

The Saint Raphael Link

Some Periodic Ramblings of the Prior

February 2014 (Issue 10)

Dear Friends,

***Fight the good fight with all thy might,
Christ is thy strength and Christ thy right
Lay hold on life and it shall be
Thy joy and crown eternally.***

Do you find that just occasionally life begins to weigh heavy? I suppose that this happens to us all from time to time.

Pressures of one sort or another begin to build up. Perhaps at work where we are given more duties or responsibilities; then there are the demands of everyday life and the running of a home and family which can make us feel stressed; and so it goes on.

Sacred Scripture reminds us that when the apostles returned to Jesus and told him all about what they had been doing, I am sure that Jesus would have understood exactly how they were all feeling. He knew that with all their coming and going, the apostles had no time even to eat.

I don't know about you, but I can't even count the number of times that I missed lunch and worked right through the day without food. There have even been times when I have gone to work one day and returned home the following day with only hot drinks to keep me going.

Such like demands were placed on the apostles so that Jesus said to them: *'You must come away to some lonely place all by yourselves and rest for a while'*.

Scripture tells us that off they went in a boat, planning to spend some time

Email: revgeoffreyrobinson@ntlworld.com / Tele: 07817 82562

in solitude and just relax from the pressures of everyday life.

Unfortunately, their hope of some time to themselves for rest and relaxation was dashed, as the crowds guessed what they were up to, and where they were planning to go. So, when they arrived, people from all the surrounding areas were waiting for them.

Now at one level you may think what a wonderful situation to be in, where people were flocking from miles around to see and hear what the apostles were teaching. But unfortunately, you and I live in a society that really couldn't care less about established religion; and I wonder why that is?

Perhaps it has something to do with selfishness and pride; of believing that as Christians we are rather better than anyone else. Well, I believe that it is attitudes such as these that have driven people away from church, and they will continue to do so until people stop putting themselves first.

There really has never been such an acute problem in our land as there is at present, where all that seems to matter to people is fulfilment of their own desires. We only have to look around within our communities, even at some religious groups, and within our places of work, to see just how arrogance, selfishness and pride seem to flourish when people turn their backs on God and his teachings.

For me, Sacred Scripture is as relevant now as the day it was written. In particular, the short passage in St Mark's Gospel (6: 30-34), which speaks about

Jesus who took pity on the people because they were like *'sheep without a shepherd'*. In other words, all constructive direction had gone out of their lives and one selfish act followed the next.

What will Jesus see when he looks at us? Will there be need for his pity or will he be able to smile because we have fought the good fight with all our might. Amen.

+ *Geoffrey* GRAND PRIOR

For your Prayers:



Beryl Anderton / Mary Gallagher / Gillian Gaiter / Norman Glover / Lesley Fudge / Thelma Thompson / Paul Shaw / Sheila Hogarth / Ivy Holland / Maddie and Alan Penlington / Ruth Barr / Simon Taylor / Kathleen Roberts / Suzie Jeng / Hilery Robinson / Tracey Solley / Ian & Anne Weatherall / Marlene Addy / Pauline Weatherall / Graham McCrudden / Ray & Doreen Connell / Margaret Smith / Florence Palmer / Sadie Sutton / Tony Kirby / Philip Coope / Peter Bell / Bishop Keith Hunter / Margaret Waterhouse / Norman Winstanley / Ruby & Calvin Brindley (*Gozo*) / John Leatherland, bishop / William Collier / Roy & Linda Smith / Tania Walker / Pamela (*Masih - pronounced Massey*) / Tommy Ryan / John Bartle / Michael Greer / Brian Lee (*OSRaphael*) / Brian Adams / Gwen Cordell / John Bodkin / Leah Uttley / Paula Lester / Vicky Grimshaw / Patricia Grant / Elena Grady (and parents) / Brian Barber.

Answers to Locations:

1. St Mary's Church Bury Lancashire. 2. Birmingham Oratory (inside) and 3. Edinburgh with the castle in background.

Calendar of Saints



ST AGABUS THE PROPHET

Feast Day 13th February

A prophet twice mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (XI 28 / XXI 10-12) A Carmelite legend has led to his being usually represented in art robed in the Carmelite Habit and holding the model of a church.

Jesu, the Very Thought of Thee

Jesu, the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills the breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.

Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame,
Nor can the memory find
A sweeter sound than Thy blest Name,
O Saviour of mankind!

O hope of every contrite heart,
O joy of all the meek,
To those who fall, how kind Thou art!
How good to those who seek!

But what to those who find? Ah, this
Nor tongue nor pen can show;
The love of Jesu, what it is,
None but His loved ones know.

Jesu, our only joy be Thou,
As Thou our prize will be;
Jesu be Thou our glory now,
And through eternity.

Hymns often raise odd associations in the mind. This hymn written by Bernard of Clairvaux, always takes me to the green, mountainous country beyond Grenoble in France and to, La Grande Chartreuse. Its secluded position in the mountains makes it a remote spot even today, but nothing to what it was in the spring of 1125 when Bernard came riding up the ravines to visit it.

Bernard's letters had already made him famous, but his hosts were disappointed to see him tiding such a splendid horse and sitting on so fine a saddle. It was mentioned to Bernard, who was surprised at the criticism. Although he

had ridden miles on it he had not noticed, he said, how fine the saddle was, and in any case the horse was not his: it had been lent to him for the journey by his uncle!

His friends were happy again, and marvelled at Bernard's deep contemplation which had hidden from him what they saw at first glance. He was later riding by the lake of Geneva, and his companion asked him what he thought of the lake. 'What lake?' asked Bernard.

Few in Christian history were more deeply devoted to Jesus in every thought and action than Bernard of Clairvaux.

Seven centuries afterwards David Livingstone wrote in his African journal, 'The hymn of St. Bernard on the name of Christ pleases me so; it rings in my ears as I wonder across the wide, wide wilderness.'

Poetry Corner

O COME QUICKLY

by Thomas Campion

Never weather-beaten sail more willingly bent to shore,
Never tired pilgrim's limbs affected slumber more,
Than my wearied sprite now longs to fly out of my troubled breast:
O come quickly, sweetest Lord, and take my soul to rest!

Ever blooming are the joys of heaven's high Paradise,
Cold age deafs not there our ears nor vapour dims our eyes:
Glory there the sun outshines; whose beams the Blessed only see:
O come quickly, glorious Lord, and raise my sprite to Thee!

Cook's Corner



SPICY LAMB CHOPS

(Serves 4)

Ingredients:

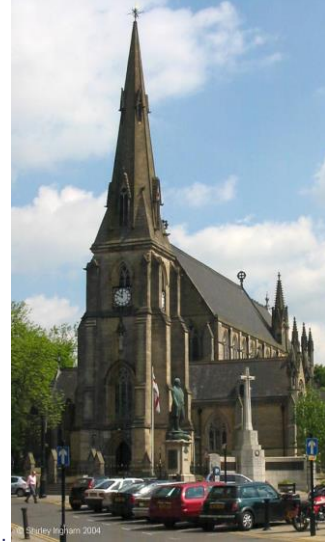
4 chump chops of lamb / oil / 1 small chopped onion / 1oz (25g) butter / 1 large chopped cooking apple / 2 tbsps tomato puree / 1oz

(25g) brown sugar / 1-2tsp Worcestershire sauce / salt and pepper to taste.

Method:

Brush chops with oil and grill 8-10 minutes each side. Sauce: Fry onion in butter until soft add remaining sauce ingredients, cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Serve chops topped with sauce.

Guess the Locations



1.



2.



3.



The Healing Teaching &
Chivalric Order of St Raphael