

# The Saint Raphael Link

Some Periodic Ramblings of the Prior

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## Dear Members

The Christian priest joins one man to one woman by joining their right hands together; then wrapping his stole around them he proclaims: **“What God has joined together, let no one put asunder”**.

You and I live in a broken world; a world where almost every moral issue has been wiped out. Even some denominations of the Christian Church allow its ministers to live together in church property in the full knowledge that same-sex relationships take place. The Government have recently legalized civil contracts under the guise of “marriage”. Even the catholic church sometimes even turns a blind eye to sexual relationship of their clergy in the full knowledge that by doing so they are condoning the breaking of the solemn vow of celibacy.

What God has joined together, let not man put asunder. You see, for a Christian, marriage is much more than just two people who vow to be together until death. Christian marriage is a picture of the very union between Christ and his bride, the church. We are, all together, the bride of Christ. He is the ever-faithful bridegroom. We are the damsel in distress – the distress of sin and death. He is the knight in shining armour, our champion, who rescues us from the dragon (the Evil One) and wins for us a happily ever after.

And is it an accident that the text about marriage is followed by Jesus' regard for the little children? For one of the great blessings of marriage is that through the one flesh union, God brings forth new life. In the bearing of children, the two, quite literally, become one.

Even as much as we are part of his bride, the church, so also are we, through Christ, children of God. And Jesus regards even little children.

I remember as a child of about 8 or 9, being given the great responsibility of shopping for some groceries. And so I set off to walk the mile or so to the village store where I stood at the counter, waiting for my turn. But the people behind the counter didn't seem to notice me, and only waited on the adults. Maybe they didn't think that I was old enough to do my own shopping. Or maybe I was just too short to be seen. Whatever the reason, I was ignored as a child by the shop assistants.

But Jesus regards little ones. He has a special place in his heart for them. He touches them and blesses them, blesses even us. He gives us all blessings at the font. He brings us to himself, even when some would say the blessing isn't for children. He calls us his own, calls us by name, and commends us to the Father.

Receiving his kingdom like a little child means to receive him, Jesus, with childlike faith and trust in him to make it all right.

Our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us about marriage and children. He calls a sin a sin, and points us back to basics when it comes to what is right and true, and just.

But he is also the one who brings forgiveness, for all who sin - for the divorcee and those who dishonour marriage in any way – even some churches and our nation's government have separated themselves from God by sin; believing themselves to be above God's Law. He brings life to those whose lives are torn apart and in tatters. He brings salvation, renewal and reconciliation to all who receive him like a child, and look to the blessings of his cross rather than trusting in our own devices.

Therefore, **“what God has joined together, let no one put asunder”**. Amen.

With good wishes and every blessing.

+Geoffrey – GRAND PRIOR



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## Calendar of Saints



### Saint Abraham:

St. Abraham Kidunaia was born to a wealthy family during the third century. After receiving an excellent education, Abraham was encouraged to get married. He followed the wishes of his parents, but after the wedding ceremony, he told his bride his desire to remain a virgin and dedicate his life to God. His bride

accepted this resolution and Abraham retired to a hermitage near Edessa, a city near Mesopotamia.

Ten years after he retreated from the world, his parents died and left a great amount of wealth to Abraham. As soon as he was aware of this, he asked a friend to distribute the sum to charitable causes. Through actions like this and his deep prayer life, Abraham became known throughout the region as a holy man and many came to him for guidance.

His reputation even came to the ears of the bishop, and when Edessa became poisoned with sin and idolatry, Abraham was ordained and asked to go to the city preaching reform. Abraham was greatly distressed by this, but obeyed the wishes of the bishop.

When Abraham arrived in Edessa, none of the residents would listen to his words. Eventually, through constant prayer, Abraham converted them. Once the conversions took place, Abraham returned to his hermitage to continue his life of solitary prayer.

Around the year 360 Abraham died after a life of faithful service to God.

### Guess The Locations:

1. Mojacar in Spain
2. The Trafford Centre in Manchester
3. York Minster

## Story Corner

Shoes on the Mantelpiece



There was once a very poor orphan who wanted nothing more in the world than to belong to a family. Finally, his opportunity came. He was eight years old and a family wanted to adopt him! Introductions were made, papers were signed, and just 6 days after his eighth birthday he left for his new home. He took with him his hope and his possessions – the old worn and torn clothes he was wearing and a single soft toy. His new parents were excited to have him with them, and wanted him to feel like one of the family. A special celebration dinner was held, he was given his own room, and he was introduced to the other kids in the street. His new parents took those old clothes, threw them away and bought him

beautiful new clothes. They bought him a bike and more toys, and pretty soon he began to feel just like all the other kids in the neighbourhood, loved and part of a family. One thing however was curious. The young boy's old shoes, the ones with the big holes in them, weren't tossed out with the rest of his clothes. His new father placed them on the mantelpiece.

It wasn't long before the newly adopted son found out why. Every time that boy did something wrong his father would go and get those shoes and say "Look at all we've done for you. We took you in when you had nothing, but look at how you've behaved"

Unfortunately, we do the same thing all too often in our relationships. We dredge up the past and throw it back in someone's face, never letting them forget how much they're in our debt. Forgiveness means throwing out the shoes as well as the clothes, refusing to dredge up the past and make it a reason for action in the present.

### Cook's Corner:



Allhallows is on the horizon and pumpkins are in abundance, so make the most of the glut with this delicious, easy pumpkin soup. Healthy but still full of autumnal flavour, thanks in part to a touch of cinnamon, it's a perfect warming lunch or light supper dish.

#### Ingredients:

250g pumpkin flesh / 1 onion / 500ml skimmed milk / 2 carrots / Pinch of cinnamon / Salt & pepper, to taste

#### Method:

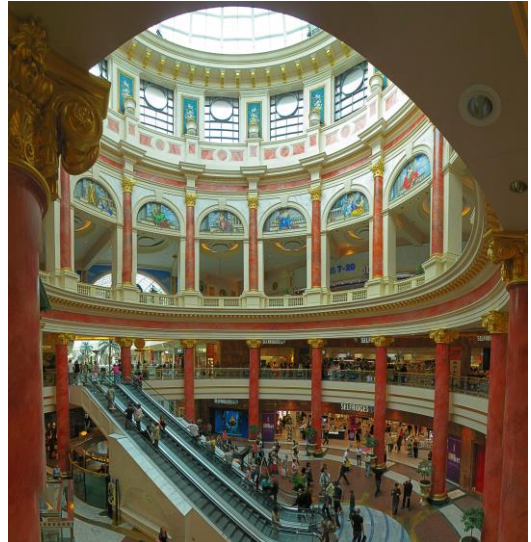
Cut the pumpkin into little squares. Peel the onion and carrots and cut them into small slices.

Place all vegetables with the skimmed milk into a saucepan and a pinch of cinnamon. Then bake them until the pumpkin flesh is soft and smooth (this will take about half an hour). Stir this mixture to make it smooth and heat it again, adding some water. Depending on the consistency you want, leave this for about another half an hour. Add salt and pepp

### Guess the Locations:



1.

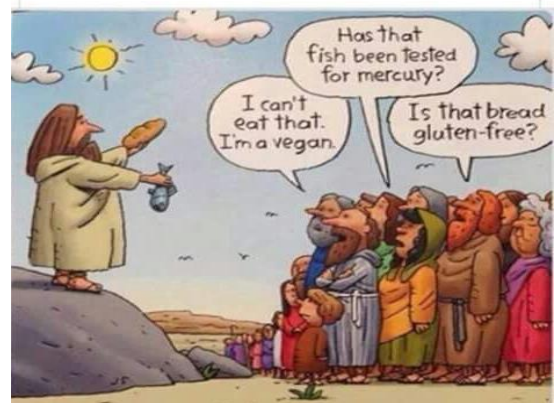


2.



3.

If Jesus tried to feed the 5000 today... :)



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