to give them a base to work from. As the house was in a rather dilapidated state they had to start by making it habitable.

On Friday morning we had a trip to Bordeaux. Sister Aine led a group of us in the footsteps of the Founder, visiting the Cathedral of St André where Fr Noailles was baptised and the surrounding area. We went on to the church and neighbourhood of St Eulalie, where Fr Noailles was a curate for four years, as well as visiting other parts of Bordeaux. Fr Noailles spent most of his time between Bordeaux

and Martillac. It was a beautiful sunny day and a thoroughly enjoyable visit, thanks to Sister Aine.

Meeting many people from other parts of the world with their various languages and sitting down with them at meal times at La Solitude was a wonderful sharing experience as we struggled to communicate amid much laughter.

On Friday afternoon we returned to the work in hand to reflect on all that had been said during the previous three days. Thanks were conveyed to all those involved in the organization of the proceedings and in particular to all the translators.

At 5:30 am a Mass of Creation and of Thanksgiving was celebrated in the open air on the island next to the sculptured statue of a seated Pierre Bienvenu Noailles. It was a truly special occasion.

It was an interesting and rewarding experience to attend the General Assembly and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of it, which only happens once every ten years.

On Saturday morning September 29th 2012 at 6:45 am we left Martillac in the dark, waved off by Sisters and others, driven by kind and helpful neighbours for Bordeaux Airport to await the flight home. What a lot to digest, to reflect upon! 'How to go forward in the New Story of the Universe?' As Sister Colleen G.C. Moore said, 'We do not know the answers yet, but we are asking the questions.'

An angle on Lourdes

By Paul E Chrichton



Last summer 2011 Yvonne and I and a group of pilgrims made a tour of some Marian and other devotional sites in France with the objective of staying a while in Lourdes. Our resting points included Versailles, Nevers, Ars, Lisieux, Tours as well as Lourdes. We were a small group of thirty five with some requiring wheelchair assistance. Pushing became one of my occasional duties, particularly when in Lourdes.

It was not the first time visit for Yvonne or me and neither for quite a few of the rest of our group and a good spirit was there from our start in Dagenham and throughout our journey which was led by Father Stephen Myers; well known to some of us. Good humour and good sustenance throughout made it a thoroughly enjoyable and busy week enhanced also in Lourdes by meeting, by sheer chance, a large contingent of Brentwood Diocesan youth.

The possible irony, as far as I was concerned, occurred a month or so after our return home. Following a routine medical with the GP Well Man Clinic, I was diagnosed with cancer. No warning, no symptoms, no side effects, except a rise in the Prostate Specific Antigen level in a blood sample analysis which prompted detailed examination leading to the diagnosis. My first selfish thought was how long have I got? Did I have one month, a year or two; very sobering thoughts?

At this point life began to change. After various tests and scans it became clear that I was lucky and the tumour was completely contained and removable by surgery or

radio therapy. It was my choice which procedure to have the end result of either being likely to produce a possible cure with minimal worry about side effects.

At first I had an annoying little - back of the mind query. I had just returned from Lourdes and now this. A bit simplistic really and increasingly I began to conclude that if there was a Lourdes effect it was that an early diagnosis, so timed that provided action was taken promptly the devastation that a tumour breakout could have on one's being, would be averted.

Now in the Autumn of 2012 I have been released back into the wild by my consultants after a year's treatment which, due to the goodness, expertise and professionalism of many people, was without pain and successfully completed subject now to six monthly checks and clearances. Deo Gratias.

There was also underlying the whole event, an increasing bond with quite a large number of people from all walks of my life some of whom were fellow sufferers and enormous support from my wife Yvonne, family and friends.

God only works through the actions and minds of his people and I have had this well and truly cemented in my life's experience both now and in the past; thanks be to God and to his people.

In my case, perhaps initially, the Lourdes effect appeared a bit perverse but in retrospect it now seems totally clear. The treatment is complete. The after effects of the treatment will take a little longer.

In retrospect this last year has been one of the most rewarding and dare I say, enjoyable of our lives for many reasons but that's another story.



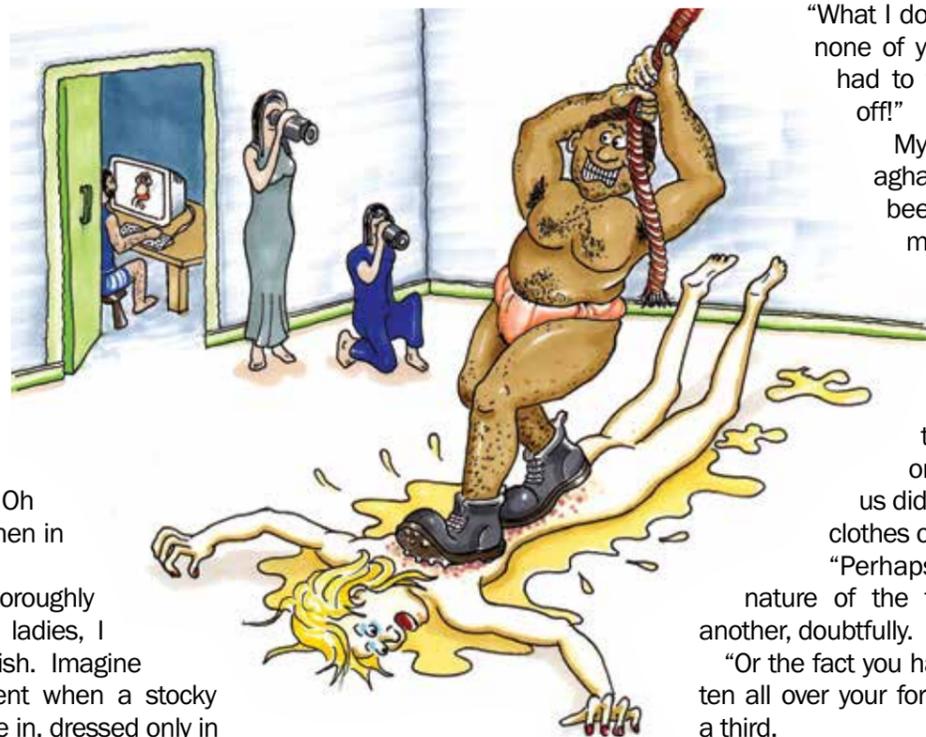
Tale of a slithery experience

It has been a few years since I shared any of the excruciating situations I regularly find myself in, usually due to engaging mouth before brain. The one I am about to relate, however, is not in that category, but equally cringeworthy.

I was on a yoga holiday in Kerala, in India, staying at an Ayurvedic retreat, where many healing practices were being carried out. Having heard positive reports from several friends who had been treated for frozen shoulder and tennis elbow, I decided to seek help for my sciatica, which had caused me much pain in the past. Having already enjoyed a massage with oils from the two ladies there, I wasn't overly alarmed, but slightly perturbed, to be told I had to remove all my clothes for the treatment. Oh well, I thought, when in Rome.....

Having been thoroughly oiled by the two ladies, I felt like a wet fish. Imagine my embarrassment when a stocky Indian man strode in, dressed only in an orange loincloth! At least he had some clothes on! Compared to me, he was formally attired! I reasoned that I was covered in so much oil; I'd probably shoot straight out the window if he attempted to massage me at that point. But this was no ordinary massage, I soon discovered. The lady instructed me to lie face downwards on the floor, as I was to be given a foot massage. By this time I was so bemused I went into automatic mode. Inside, I was thinking: "You wait until I see my friends outside! They might have warned me about this!" But on the outside, I appeared totally calm.

Having slid down on to the floor, leaving a trail of slime behind me, I waited for the onslaught. At this point, the man had not uttered a word, but now he barked out instructions, presumably to the lady, since I couldn't understand a word. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw him catching hold of a rope suspended from the ceiling, and then I was ground into the floor as if a steamroller had run over me. I don't know why he bothered with a rope, since it appeared to make no difference to the weight crushing me down.



When he finally stopped, I slid to my feet like a cartoon character that has been run over and resembles a sheet of thin paper! I suppose it's one way to lose weight! I could patent it for use in health clubs in England.

The final humiliation was having to practice an exercise which I was to do every day, according to Mr. Ropeman, and involved swinging the hips round as if doing the hula hoop. At this point, the fact I had no clothes on was immaterial - any dignity I had had before was long gone. Wrapped in a towel, I staggered out of the treatment

room to rejoin my friends, who were agog to know how it had gone since, according to them, the only sound issuing from the room had been long drawn-out groans from yours truly! "What on earth was going on in there?" they demanded to know. When I explained the procedure, they were in fits of laughter, since none of them had had that treatment.

"That's all very well," I protested. "What I do object to is that none of you warned me I had to take my clothes off!"

My friends looked aghast. It must have been the look on my face that did it, because one by one they started to laugh. "I don't know how to break this to you," said one, "but none of us did have to take our clothes off!"

"Perhaps it was the nature of the treatment," said another, doubtfully.

"Or the fact you had 'gullible' written all over your forehead," quipped a third.

I shall probably never know, but I like to believe the best in people and I am sure it was all for the best possible reasons that I was subjected to such an embarrassing ordeal. Of course, my friends thought it was hilarious and are constantly reminding me about it. One even bought me a hula hoop on the strength of it!

But the final laugh was mine. Since that day, I have never suffered from sciatica, so Mr Ropeman is vindicated in my eyes! I just hope and pray I'm not featured somewhere on You Tube, demonstrating the hula hoop minus the hoop!!!!



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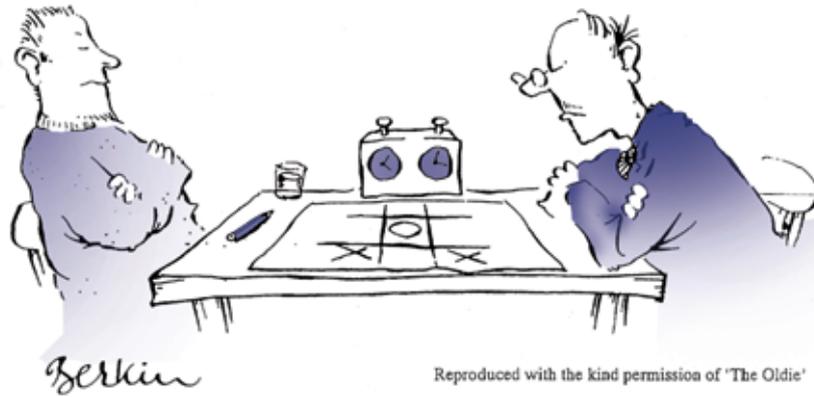
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