

The Saint Raphael Link

Some Periodic Ramblings of the Prior

OCTOBER 2012 (Issue 2)

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Dear Friends,

Occasionally, I spend some time in the countryside 'getting stoned' as my wife likes to put it.

That is a term which is applied to me when I accompany a friend surveying and sometimes even restoring 'stone' milestones.

For someone like me who's interested in history, it is a hobby or past-time which links me to our country's historical past more than you might think.

So earlier this year, we set off to search the A682, from Barrowford to Gisburn. Along that road we passed a Toll House, numerous milestones and even some Eighteenth Century boundary stones. With just a little imagination I could visualise in times past, farmers using the route to take their animals to market in Gisburn and, in the other direction, their fleeces for processing to the Mills in Colne.

After a very pleasant lunch taken in a local hostelry in Gisburn, we then decided to inspect some more up-to-date, mid Eighteenth Century cast iron milestone along the A59. But to our surprise we found that one of them had suffered some damage and had been broken into two pieces.

Decisions, decisions - should we simply record the damage and move on, or should we try some remedial treatment. You guessed it – we decided to repair it; and so the salvage process began. Into the back of the car the damaged milestone went for transportation to Leyland, where all the necessary preparation process would begin.

Preparation is an important process in many areas of our lives. Think, for example, of the hours we may have spent preparing to pass examinations, renovating an old house or even just the preparation needed to celebrate one of the many landmarks which occur from time to time in our individual lives. Yes, preparation is a very important ingredient for each one of us.

Thinking about this recently brought to mind the 'Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids'. Five of whom were wise, but five of whom were foolish. If you like, five had taken the time to prepare to meet the bridegroom; but five simply couldn't be bothered and this resulted in the doors being locked against them. (Matthew 25:1-13)

Jesus told this story to his disciples and it is a very important lesson for each one of us today; that we must spend time in preparation.

But unfortunately, how often have we heard people say: '*O we didn't go to church last Sunday, we were on holiday*'. Or: '*I go to church when I can, because I have such a busy life*'. And all too often these days we hear: '*O I don't go to church; I can't be bothered with all that*'.

Quite frankly, the choice is ours; we can be like the foolish bridesmaids and please ourselves in this life. But the danger with such attitudes is that when death does come, we risk the heavenly doors being locked against us.

I don't know about you, but I would prefer to spend some time now in preparation for what lies ahead: So as sacred scripture says: '**Stay awake because you do not know either the day or the hour**'. Amen.

+Geoffrey

Calendar of Saints:

St Luke – Feast Day 18th October

He was a first century Greek of Antioch and a physician by profession, who became the fellow worker of Saint Paul and remained with him until the great apostles' martyrdom. He wrote the third gospel – 'St Paul's Gospel' –

and the Acts of the Apostles. The later tradition that he was a painter seems to be based on the picturesque style of his narrative. There is no evidence that he died a martyr.

Can they hear us?

The historic Christian practice of asking our departed brothers and sisters in Christ - the saints - for their intercession has come under attack in the last few hundred years. Though the practice dates back to the earliest days of Christianity and is shared by Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, the other Eastern Christians, and some Anglicans—meaning that all told it is shared by more than three quarters of all Christians on earth. Nonetheless, it still comes under heavy attack from many within the Protestant movement that started in the sixteenth century.

One charge made against it is that the saints in heaven cannot even hear our prayers, making it useless to ask for their intercession. However, Scripture indicates, that those in heaven are aware of the prayers of those on earth. This can be seen, for example, in Revelation 5:8, where John depicts the saints in heaven offering our prayers to God under the form of *"golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints."* But if the saints in heaven are offering our prayers to God, then they must be aware of our prayers. They are aware of our petitions and present them to God by interceding for us.

Some may say that in this passage the prayers being offered were not addressed to the saints in heaven, but directly to God. Yet such observations would only strengthen the fact that those in heaven can hear our prayers, for then the saints would be aware of our prayers even when they are not directed to them!

In any event, it is clear from Revelation 5:8 that the saints in heaven do actively intercede for us. We are explicitly told by John that the incense they offer to God is the prayers of the saints.

Prayers are not physical things and cannot be physically offered to God. Thus the saints in heaven are offering our prayers to God mentally. In other words, they are interceding.



No Time to Pray:

I knelt to pray but not for long, I had too much to do.

I had to hurry and get to work for bills would soon be due. So I knelt and said a hurried prayer, and jumped up off my knees.

My Christian duty was now done; my soul could rest at ease. All day long I had no time, to spread a word of cheer.

No time to speak of Christ to friends, they'd laugh at me I'd fear.
No time, no time, too much to do, that was my constant cry,

No time to give to souls in need; but at last the time, the time to die.

I went before the Lord, I came, I stood with downcast eyes.

For in his hands God held a book; it was the Book of Life.
God looked into his book and said "your name I cannot find".

"I once was going to write it down but never found the time" by Kathryn Neff Perry

Did You Know?

Fact 1 - The names of the Apostles are:

1. Peter (also known as Simon Peter)
2. Andrew (the brother of Simon Peter)
3. James (the son of Zebedee)
4. John (the brother of James)
5. Philip
6. Bartholomew
7. Thomas
8. Matthew
9. James the Less (the son of Alphaeus)
10. Jude Thaddaeus (also known as Judas the brother of James)
11. Simon the Zealot
12. Judas Iscariot (the one who betrayed Jesus)

Fact 2 - An apostle was one of the original 12 disciples chosen by Christ to preach his gospel.

Fact 3 - The 12 Apostles of Jesus were missionaries, or leaders of the religious mission in the early Christian Church.

Fact 4 - The 12 apostles were the followers of Jesus who were sent to spread the Christian message after his death and resurrection.

Fact 5 - These disciples of Jesus are referred to as Apostles after the death of Jesus, when they moved on to become missionaries.

Fact 6 - The lives of these men are detailed in the New Testament of the Holy Bible in the following books: The four Gospels - Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, The Acts of the Apostles, The Epistles - letters of instruction by Peter, Paul, John and others to the early, newly established churches



For Your Prayers:

Please do not hesitate to make a request either by phone or email for anyone you know who is in need of regular prayer.

Rhys – a four year old boy that had a brain tumour removed and has just returned from USA after receiving follow-on ‘Proton’ Treatment.

Pat (Patricia) – developed very serious leg ulcers and had to spend several weeks in hospital receiving intravenous antibiotics.

Michael – developed a trapped nerve in his neck. He has undergone an operation to relieve the intense pain and is now recovering at home.

Tracey – a young mother of two children suffered from over-prescribed drugs to alleviate arthritis. Her damaged liver is now beginning to regenerate.



Cook's Corner:

Ginger Millionaire's Shortbread

Ingredients:

For the shortbread base:

75g unsalted butter / 60g caster sugar / 225g plain flour / 2 balls of stem ginger (3 if you like a stringer taste), finely chopped / 1tsp golden syrup.

For the caramel:

140g unsalted butter / 397g tin light condensed milk / 4tbsp golden syrup / 20g caster sugar.

For the chocolate topping:

200g dark chocolate.

Method:

Heat the oven to Gas Mark 3 / 160C / fan oven 140C.

To make the shortbread, place the butter, caster sugar and flour in a bowl. Rub with fingers until the mix resembles fine breadcrumbs. Add the stemmed ginger and syrup, then press the mixture into a lightly greased oblong Swiss roll or square brownie tin.

Bake in the oven for five minutes, then turn to gas mark 2, 150C / 130C and bake for another 25-30 minutes until lightly golden. Leave to cool.

To make the caramel, melt the butter in a saucepan then add the rest of the ingredients and bring to the boil, stirring all the time. Gently simmer for 10-15 minutes, until golden in colour and thicker. Pour over the cooled shortbread and leave to cool. Then melt the chocolate in a bowl set over a pan of boiling water. Pour over the top of the caramel. Leave to set, and then cut into squares in the tin.

(Serves 10-12)

Hidden Books:

Can you find fifteen books from the Bible hidden in the following text?

‘I came upon this remarkable paragraph and, having read it several times, realised that there were fifteen Books of the Bible hidden in the text. I know not if it was by design or purely a fluke, I challenged my friends to find the fifteen and some kept looking so hard for the facts they became confused and questioned the truth of the statement. Some queried the numbers and a few were in a jam, especially since the names of the books were not capitalised. To others it was too big a job to some a complete revelation. I must confess I found it a most fascinating search, especially when I had completed the task. Yes, there are some really difficult ones to spot; you may require judges to help you. I will admit it usually takes some time to find the fifteenth; there will be loud lamentations when it is found. One friend said she brews a cup of tea to help her concentrate. See how well you compete. Relax now, for there are fifteen books of the Bible hidden here.’

(Answers will appear in the next issue of The Link)

Concentrate on these Sentences:

- 1] To get something you never had, you have to do something you never did. When God takes something from your grasp, He's not punishing you, but merely opening your hands to receive something better.
- 2] The will of God will never take you were the Grace of God will not protect you. Something good will happen to you today; something that you have been waiting to hear. This is not a joke; someone will call you by phone or will speak to you about something that you are waiting to hear.
- 3] There comes a point in your life when you realise who matters, who never did, who won't anymore, and who always will. So, don't worry about people from your past, there is a reason why they didn't make it to your future. *(Author Unknown)*



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