

# The Saint Raphael Link

Some Periodic Ramblings of the Prior

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## Dear Members

A couple of years ago, Pamela and I went to a local production of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' at Burnley Mechanics with four of our grandchildren and their parents.

*'O no you didn't, O yes we did, O no you didn't.'*

Of course later in the pantomime and true to form, the 'Dame' began her banter with the audience. It was at this point that I couldn't help looking at the faces of our two youngest grandchildren who were totally absorbed in the game – they were shouting back the answers – *'O yes you did!'*

My first experience of pantomimes took place over fifty years ago at the Bradford Alhambra. *'O no it didn't, O yes it did, O no it didn't.'*

Well actually, *'O yes it did'*, and the only real difference was the musical accompaniment and magnificent scenery.

My childhood remembrances were of numerous spectacular scenery changes and the musical accompaniment, which was supplied by a small orchestra. Nowadays, cutbacks mean that the scenery does not change as often and the music is provided by a five piece band.

Nonetheless, the things which have not changed are the pantomime traditions and the story lines which have remained intact.

So it was that as I watched the pleasure on the faces of parents and children alike at that show, it was a magical experience.

I don't know about you, but I have often thought of the Church as being much like a pantomime, in that until quite recently, it

remained true to its traditions and storylines within a relevant and up-to-date setting.

However, I'm afraid that is no longer the case as many branches of the Christian Church seem to have lost their way, by allowing liberal approaches to doctrine and scripture. For some unknown reason they seem to hold a fear of teaching the Faith of Christ Crucified.

Have you noticed that even television quiz programme contestants are often no longer able to answer even the most basic of questions relating to the Christian Faith. Only the other night on 'Tipping Point' a contestant answered that the Books of Genesis and Exodus form part of the New Testament!

What a shameful state of affairs that is, in a country which at one time was proud to be Christian. Why is it that we cannot be more like other world religions, and particularly the Jewish people of God who have never shrunk from proclaiming their faith.

I for one am not prepared to play a part in such a betrayal to the faith of our forefathers, by supporting such modern innovations.

The gospels stand as a witness and continue to remind us just how much importance Our Lord himself and the early church placed upon Holy Scripture.

Recent pronouncements from the Vatican and the Orthodox Church, has shown just how important it is for all Christians to stand together. If our faith and traditions are important to us, then we should stand firm for what we believe, rather than allow dilution to go unchallenged.

Do you remember that day in the Temple when Our Lord unrolled the scroll and began reading from the place where it is written: *'The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the Good News to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour.'* ... .. *This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.*

I believe that what really matters in our 21<sup>st</sup> century, is not that we happen to be

members of a particular church or denomination, but that we all stand together to protect the One True Faith, the Faith which many of those first Apostles and generations of Saints since, have given their lives to protect.

*'O yes they have, O no they haven't, O yes they have.'* **Amen.**

*+Geoffrey* GRAND PRIOR



Beryl Anderton / Mary Gallagher / Gillian Gaiter / Paul Shaw / Sheila Hogarth / Ivy Holland / Ruth Barr / Kathleen Roberts / Lesley Fudge / Thelma Thompson / Ian & Anne Weatherall / Marlene Addy / Ray & Doreen Connell / Margaret Smith / Tania Walker / John Bartle / Brian Adams / Vicky Grimshaw / Patricia Grant / Brian Barber / Elizabeth Mills / Lidia Flemming / Vera Balmforth / Tracey Rouse / Paul Sheridan / Robert Walker / Roy Howard / Albert Jones / (Baby) Charlotte Park / Nicole Vendettuoli / Margaret Rixon / Vivienne Ainsworth / Ivor MacFarlane / Shaun Humphries / Lucy Riding / David Ford / 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 / Michael Aymes / Gaynor Smith (nee James) / Anne Snell / 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 Billernes / Charlotte Ward Juliette Burglé / Sally Hayes / Stephen / Raymond Ketland / Fr Chris Sterry / Nick Brooks / Pam Crane / Roy Grainger.

Answers to Locations: 1. River Thames (The Eye) / 2. Sherwood Forest in Nottinghamshire (Robin Hood) / 3. Carlisle Castle.

## Calendar of Saints



St. Agnes of Rome was born in 291 AD and raised in a Christian family. Agnes was very beautiful and belonged to a wealthy family. Her hand in marriage was highly sought after, and she had many high ranking men chasing after

her. However, Agnes made a promise to God never to stain her purity. Her love for the Lord was great and she hated sin even more than death!

Whenever a man wished to marry Agnes, she would always say, "Jesus Christ is my only Spouse."

According to legend, the young men she turned away became so angry and insulted by her devotion to God and purity that they began to submit her name to authorities as a Christian follower.

In one incident, Procop, the Governor's son, became very angry when she refused him. He tried to win her for his wife with rich gifts and promises, but the beautiful young girl kept saying, "I am already promised to the Lord of the Universe. He is more splendid than the sun and the stars, and He has said He will never leave me!"

In great anger, Procop accused her of being a Christian and brought her to his father, the Governor. The Governor promised Agnes wonderful gifts if she would only deny God, but Agnes refused. He tried to change her mind by putting her in chains, but her lovely face shone with joy.

Next he sent her to a place of sin, but an Angel protected her. At last, she was condemned to death. Even the pagans cried to see such a young and beautiful girl going to death. Yet, Agnes was as happy as a bride on her wedding day. She did not pay attention to those who begged her to save herself. "I would offend my Spouse," she said, "if I were to try to please you. He chose me first and He shall have me!" Then she prayed and bowed her head for the death-stroke of the sword.

Other accounts of Agnes' life hold the Prefect Sempronius responsible for her martyrdom. It is said he condemned the young girl to be dragged through the streets naked. Some versions of the legend state that Agnes' hair grew instantly to cover her entire body and all the men who attempted to rape the beautiful virgin were immediately struck blind.

The stories go on to explain that another man presided over Agnes' trial after Sempronius excused himself. The new man sentenced Agnes to death. At first, Agnes was tied to a stake, but either the wood would not burn or the flames parted away from her. This prompted an officer to draw his sword and behead the girl. It is believed that her blood, which poured out to the stadium, was soaked up with cloths by Christians.

She died a virgin-martyr at the age of 12 or 13 on 21 January 304.

Agnes was buried beside the Via Nomentana in Rome. Her bones are currently conserved beneath the high altar in the church of Sant' Agnese fuori le mura in Rome, which was built over the catacomb that held her tomb. Her skull is preserved in the church of Sant' Agnese in Agone in Rome's Piazza Navona.

In 1858, Father Caspar Rehrl, an Austrian missionary founded the Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes.

St. Agnes is widely known as the patron saint of young girls. She is also the patron saint of chastity, rape survivors and the Children of Mary. She is often represented with a lamb, the symbol of her virgin innocence, and a palm branch, like other martyrs. She is shown as a young girl in robes holding a palm branch with the lamb either at her feet or in her arms. Her feast day is celebrated on January 21. On her feast day, it is customary for two lambs to be brought in to be blessed by the pope. On Holy Thursday the lambs' wool is removed and woven into the pallium the pope gives to a newly consecrated archbishop as a sign of his power and union with the pope.

## Story Corner

### GOD'S HANDS

Wishing to encourage her young son's progress on the piano, a mother took her boy to a Paderewski concert. After they were seated, the mother spotted a friend in the audience and walked down the aisle to greet her. Seizing the opportunity to explore the wonders of the concert hall, the little boy rose and eventually explored his way through a door marked "NO ADMITTANCE."

When the house lights dimmed and the concert was about to begin, the mother returned to her seat and discovered that the child was missing.

Suddenly, the curtains parted and spotlights focused on the impressive Steinway on stage. In horror, the mother saw her little boy was sitting at the keyboard, innocently picking out "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." At that moment, the great piano master made his entrance, quickly moved to the piano, and whispered in the boy's ear, "Don't quit. Keep playing."

Then, leaning over, Paderewski reached down with his left hand and began filling in a bass part. Soon his right arm reached around to the other side of the child and he added a running obligato. Together, the old master and

the young novice transformed a frightening situation into a wonderfully creative experience.

The audience was so mesmerized they couldn't recall what else the great master played. Only the classic "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star."

That's the way it is with God. What we can accomplish on our own is hardly noteworthy. We try our best, but the results aren't exactly graceful flowing music. But with the hand of the Master, our life's work truly can be beautiful. Next time you set out to accomplish great feats, listen carefully. You can hear the voice of the Master, whispering in your ear, "Don't quit. Keep playing."

## Cook's Corner:

### FISH PIE



#### INGREDIENTS

1kg floury potatoes, eg Maris Piper or King Edwards / 50g butter / Splash of milk / 500ml fish stock / 100ml white wine / Small bunch of parsley, separated into leaves and stalks / 350g white fish fillets and / or salmon / 350g smoked white fish / 200g small peeled prawns / 50g butter / 50g plain flour / 200ml double cream / 2 anchovies, finely chopped / Handful of white breadcrumbs

#### METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 180C. Peel the potatoes and cut into evenly sized chunks. Put in a large pan, cover with cold water, add a generous pinch of salt, and bring to the boil. Simmer for about 20 minutes, until tender. Drain, and allow to sit in the colander for a few minutes, then mash until smooth, and beat in the butter and a splash of milk. Season well and set aside.

2. Put the fish stock, wine and parsley stalks into a large pan, and bring to a simmer. Add the fish, and simmer for five of minutes, then lift out with a slotted spoon, remove the skins if any, and cut into large chunks. Discard the parsley stalks.

3. Melt the butter in a medium pan over a lowish heat, and then stir in the flour. Cook, stirring, for a couple of minutes, being careful not to let it brown. Gradually stir in the stock.

Bring to the boil, then simmer for about 20 minutes.

4. Take the sauce off the heat, stir in the double cream, parsley leaves and anchovies and season. Add the fish and prawns and toss to coat.
5. Put the seafood and sauce into a baking dish and top with the mashed potato. Bake for 20 minutes, then sprinkle over the breadcrumbs and bake for a further 15, until the top is golden.

## Guess the Locations:



1.



2.



3.



"If I refer to God as 'He' I offend women.  
If I refer to God as 'She' I offend men.  
In my profession, I find it's best  
not to talk about God at all."

God does not demand we be **SUCCESSFUL**, God demands we be **FAITHFUL!**



Mother Theresa speaking a great truth of perspective for life.

### Diary Note:

**THE INSTALLATION OF THE NEW  
GRAND MASTER TAKES PLACE ON  
SUNDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST 2016**

at the 'OCCUK' Cathedral & Priory Church,  
Rugeley, Staffordshire



### Your Reward

Violet King

The way may seem hard,  
The road may be rough  
To endure to the end  
You have to be tough,  
But try to stand firm,  
Be positive too  
Your faith can be strong,  
And you will win through.

You won't be alone  
No, never my friend,  
The burden is shared,  
Right down to the end.  
Our Father in Heaven,  
And Jesus, our Lord  
Are waiting to give you  
Your eternal reward.



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