

The Saint Raphael Link

Some Periodic Ramblings of the Prior

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Dear Friends,

May I first of all, wish Members and Officers of the Healing, Teaching and Chivalric Order of Saint Raphael, a very Happy New Year.



Some time ago, I was driving along in the car listening to a story on Radio 4, read in a very stylish way by Joanna Lumley. It was an engaging tale about a teenage schoolgirl, who when acting as a school monitor, came across a pile of exam papers for a forthcoming examination which it was crucial for her to pass.

It transpired that the young lady in question must have held very high moral standards as she actually paused to consider her feelings of temptation. Should I or should I not take a sneaky look. Of course there are those who would not give a second thought to cheating, particularly if it led to passing an exam, gaining some other sort of unfair advantage, or even manipulating a situation for financial gain.

Each and every one of us face these sorts of dilemmas in our daily lives from time to time. There really is no shame in being tempted – the shame is when we fail to do what is right and just. Failure to act with integrity always results in betrayal: Betrayal of others, but more importantly, betrayal of ourselves.

For Christians, Lent which always begins on Ash Wednesday falls this year on the 13th February. The Lenten period is always a good time to consider our personal failures and how these failures affect others. That I believe is why the compilers of our Lectionary have used for the Gospel Reading for the First Sunday in Lent, the account of when Jesus was tempted

in the desert.

The devil tried very hard to overcome good with evil intent. Firstly by appealing to the fact that Jesus was hungry after fasting for forty days in the desert; but having failed in this, the devil then appeals to Jesus to prove his Divinity by demonstrating how his Holy Angels would support and protect him. Then, failing for the second time, the devil decides to pull out all the stops, so to speak, by offering Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in all their splendour. I wonder how many of us would be able to resist such an offer.

Just think about it, being given the world and all the money and property that go with it. Well for some I suppose that would be fine; so long as they got what they wanted. But for those of us who try and follow Jesus that way is not an option. No, if we want to retain our integrity and our immortal souls, we should cry: 'Be off Satan!'

Joanna Lumley's story of the teenage schoolgirl illustrated to me just how easy it is to succumb to temptation. But remember that if we do give way to temptation we risk holding hands with the devil for all eternity.

I for one will try my best to shout 'Be off Satan!' – How about you?

+ Geoffrey



Cook's Corner:

SCOTTISH COBLER

Ingredients:

1oz butter / 2tbsp oil / 1 large onion, chopped / 1lb beef mince / 1oz plain flour / $\frac{3}{4}$ pint of beef stock / 4oz chopped mushrooms / seasoning / 2 stems celery, chopped / 4oz self-raising flour / 4oz oatmeal / 4oz margarine / beaten egg

Method:

Melt butter and oil and fry onion for 3 minutes. Add mince and fry until brown. Stir in the plain flour, and add the stock gradually. Add mushrooms, seasoning and celery. Bring to the boil and simmer for $\frac{3}{4}$ hour. Meanwhile

make up Cobbler topping: sieve the self-raising flour, add 4oz oatmeal, and rub in the margarine. Mix to a fairly firm dough with water. Roll out approximately ½ inch thick, and cut into rings, with large and small pastry cutter. Put cooled meat mixture into a deep casserole, and top with oatmeal Cobblers. Brush with beaten egg and sprinkle with extra oatmeal. Bake at Gas Mark 7 / Electric 200C for 20-25 minutes.

For your Prayers:

Baby Isobel:

(In hospital with heart related problems)

Reece Ryan aged 4:

(Recovering at home after 'Proton' treatment in America for a brain tumour)

Mary Dalton & Brian Keane

(Both Members of our Order who are now recovering from individual illnesses)

Anne & Gordon Gentry

(Members suffering with heart and chest related illnesses)

Calendar of Saints:

ST BONIFACE OF LAUSANNE

Feast Day 19th February

He was born in Brussels and educated by nuns of La Cambre (Camera S. Mariae), near his native city. He then studied at Paris, where he taught dogma, afterwards transferring his Chair to the University of Cologne. About the year 1230 he was made bishop of Lausanne, but owing to the impossibility of reaching an understanding with several of his clergy, he resigned (1239) and henceforth lived at La Cambre as chaplain to the nuns. The Cistercians claim him for their Order.

The Office of Grand Prior

(Here are some interesting background details of the mediaeval Office of Prior. The modern-day equivalent within military religious orders, mainly function as chaplains and have certain responsibilities of a spiritual and pastoral nature to carry out).

In the Benedictine Order and its branches, in the Premonstratensian Order, and in the military orders there are three kinds of priors: the claustral prior, the conventual prior, and the obedientiary prior.

The Claustral Prior (Latin *prior claustralis*), called dean in a few monasteries, holds the first place after the abbot (or grand-master in military orders), whom he assists in the government of the monastery, functioning effectively as the abbot's second-in-charge. He

has no ordinary jurisdiction by virtue of his office, since he performs the duties of his office entirely according to the will and under the direction of the abbot. His jurisdiction is, therefore, a delegated one and extends just as far as the abbot desires, or the constitutions of the congregation prescribe. He is appointed by the abbot, generally after a consultation in chapter with the professed monks of the monastery, and may be removed by him at any time. In many monasteries, especially larger ones, the claustral prior is assisted by a **sub prior**, which held the third place in the monastery. In former times there was in larger monasteries, besides the prior and the sub prior, also a third, fourth and sometimes even a fifth prior. Each of these was called *circator* (or *circator*), because it was his duty to make the rounds of the monastery to see whether anything was amiss and whether the brethren were intent on the work allotted to them respectively. He had no authority to correct or punish the brethren, but was to report to the claustral prior whatever he found amiss or contrary to the rules. In the Congregation of Cluny and others of the tenth, eleventh and twelfth centuries there was also a greater prior (*prior major*) who preceded the claustral prior in dignity and, besides assisting the abbot in the government of the monastery, had some delegated jurisdiction over external dependencies of the abbey. In the high days of Cluny, the abbot was assisted by a coadjutor styled Grand-Prior (*Grand-prieur* in French).

The Conventual Prior (Latin *prior conventualis*) is the independent superior of a monastery that is not an abbey (and which is therefore called a "priory"). In some orders, like the Benedictines, a monastery remains a priory until it is considered stable enough and large enough to be elevated to the rank of an abbey. In other Orders, like the Camaldolese and Carthusians, conventual priors are the norm and there are no abbots. (The superior of the major houses of Camaldolese nuns, however, is called an abbess). This title, in its feminine form **prioress**, is used for monasteries of nuns in the Dominican and Carmelite orders.

An Obedientiary Prior heads a monastery created as a satellite of an abbey. When an abbey becomes overlarge, or when there is need of a monastery in a new area, the abbot may appoint a group of monks under a prior to begin a new foundation, which remains a dependency of the mother abbey until such time as it is large and stable enough to become an independent abbey of its own.

A Prior Provincial is head of an area of certain Orders, notably the Dominicans, who are not cenobitic (monks) but mendicant friars. Among Dominicans, a convent, male or female, may be headed by a conventual prior, the province by a prior provincial, but the head of the whole Order is not called prior general, but Master General. In all these Orders the second superior of a monastery is called sub prior and his office is similar to that of the claustral prior in the Benedictine Order.

Now as I mentioned earlier, the modern-day equivalent of a Prior within a military religious order, generally acts as a chaplain for all its members. As your Chaplain, I am always available to offer prayer for specific individual needs, for the sick and dying and of course as a channel of our Saviour's healing grace through anointing with Holy Oil. For those members without specific links to a Christian priest or minister, a sacramental ministry is offered and other varied services can be arranged according to individual needs. Please do not hesitate to make contact with me if you feel that I can be of any help whatsoever.

**A Grace before Meals –
Written by Robert Burns**

Some hae meat and canna eat,
And some would eat that want it;
But we hae meat, and we can eat,
Sae let the Lord be thankit.

The Vicar of Bray (song)

The British Musical Miscellany, Volume I, 1734. Text as found in R. S. Crane, A Collection of English Poems 1660-1800. New York: Harper & Row, 1932.

"The Vicar of Bray" is a satirical song recounting the career of the Vicar of Bray and his contortions of principle in order to retain his ecclesiastic office despite the changes in the Established Church through the course of several English monarchs. The song is particularly interesting because of the number of (rather specific) allusions to English religious and political doctrines and events crammed into it:-

In good King Charles's golden days,
When Loyalty no harm meant;
A Zealous High-Church man I was,
And so I gain'd Preferment.
Unto my Flock I daily Preach'd,
Kings are by God appointed,
And Damn'd are those who dare resist,
Or touch the Lord's Anointed.
**And this is law, I will maintain
Unto my Dying Day, Sir.
That whatsoever King may reign,
I will be the Vicar of Bray, Sir!**

When Royal James possess the crown,
And popery grew in fashion;
The Penal Law I shouted down,
And read the Declaration:
The Church of Rome I found would fit
Full well my Constitution,
And I had been a Jesuit,
But for the Revolution.
And this is Law, &c.

When William our Deliverer came,
To heal the Nation's Grievance,
I turn'd the Cat in Pan again,
And swore to him Allegiance:
Old Principles I did revoke,
Set conscience at a distance,
Passive Obedience is a Joke,
A Jest is non-resistance.
And this is Law, &c.

When Royal Anne became our Queen,
Then Church of England's Glory,
Another face of things was seen,
And I became a Tory:
Occasional Conformists base
I Damn'd, and Moderation,
And thought the Church in danger was,
From such Prevarication.
And this is Law, &c.

When George in Pudding time came o'er,
And Moderate Men looked big, Sir,
My Principles I chang'd once more,
And so became a Whig, Sir.
And thus Preferment I procur'd,
From our Faith's great Defender
And almost every day abjur'd
The Pope, and the Pretender.
And this is Law, &c.

The Illustrious House of Hanover,
And Protestant succession,
To these I lustily will swear,
Whilst they can keep possession:
For in my Faith, and Loyalty,
I never once will falter,
But George, my lawful king shall be,
Except the Times shou'd alter.
And this is Law, &c.



The Healing Teaching &
Chivalric Order of St Raphael