

The Saint Raphael Link

Some Periodic Ramblings of the Prior

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Dear Members

Now is the time of year when we can often see tractors darting in and out of fields. Sometime they even cause tail backs on our country lanes. Perhaps even on the odd occasion we may be tempted to lose our temper when they cause us delays to our journeys.

But, it is quite easy to forget just how many difficulties our farmers have to endure in this country; difficulties which are brought about by inclement weather and the import of cheaper produce into our shops and supermarkets from overseas.

Now it seems to me that when it comes to facing difficulties and failures in life; the farming communities sound a lot like many of us who work long and hard, and then only occasionally succeed.

All of us have to deal with failures in our hopes, in our dreams, and in our great expectations.

Jesus certainly had to face a whole lot of apparent failures; and He knew full well the pain involved. He was born and raised in Nazareth and his own hometown folks rejected Him. His own Hebrew countrymen ignored His message.

Even his handpicked twelve apostles? Well, one of them sold Him out for thirty pieces of silver and the others fled when He was crucified.

Peter wasn't too swift to take His message to heart, Thomas was the doubter, and the others weren't much better either.

Well; up to this point my remarks all sound terribly dismal and discouraging. But my point is that we need to remember that Jesus did not let apparent failure stop Him.

In the parable of the sower (Matt:13), Jesus spoke about a crop that yielded a harvest in successful amounts, some yields bringing spectacular success.

You and I, like all good farmers who continually face disasters of every sort, need to seriously engage ourselves in the enterprise of faith and hope; planting the best of what we have, and then letting God do the rest.

Our present world is a mess, but it always has been. We need to see that there is also an amazing amount of goodness in it. The greatest miracle of all isn't found at Lourdes, Fatima or even England's Nazareth (in Walsingham): it's found in those around us, in those who are, in spite of terrible odds, yielding up love, kindness, caring, and sensitivity thirty, sixty and a hundred fold.

You and I are Christians and believe that at the end of our lives we will meet Christ face to face. When that time comes, how will He judge us, and by what criteria?

In the 25th Chapter of St Matthew's gospel there is a very big clue:

"Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothed thee? And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.'

Now it seems to me that despite our many failed attempts at following our Blessed Lord's teachings, and being like the grain that fell on stony ground, there is still some hope.

Jesus knows our human failings; He knows our doubts, our fears and our disobedience. But if we persevere and seek to 'Sow the Seed' along the way; one day we will each be granted a share in the Eternal Harvest Home in Heaven. Amen.



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Vera Balmforth / Tracey Rouse / Paul Sheridan / Robert Walker / Alan Pearson, bishop / David Kiteley / Denise & James (mental health) / John James / Valerie Fisher / Roy Howard / Albert Jones / (Baby) Charlotte Park / Nicole Vendettuoli / Margaret Rixon / Vivienne Ainsworth / Ivor MacFarlane / Shaun Humphries / Lucy Riding / Veronica Hawcroft / Amelia Radomski / Mary Flannigan / John & Mary Howard / Ida Simpson / Bernadette Delaney / Alexander Stoneham / Edward Billington / Katie Baker / Mary Cumberbach / Debbie Munday / Jean and Alan Rothwell / Michael & Anne Stephen / John Monkhouse / Michael Aymes / Gaynor Smith (nee James) / Beryl & Julie Stelling / Diane Beresford / Doreen Devitt / Joan Armstrong / Brian & Brigitte Duffet / Eileen Duffy / Tony Kirby / Ronald Ball / Ian Cameron / Terry Duffy / Diane Shipton and parents Derek & Delia / Angela Billerness / Charlotte Ward / Juliette Burglé / Sally Hayes / Stephen / Raymond Ketland / Fr Chris Sterry / Nick Brooks / Pam Crane / Philip Coupe / Yvonne Doyle / Ruth Moody & family.

Answers to Locations: 1. Lichfield Cathedral / 2, Concord aircraft. 3. St James' Palace.

Calendar of Saints



Saint Lawrence:

Was one of seven deacons who were in charge of giving help to the poor and the needy. When a persecution broke out, Pope St. Sixtus was condemned to death. As he was led to execution, Lawrence followed him weeping, "Father, where are you going without your deacon?" he said. "I am not leaving you, my son," answered the Pope. "in three days you will follow me." Full of joy, Lawrence gave to the poor the rest of the money he had on hand and even sold expensive vessels to have more to give away.

The Prefect of Rome, a greedy pagan, thought the Church had a great

fortune hidden away. So he ordered Lawrence to bring the Church's treasure to him. The Saint said he would, in three days. Then he went through the city and gathered together all the poor and sick people supported by the Church. When he showed them to the Prefect, he said: "This is the Church's treasure!"

In great anger, the Prefect condemned Lawrence to a slow, cruel death. The Saint was tied on top of an iron grill over a slow fire that roasted his flesh little by little, but Lawrence was burning with so much love of God that he almost did not feel the flames. In fact, God gave him so much strength and joy that he even joked. "Turn me over," he said to the judge. "I'm done on this side!" And just before he died, he said, "It's cooked enough now." Then he prayed that the city of Rome might be converted to Jesus and that the Catholic Faith might spread all over the world. After that, he went to receive the martyr's reward.

Saint Lawrence's feast day is August 10th.

Story Corner

The pain of forgiveness

by Rachel Tulloch

This story is of two friends who lived in a small community in Kentucky in the year 1912. Ben Feltner and Thad Coulter were part of a close-knit agrarian community with strong ties to each other, to the land, and to hard work. Yet tragedy ensued when Thad invested in a risky business deal with his son and lost out. Humiliated and falling into despair, Thad drank himself into a stupor and then headed over to ask his friend Ben for help. Ben did not want to discuss options with Thad in his condition, and so refused to talk with him until the next day when he was sober. However, Thad succumbed to the darkness creeping over him and returned home to get his

gun, which he then used to shoot Ben Feltner in a drunken rage.

The rest of the story was a beautiful tale of forgiveness and mercy offered by Ben's family and the community. Yet sadly, Thad himself was unable to experience that forgiveness because he could not bear to live knowing he had killed his best friend, and so ended his own life.

The narrator then makes this profound comment: "People sometimes talk of God's love as if it's a pleasant thing. But it is terrible, in a way. Think of all it includes. It included Thad Coulter, drunk and mean and foolish, before he killed Mr. Feltner, and it included him afterwards."

"God's love is terrible, in a way. Think of all it includes." People often ask, "Could God not have forgiven people without going through the pain and the violence of the Cross?" As nice as that sounds, reality forces the response: When is forgiveness not painful? True forgiveness cannot occur unless the hurt is acknowledged and called for what it is.

When you look a wrong full in the face but choose to accept the hurt instead of returning it on the one who did it, that is always painful.

Jesus illustrates forgiveness by telling the story of a servant who owes his master more money than he could possibly repay (See Matthew 18:21-35). The master originally threatens to sell the servant's family and possessions to get some return for the debt, but when the servant begs for mercy, the master is gracious and forgives the debt. Yet the same servant not only refuses to forgive the debt of his fellow servant, but also has him thrown in prison as punishment.

Sometimes we treat forgiveness and justice as though they are mutually exclusive. If we choose the way of justice, we think the options are reparations or retribution—either the

guilty person makes up for a wrong or is punished for it. These are the only options the servant offered his debtor. Since the second servant could not repay, he was then punished.

However, the master chose the way of mercy when he forgave the debt, neither requiring reparation nor inflicting retribution.

If God has really forgiven us like the master forgave the servant, we ask, then why all the pain and death of the Cross? Does the Cross undermine God's mercy? Is it merely an underhanded way for God to force repayment from humanity or exact punishment on us?

In asking these questions, we betray a misunderstanding of both justice and forgiveness. Justice can never be achieved by reparation or retribution alone because like the servants' debts, true wrongs can never be repaid. The hurt and pain caused are not reversible. Punishing the guilty person does not undo the hurt either, even if it brings brief satisfaction to the victim, just as the first servant did not get his money back simply because the other man was in jail. Justice must be about much more than balancing out the wrongs of the world. It must be about making things right, about the kind of restoration that does not reverse the pain, but moves beyond it toward something new.

And just as wrongs cannot be erased by punishment or repayment, they cannot really be erased by simple forgiveness either. When the master forgives the servant's debt, the debt does not simply disappear. The master takes the loss! He accepts the full brunt of the debt himself.

Similarly, when a person forgives, he or she accepts the full brunt of the hurt or injustice rather than returning it on the one who caused it. Although it is painful, this is the way that healing and

restoration begin. This is why there is no way to avoid the bloody Cross. And this is why God's love is terrible.

Think of what it includes: us, with our best and our worst, with our failed attempts and outright cruelty, with our wrong motives for right actions and our right motives for wrong actions... us, with the mess we have made of the world, with our brokenness and despair, with our rebellions and inadequacies. We are the ones included in and redeemed by the deep and wide love of God.

Saint Paul is astonished by this reality when he emphasizes that Christ died for us while we were still sinners (Romans 5:8)!

Instead of demanding that we pay what we cannot, instead of punishing us for not paying what we cannot, the God we see in Jesus Christ accepts the loss himself and opens his arms even to those who would murder him.



The Cross does not represent God's mercy being tamed by his anger; rather, it demonstrates that God's mercy is much bigger than we think. The Cross is a graphic picture of God's terrible love.

Cook's Corner:



Ingredients:

1/4 cup shelled, roasted unsalted pistachios / 1 cup arugula / 1/4 cup butter, softened / 2 boneless rib-eye steaks (each about 12 oz.) / One pound of asparagus, trimmed /

2 tablespoons olive oil / 1 1/2
teaspoons kosher salt / 1 1/2
teaspoons pepper.

Preparation;

1. Whirl pistachios and arugula in a food processor until minced. Add butter and whirl until smooth, scraping down inside of bowl as needed. Transfer to a small container and chill.
2. Coat steaks and asparagus with oil and season with salt and pepper. Grill steaks, turning once, until done the way you like, 6 to 15 minutes for medium-rare. Grill asparagus in last few minutes, turning once, until tender-crisp.
3. Transfer everything to a cutting board, dollop steaks with butter, and tent with foil. Let rest for 5 minutes. Slice steaks and serve with asparagus.

**If you can't find unsalted pistachios, use unsalted butter to balance the salty nuts.*

Make ahead: Pistachio butter, up to 1 week, chilled.

Guess the Locations:



1.



2.



3.



Thanks to Julie Seeto

11-14-2002

WHY DON'T YOU STOP WONDERING WHAT'S
WRONG WITH THE WORLD AND READ THE MANUAL



Thanks to Enoch

11-07-2002

My sincerest apologies to anyone who
got injured last week when we
scheduled the bake sale and weight
watchers for the same evening

**THE INSTALLATION OF THE
NEW GRAND MASTER
TAKES PLACE ON
SUNDAY 21ST AUGUST 2016**
at the 'OCCUK' Cathedral & Priory
Church, Rugeley, Staffordshire

All Welcome



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Chivalric Order of St Raphael

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