

The Saint Raphael Link

Some Periodic Ramblings of the Prior

June 2015 (Issue 18)



Dear Members

The other day, I was reminded about the occasion, when Pam and I were invited to a service of re-dedication for members of both the Priory of England and the St John's Ambulance Brigade in Greater Manchester. Those of you who know me will not be surprised to hear me say that I find people most interesting; and derive a great deal of pleasure from 'people watching'.

Alleluia! For on that particular occasion as I was able to choose a seat from which I could easily observe all the preparations which were taking place; and as there was plenty of time before the service began, I settled down and started to watch.

Firstly the choir who were practising for the service, then the general stewarding which was being carried out by the younger members of St John and finally the Cathedral Wardens and Stewards who, as always, were taking their duties very seriously indeed.

'**Eyes are the gateway to the Soul**' I was always reminded when I was in training for pastoral ministry. So it didn't take me long before my general interest in the proceedings gave way to my intense concentration on the eyes of one particular individual. Initially I noticed that he was smartly dressed in a dark suit and wearing a long black mantle displaying the distinctive white Maltese Cross of the Order. Outwardly, a picture of what you might have expected to see, but inwardly the eyes gave away a smugness of character combined with just a hint of pomposity.

We enjoyed the service, but afterwards, I observed one of the cathedral clergy whose undivided attentions were exclusively directed towards the 'great and the good' of the city.

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Those whom were deemed worthy of his attention were treated with graciousness, but to others, his eyes showed a total and distinct lack of interest

I don't know about you, but I always feel that there is something repugnant about such behaviour; which I have to say is not uncommon in today's world. But more importantly, they are not the ways in which we as Christians should behave.

Well, thinking about such things; my mind then began to wonder how each one of us would shape up to that particular biblical teaching in the parable entitled 'Servant of All'.

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, obviously had a very high opinion of themselves, when they asked: "**Allow us to sit, one at your right hand and the other at your left in your glory.**" Jesus responded by saying: that they did not understand what they were asking, and furthermore, such power was not His to grant.

Now, I am sure that at some time in our lives, we will have known or will have met people who believe they are superior to others. But for all who profess to be Christians, there really is no place for those sort of thoughts whatsoever: rather we should all take heed of our Blessed Lords teachings when he said: "**No; anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be slave to all. For the Son of Man himself did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.**"

What a great pity it is, that so many Christians seem to have '**wandered from the pathway**' as the hymn puts it and have fallen into that same trap by thinking too highly of themselves. Always remember too that, hard as we may try to conceal any falsehood and wrong-doing; '**Eyes are the gateway to the soul**, from which none of us can ever escape. Amen.

+Geoffrey GRAND PRIOR



For your Prayers:

Beryl Anderton / Mary Gallagher / Gillian Gaiter / Paul Shaw / Sheila Hogarth / Ivy Holland / Ruth Barr / Kathleen Roberts / Suzie Jeng / Tracey Solley / Leslie Fudge / Thelma Thompson / Ian and Anne Weatherall / Marlene Addy / Pauline and Roy Weatherall / Ray and Doreen Connell / Margaret Smith / Florence Palmer / Sadie Sutton / Peter Bell / Norman Winstanley / William Collier / Tania Walker / Tommy Ryan / John Bartle / Brian Adams / Vicky Grimshaw / Patricia Grant / Brian Barber / Elizabeth Mills / Christine Felton / Lidia Flemming / Vera Balmforth / Tracey Rouse / Paul Sheridan / Roy Howard / Elaine Ingham / Carole & Brain Sagar / Albert Jones / Dianne Shipton & Derek her father / (baby) Charlotte Park / Nicole Vendettuoli / Pat Crawshaw / Hannah Hudson / Margaret Rixon / Vivienne Ainsworth / Jo Kelley / Elaine Coope / Ivor MacFarlane / Alan Ferguson / Shaun Humphries / Lucy Riding / David Ford / Veronica Hawcroft / Amelia Radomski / Mary Flannigan / Eileen Spiekman John & Mary Howard / Leslie Redman / Ida Simpson / Bernadette Delaney / Alexander Stoneham / Edward Billington / Katie Baker / Mary Cumberbach / Debbie Munday / Michael Aymes / Karen Kirby / Gaynor Smith / Ann Snell / Rod Crawford / Beryl & Julie Stelling / Diane Beresford / Doreen Devitt / Joan Armstrong / Margaret Waterhouse.

Answers to Locations:

1. Glasgow / 2, Walsingham Abbey Grounds / 3. East London.

Calendar of Saints



William was a young boy of Paris who was taught by his good uncle, the Abbot Hugo. When it was time for him to decide what he should become, William prayed to God to help him make the right choice. Then, on his uncle's advice, he made up his mind to become a priest.

Although William wanted only to do good to everyone, there were some who became his enemies. They were living bad lives, and every time they saw how kind and pure and devout William was, it made them realize how sinful they were. Instead of changing and following his good example, they tried to get rid of him. They even told the bishop lies so that he would not make William a priest. But the bishop knew what a holy man William really was and he paid no attention to the false accusations.

Next his enemies tried to have the Saint sent away, but again God did not let their plan work. In the end, it was these evil men who were sent away - and by the Pope himself! St. William and three companions were asked to go to Denmark to convert sinners and pagans and make the Religious there more fervent.

The Saint and his companions got a good start, but then everything began to go wrong. They could hardly stand the bitter cold weather and they were very, very poor. Besides that, they did not understand the language, and they had many enemies. Frightened, William's three friends gave up and went home to France. But the Saint remained.

To show how pleased He was with St. William's trust in Him, Our Lord rewarded him with the conversion of all he had come to help. Then for thirty years the holy Abbot lived in peace and fervour with a great many good monks who imitated his virtues and love of God.

When things get hard for us, let us not be quitters. God always helps those who turn to Him for help

Story Corner



After living what I felt was a "decent" life, my time on earth came to the end. The first thing I remember is sitting on a bench in the waiting room of what I thought to be a court house. The doors opened, and I was instructed to come in and have a seat by the defence table.

As I looked around, I saw the "prosecutor." He was a villainous looking gent who snarled as he stared at me. He definitely was the most evil person I have ever seen. I sat down and looked to my left and there sat My Attorney, a kind and gentle looking man whose

appearance seemed so familiar to me; I felt I knew Him.

Then the corner door flew open and there appeared the Judge in full flowing robes. He commanded a sacred presence as He moved across the room. I couldn't take my eyes off of Him. As He took His seat behind the bench, He said, "Let us begin."

The prosecutor rose and said, "My name is Satan, and I am here to show you why this man belongs in hell."

He proceeded to tell of lies that I told, things that I stole, and times when I cheated others. Satan told of other horrible perversions that were once in my life and the more he spoke, the further down in my seat I sank. I was so embarrassed that I couldn't look at anyone, not even my own Attorney.

The Devil continued to tell of sins that even I had completely forgotten about. As upset as I was at Satan for telling all these things about me, I was equally upset at My Attorney who sat there silently not offering any form of defence at all. I know I had been guilty of those things, but I had done some good in my life - couldn't that at least equal out part of the harm I'd done?

Then Satan finished with a fury and said: "This man belongs in hell, he is guilty of all that I have charged, and there is not a person who can prove otherwise."

When it was His turn, My Attorney first asked if He might approach the bench. The Judge allowed this over the strong objection of Satan and beckoned Him to come forward. As He got up and started walking, I was able to see Him in His full splendour and majesty. I realized why He seemed so familiar; this was Jesus representing me, my Lord and my Saviour.

He stopped at the bench and softly said to the Judge, "Hi, Dad," and then He turned to address the court. "Satan was correct in saying that this man had sinned. I won't deny any of these allegations. And, yes, the wages of sin is death, and this man deserves to be punished."

Then, Jesus took a deep breath and turned to His Father with outstretched arms and proclaimed, "However, I died on the cross so that this person might have eternal life, and he has accepted Me as his Saviour, so he is Mine."

My Lord continued with, "His name is written in the book of life and no one can snatch him from Me. Satan still does not understand yet. This man is not to be given justice but rather mercy."

As Jesus sat down, He quietly paused, looked at His Father and said, "There is nothing else that needs to be done. I've done it all."

The Judge lifted His mighty hand and slammed the gavel down. The following words bellowed from His lips... "This man is free. The penalty for him has already been paid in full. Case dismissed."

As my Lord led me away, I could hear Satan ranting and raving, "I won't give up, I will win the next one."

I asked Jesus as He gave me my instructions where to go next, "Have you ever lost a case?" Christ lovingly smiled and said, "Everyone that has come to Me and asked Me to represent them has received the same verdict as you, "PAID IN FULL."

COOK'S CORNER

AUBERGINE AND BEEF SHAKSHUKA



Shakshuka is a Middle Eastern dish of eggs cooked in a spiced tomato sauce. Works well as a brunch or for supper

Ready in 1 hour 10 minutes

Cooking time 45 minutes

Prep time 25 minutes

Serves 4

Ingredients

1 aubergine, cut into 3cm chunks / 2 tbsp olive oil
250 g beef mince / 1 onion, finely sliced / 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped / 1 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp ground cumin / 0.5 tsp smoked paprika
0.5 tsp crushed chillies / 2 x 400g tins chopped tomatoes / 1 tsp sugar / 4 medium eggs

To serve:

1 tbsp tahini paste / 1 tbsp natural yogurt a squeeze of lemon juice / 1 preserved lemon, pips discarded, finely chopped / 50g feta cheese, crumbled / 28 g flat-leaf parsley, leaves chopped / a pinch of sumac / toasted pitta breads.

Method

1] Preheat the oven to 200°C, fan 180°C, gas 6. Put the aubergine chunks into a roasting tin, drizzle with 1 tablespoon of oil and season. Roast in the oven for 30 minutes until tender and cooked through.

2] Meanwhile, heat a large, non-stick lidded frying pan, add the mince and cook over a high heat, stirring for 3-4 minutes until browned; transfer to a plate. Add the remaining oil and the onion to the pan; cook gently for 10 minutes, covered. Stir in the garlic, spices and chillies. Cook for 2 minutes, then return the beef to the pan, add the tomatoes, sugar and 200ml kettle-hot water.

Stir well and bring to the boil.

3] Simmer, uncovered, for 20 minutes. Stir occasionally, then add the roasted aubergine and season well.

4] Using the back of a large spoon, make four wells in the sauce. Crack an egg into each one. Cover with a lid and cook gently for 6 minutes, then turn off the heat and leave covered for a further 2 minutes until the whites are set, but the yolks still runny. Alternatively, transfer the mixture to a preheated ovenproof dish, add the eggs and bake at 200°C, fan 180°C, gas 6, for 5-8 minutes or until the eggs are cooked to your liking.

5] Mix together the tahini, yogurt and lemon juice to taste; season. Add a teaspoon of cold water to make it 'drizzleable'.

6] Sprinkle the shakshuka with the preserved lemon, feta and parsley. Spoon on the tahini dressing; finish with a pinch of sumac. Serve with pitta breads.

Guess the Locations:



1.

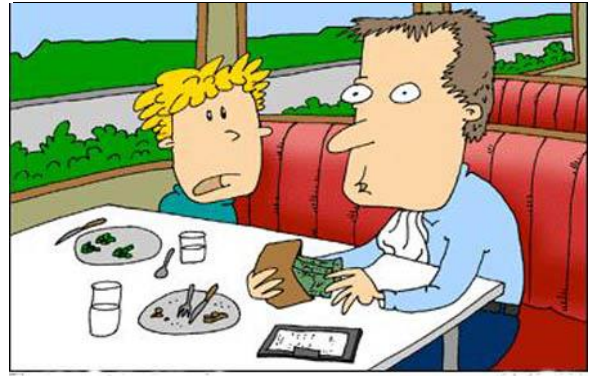


2.



3.

RELIGIOUS JOKES



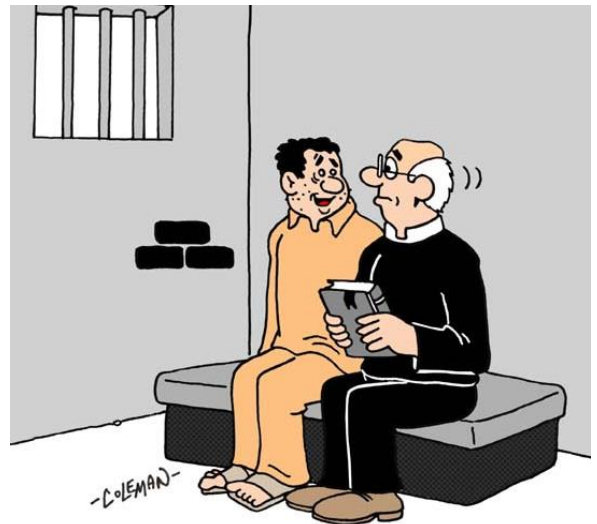
HOW COME THE WAITRESS GETS 15% AND GOD ONLY GETS 10%?



(See Genesis 19:1-29)

02-25-2003

SOMETIMES I MISS THE OLD TESTAMENT DAYS WHEN WE COULD SMITE THEM FOR THAT KIND OF BEHAVIOR



"NO, I DIDN'T GET A PRESIDENTIAL PARDON, BUT I GOT SOMETHING BETTER. GOD HAS FORGIVEN ME!"



The Healing Teaching & Chivalric Order of St Raphael