

# The Saint Raphael Link

Some Periodic Ramblings of the Prior

February 2015 (Issue 16)



*Dear Members*

The forty days of Lent starts later this month on Ash Wednesday (18<sup>th</sup>); and so begins the longest penitential period in the Church's Calendar.

When I was younger I could never quite work out the mathematics; because if you start on Ash Wednesday and count the days until Easter, it adds up to 46. Even I know that forty-six is not forty!

Knowledge is a wonderful thing, particularly when I discovered that Sundays are not regarded as days of Lent at all. That means that I was in with a chance of working it out. As there are six Sundays in the period, even I could then deduct 6 from 46 and end up with 40.

So Lent in fact has forty days and we are forcefully reminded of this by one of the most popular and well-known Lenten hymns: 'Forty days and forty nights'. Let me just remind you of the words of the first verse which run as follows:

***'Forty days and forty nights  
Thou wast fasting in the wild,  
Forty days and forty nights  
Tempted and yet undefiled'***

The words of the last line give a clue about the important Lenten Theme of 'Temptation'.

How many times have we been tempted? I suppose that temptation forms a real part of our human condition. It is something that none of us ever escape and we need to be aware that the devil prowls around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, as scripture says.

Well, we can take heart, for one of the Lenten Gospels tells us about the time Our

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Blessed Lord was attacked three times by the devil in the wilderness.

The first temptation was asking Our Lord to turn stones into bread. The second, was to endanger Himself so that His angels would come to His aid; and finally, the devil took Jesus up to a high mountain, and showing him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour said: *'I will give you all these if you fall at my feet and worship me.'* Then Jesus replied, *'Be off, Satan! For scripture says: you must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone.'*

Let me finish by telling you a true story about a young girl who unfortunately became involved with the occult and devil worship. After many years practising demonic ways she could stand it no longer. She had lost the love and respect of her friends and family and had become extremely frightened. She was at the point of total collapse, when she eventually found the courage to consult a priest. After listening for hours to the girl, the priest decided that the only course of action left open to him was to re-baptise the girl in the Name of the Sacred Trinity.

Now the interesting thing is this, that when the priest dipped his hand in the holy water and made the sign of the Cross on the girl's forehead, she began to shake violently and fell to the floor letting out uncontrollable screams.

Eventually there was a peaceful calm and as the priest bent over the girl, he noticed that she now bore a pink mark of the cross on her forehead where the holy water had been traced. It took several hours for this to finally fade away.

Yes, the devil is powerful, perhaps even more than we care to think. But always remember that the Cross is more so and always overcomes evil. Jesus said: *'Be off, Satan! You must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone.'*

Lent is nearly upon us and gives us an opportunity to examine our lives more deeply than perhaps we otherwise would. So let us

reject the devil and all his works by meditating on the words of that hymn I used earlier.

**Keep, O keep us, Saviour dear,  
Ever constant by thy side,  
That with thee we may appear  
At the eternal Eastertide. Amen.**

+ *Geoffrey* GRAND PRIOR



### For your Prayers:

Beryl Anderton / Mary Gallagher / Gillian Gaiter / Paul Shaw / Sheila Hogarth / Ivy Holland / Maddie and Alan Penlington / 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 / Ruby & Calvin Brindley (Gozo) / John Leatherland, bishop / William Collier / Tania Walker / Tommy Ryan / John Bartle / Michael Greer / Brian Adams / Vicky Grimshaw / Patricia Grant / Brian Barber / Elizabeth Mills / Helen Kalli / Christine Felton / Lidia Flemming / Vera Balmforth / Tracey Rouse / Paul Sheridan / Roy Howard / Elaine Ingham / Carole Sagar / Albert Jones / Dianne Shipton & Derek her father / (baby) Charlotte Park / Nicole Vendettuoli / Tyler Page / Pat Crawshaw / Julie Stelling / Hannah Hudson / Cath Bromilow / Norman Dutton, archbishop / Bishop Mike & Olive Ward / Margaret Rixon / Vivienne Ainsworth / Jo Kelly / Beverley Corby / Elaine Coope / Jean & Alan Rothwell / Ivor MacFarlane / Alan Ferguson.

Answers to Locations:

1. Peterborough Cathedral / 2. Tyburn Convent in London / 3. Holyrood Abbey in Scotland

## Calendar of Saints



### SAINT NICHOLAS

HIS FEAST DAY IS 14<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY

On February 14, fancy restaurants will be booked solid, florists will do their best business of the year, and children's backpacks will be stuffed full of heart-shaped cards from classmates. And it's all thanks to St. Valentine. So before you indulge in those little heart-shaped sweets with "Be Mine" written on them, here's the info on the man of the hour.

### Who is St. Valentine?

Well, there was actually more than one. There's nearly a dozen martyred saints named Valentine, but February 14 is the feast day that commemorates St. Valentine of Rome, who lived in the third century.

### What did Valentine of Rome do?

Like most stories from so long ago, it's hard to discern which parts of the story are true and which ones were exaggerated or conflated with the acts of other martyrs of the early Christian church. But we're pretty sure that Valentine of Rome was arrested and executed for, among other crimes, performing marriages for members of the early Christian church and others who may have been forbidden from marrying.

### Is that why he's connected with love and romance?

Pretty much. There's some speculation that his feast day on February 14 coincided with some kind of Roman fertility ritual celebrated around the same time, but evidence is spotty.

### Why is he so popular today?

Mostly due to one Geoffrey Chaucer, who wrote a lot about St. Valentine and connected him to the idea of courtly love in 14th century Europe. Chaucer was one of the founders of what would become English literature, so he had a pretty big influence.

### So why do we give gifts, flowers and cards called "valentines"?

That tradition of courtly love included lots and lots of gifts - poems, tokens of affection, and so on. A continual stream of gifts proved that you were sincere in your affection. The tradition continues to today, where flowers and chocolates are the cliché.

Legend also says that St. Valentine, before his execution, wrote a letter to his jailer's daughter and signed it, "Your Valentine." It might not be true, but it's a good story regardless.

## Did the Romans have any other influence on Valentine's Day?

Other than the obvious - Cupid, the winged, eternally youthful, love-arrow-shooting god of desire, attraction and affection - it was the Romans who believed that there was a vein that ran from the left hand's ring finger directly to the heart. Thus explaining why we use that finger for engagement and wedding rings.

## So Valentine is the patron saint of love?

As well as beekeepers and epilepsy, yes, he's the patron saint of affianced couples, happy marriages and love.

## Wait, epilepsy?

Epilepsy was once known as St. Valentine's Malady. The faithful used to invoke him in protection against epileptic fits and fainting. In some places in Europe, people still hand out key charms to invoke that protection.

## Story Corner

### The Atheist and the Bear

An atheist was taking a walk through the woods. 'What majestic trees! What powerful rivers! What beautiful animals!', he said to himself.

As he continued walking alongside the river he heard a rustling in the bushes. Turning to look, he saw a 7 foot grizzly charging towards him.

He ran as fast as he could up the path. Looking over his shoulder he saw that the bear was closing in on him. His heart was pumping frantically and he tried to run even faster.

He tripped and fell on the ground. He rolled over to pick himself up but saw the bear raising his paw to take a swipe at him.

At that instant the atheist cried out: 'Oh my God!...'

Time stopped.

The bear froze.

The forest was silent.

It was then that a bright light shone upon the man and a voice came out of the sky saying:

'You deny my existence for all of these years, teach others I don't exist and even credit creation to a cosmic accident. Do you expect me to help you out of this

predicament? Am I to count you as a believer?'

The atheist looked directly into the light.

'It would be hypocritical of me to suddenly ask you to treat me as a Christian now, but perhaps, could you make the BEAR a Christian?'

'Very well,' said the voice. The light went out, and the sounds of the forest resumed.

And then the bear lowered his paw, bowed his head and spoke: 'Lord, bless this food which I am about to receive and for which I am truly thankful, Amen.'

## Cook's Corner



### Bishop's Cider Pudding

Ingredients:

½ pint of cider / 8oz mixed dried fruit / 3oz glace cherries (chopped) / 3oz dried dates, (chopped) / 4oz fresh white bread crumbs / 3oz shredded suet / 4oz caster sugar / grated rind of one orange / 4oz plain flour / 1 level teaspoon of mixed spice / 2 large eggs / 2pint pudding basin, lightly greased.

**Method:**

Mix the dried fruit, cherries and dates together in a bowl. Stir in the breadcrumbs, suet, sugar and orange rind. Sift the flour with the mixed spice then stir it into the fruit mixture. Beat the eggs and cider together, stir into the fruit and mix well.

Spoon the mixture into the prepared basin and press it down firmly.

Grease a double sheet of greaseproof paper, fold a pleat down the centre then place over the basin and secure with string. Put the basin in a steamer or pan 1/3 full with hot water; cover and steam for 3 hours. Check the water level during cooking and top up with boiling water when necessary. Turn the pudding out onto a plate and serve with fresh orange slices and custard or sauce of choice



## Guess the Locations:



1.



2.



3.

## Did you know?



Fifty years after it was originally installed near Marble Arch in London, the Tyburn Tree stone plaque has been restored and re-dedicated.

Situated on a busy intersection near Hyde Park, it marks the site of 'The King's Gallows' where priests, traitors, criminals and many notable Catholics were executed for almost 600 years.

The list of those who were hanged at Tyburn includes several Jesuits who witnessed to their faith in Jesus Christ by laying down their lives for him at the time of the Reformation.

Fr Chris Pedley SJ from Farm Street Church conducted the service of re-dedication,

which was attended by Assistant Mother General Mother Xavier McMonagle and Mother Matthias Bailey of nearby Tyburn Convent, and Fr Dominic Robinson SJ.

The restoration of the Tyburn Tree stone plaque was commissioned by the Edgware Road Partnership and carried out by DBR (London) stonemasons, whose brief was to conserve the original stonework of the historic landmark.

The first victim of the Tyburn Tree was Dr John Story, a Roman Catholic who was convicted and tried for treason in 1196. However, the site became most notorious in the 16th century under the reign of Henry VIII. Henry used Tyburn, originally a village in Middlesex, to execute the ringleaders of the Pilgrimage of Grace and, in 1571, the Tyburn Tree was erected near the modern Marble Arch.

This form of gallows consisted of a horizontal wooden triangle supported by three legs and standing in the middle of the roadway, providing a major landmark in west London and presenting a very obvious symbol of the law to travellers.

The executions were public spectacles and proved extremely popular, attracting the public in their thousands. In the Martyrs' Shrine at Tyburn Convent, more than 350 Catholic martyrs who witnessed to their faith by dying for it during the Reformation are honoured.

Among those included in the shrine are Jesuits St Edmund Campion SJ (executed on 1st December 1581), St Robert Southwell SJ (21st February 1595).

They are joined by five Catholics who were condemned for their role in the Popish Plot of 1678 and who were all martyred at Tyburn on 20th June 1679 – Thomas Whitbread, William Harcourt, John Fenwick, Antony Turner and John Gavan.

ANNUAL INVESTITURE IN PETERBOROUGH  
SATURDAY 9<sup>th</sup> MAY 2015



The Healing Teaching &  
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