

# The Saint Raphael Link

Some Periodic Ramblings of the Prior

FEBRUARY 2020 Issue 37)

Email: [revgeoffreyrobinson@ntlworld.com](mailto:revgeoffreyrobinson@ntlworld.com) / Tele: 07817 825624



*Dear Members,*

If you've never observed Lent before, or if it means nothing more to you than "forty days without chocolate," then here are a few thoughts to introduce you to this ancient Christian season. Lent is more than just a time of year — it's a spiritual practice.

The word *Lent* comes from the Old English word *lencten* meaning "springtime." It's unique to the English language: the Latin word for Lent is *Quadragesima* or "fortieth" referring to the number of days in the Lenten fast. In the Orthodox Church, this season is called "the Great Fast."

So there is a paradoxical quality to Lent. It's a time of fasting and self-denial, yes — but it's also a time of hope and optimism, waiting for the arrival of spring and longer days. Lent is not about the absence of joy; on the contrary, through silence and simplicity and emptiness, Lent invites us to reconnect with a joy that often is hidden by the fullness and busy-ness of ordinary life.

The period of time from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday, the day before Easter Sunday, actually consists of forty-

six days. But during this period there are six Sundays, and those days are not part of the forty-day fast. Sunday is a feast day, even during Lent. So, what is the point of Lent?



## RECONCILIATION

If your theology is deeply penitential (stressing how sorry we humans should feel for our sins), then it could be a time for feeling *extra* sorry, and the Lenten fast (that chocolate you're not eating, remember?) symbolizes how contrite we sinners are (or should be).

But that's not the only way to understand Lent. Starting with a theology centred on God's mercy rather than humanity's sinfulness, we can see that God's unconditional love and forgiveness cannot be influenced by human efforts to feel contrite or make sacrifice. So, then, why observe Lent?

Lent is not something we do to make God change. It's something we do in response to God's love, to bring about change within ourselves. Think of it this way. If your garage is full of clutter, and you've just bought a shiny new car and you want to use the garage for its intended purpose (to shelter your car rather than your junk), then you have a job to do. You need to clean out the garage.

Likewise, Lent is a time when we try to clean out the clutter in our hearts and

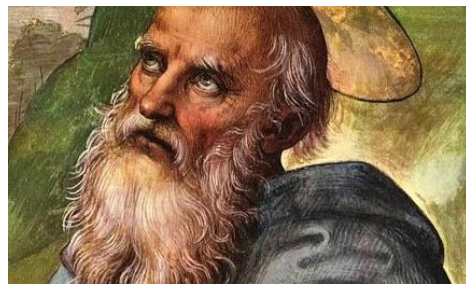
minds and souls, to prepare ourselves for the joyful gift of new life, freely given to us through the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection. Words that describe Lent — a time of silence, simplicity, meditation, humility, attentiveness — also describe contemplative prayer, and indeed, Lent does have a richly contemplative quality about it. It's a time of waiting with quiet joy for the blessings to come at Easter. The Lenten fast and almsgiving discipline, when done correctly, instill in us a sense of longing, if not literal hunger — an emptiness that represents our soul's deep longing for God. Contemplative/silent prayer also stresses the emptiness that exists in each person's soul, beneath the "noise" of our chatterbox minds and emotional hearts. "Be still and know that I am God," proclaims Psalm 46. But to find that stillness within, we need to empty ourselves.



Incidentally, the forty days of Lent symbolizes the forty days Jesus spent fasting in the wilderness after his Baptism. It was a time of cleansing and prayer for him, and it preceded the launching of his public ministry. So, Jesus' "Lent" was a time of deep inner transformation, through prayer and silence and fasting.

The "giving up" part of Lent is meant to be something significant enough that you notice the sacrifice, but not so huge that it becomes a source of spiritual pride ("Look at me, I gave up everything but bread and water for Lent; aren't I holy?"). It doesn't have to be food, although fasting from ice cream or alcoholic beverages can be excellent Lenten disciplines. But you could also fast from any type of pleasure, like social media, television, or gaming.

The fast is only part of your Lenten discipline, though. Traditionally, Lent is a time for almsgiving — giving money or other resources to those in need. In other words, Lent involves doing something extra as a response to God's love. And yes, giving to those in need is a great place to start. But Lent is also a great time to begin or renew a daily prayer practice (especially silent or contemplative prayer), Bible study or *lectio divina*, or giving time to a worthy cause. Like the Lenten fast, this "something extra" works best when it is a meaningful, but not overwhelming, commitment. Mighty oak trees grow from acorns, so let your Lenten commitments be small. God can use a small commitment in big ways.



St. Benedict, in his *Rule for Monasteries*, not only suggests to monks and nuns that they should be wary of over-doing their fast during Lent, but also that they should share their Lenten commitments with their spiritual father or mother. Even for those of us who aren't monastics, this is a great idea. Discuss your plans for observing Lent with your spiritual director if you have one, or even with an informal prayer partner. Doing so creates a bond of accountability (you're less likely to blow off your fast if someone knows about it) and also a bond of charity, for you and your companion can commit to praying for each other as you each strive to observe your Lenten commitment.

Keep in mind that you don't have to do anything at all for Lent — God loves you regardless. But remember the new car and the cluttered garage. If you leave your garage messy, you can park your car on the street and no one will complain. But it's a less than ideal situation, and with just a

little bit of effort you can have a much better arrangement. Likewise, your faith could truly be blessed by this simple 40-day discipline. Prayerfully consider it — it's worth giving it a try.

+*Geoffrey* – GRAND PRIOR



**SICK:** Paul Shaw / Sheila Hogarth / Ruth Barr / Kathleen Roberts / Lesley Fudge / Thelma Thompson / Marlene Addy / Tania Walker / Lidia Fleming / Paul Sheridan / Roy Howard / Albert Jones / Charlotte Park / Nicole Vendettuoli / Ivor MacFarlane / Shaun Humphries / Lucy Riding / Veronica Hawcroft / Amelia Radomski / Mary Flannigan / John & Mary Howard / Ida Simpson / Clarice Shaw / Tony Kirby / Sally Hayes / Nick Brooks / Bishop Gerard & Pam Crane / Ruth Moody & Family / Brigitte Duffett / Archbishop Norman and Dorothy Dutton / Keith & Joan Warren / Eileen Duffy / John Langham / Marjorie Hooley / Harry Shaw / Derrick Hawkins / Doreen Morgan / Ian Weatherall / Lilian King / Magdi Abdel Sayed / Luish Sao / Rodrigo Miranda / Anne Stephen / William (Bill) Collier / Geoff Lamb / Bev and Barrie Chester / Roy Taylor / Chris McKenna / Barbara Lee / Hazel Smith / Dave Johnson / Johnny & Pat Williamson / Betty Edgecombe / Margaret Waterhouse / Richard Bentley / Brian Warner / Mukhtar Begum / Bob Lee / Leslie & Mick / Alice Beer / David Howe / Mary Ayrton / Alision Marshall / Patrick McConnell / Janet Illingworth / John Lycett / Shelley Coulter / Jean Rothwell / Amanda Bannister / Mary Reuben.

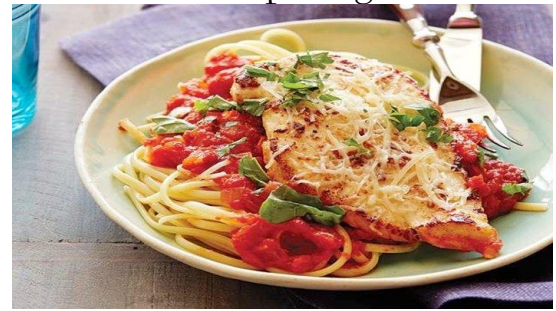
## Guess the Locations

*All Saints Church in York  
Albert Dock Liverpool*



## Cook's Corner:

Chicken parmigiana



### INGREDIENTS:

½ cup plain flour  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
8 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, trimmed and pounded flat  
455g thin linguine  
½ cup olive oil  
2 tbsps butter  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
1 whole medium onion, chopped  
¾ cups chicken stock  
Three 410g cans crushed tomatoes  
1 tbsp sugar  
¼ cup chopped fresh parsley, plus more for serving  
1 cup freshly grated Parmesan, plus more if needed  
Basil chiffonade, for serving

### METHOD

Mix the flour and some salt and pepper together on a large plate. Dredge the flattened chicken breasts in the flour mixture. Set aside.

Cook the linguine until al dente.

Heat the olive oil and butter together in a large skillet over medium heat. When the butter is melted and the oil/butter mixture is hot, fry the chicken breasts until nice and golden brown on each side, 2 to 3 minutes per side. Remove the chicken breasts from the skillet and set aside.

Without cleaning the skillet, add the garlic and onions and gently stir for 2 minutes. Pour in the stock and scrape the bottom of the pan, getting all the flavourful bits off the bottom. Allow the stock to cook down until reduced by half, about 2 minutes.

Pour in the crushed tomatoes and stir to combine. Add the sugar and more salt and pepper to taste. Allow to cook for 30 minutes. Toward the end of the cooking time, add the chopped parsley and give the sauce a final stir.

Carefully lay the chicken breasts on top of the sauce and completely cover them in the grated Parmesan. Place the lid on the skillet and reduce the heat to low. Allow to simmer until the cheese is melted and the chicken is thoroughly heated. Add more cheese to taste.

Place the cooked noodles on a plate and cover with the sauce. Place the chicken breasts on top and sprinkle with more parsley and the basil chiffonade. Serve immediately.

## GUESS THE LOCATIONS:

1.



2.



## ITS ONLY ONX LXTTXX

Though this typewriter is an old model, it works very well, except for only one key.

You'd think that with all the other keys working, one key would hardly be noticed. But just one key out of which seems to ruin the whole effort.

Have you ever said to yourself, "I'm only one person. No one will notice if I don't do my best." But it does make a difference, because to be effective, a family, an organization or a business needs complete participation by everyone to the best of his or her ability. So if you're having one of those days when you think you just aren't very important and you're tempted to slack off, remember this old typewriter. You are a key person, and when you don't do your best, nothing else around you works out the way it's supposed to.

## SAINT RAPHAEL



St. Raphael is one of the seven Archangels who stand before the throne of the Lord, and one of the only three mentioned by name in the Bible. He appears, by name, only in the Book of Tobit. Raphael's name means "God heals." This identity came about because of the biblical story that claims he "healed" the earth when it was defiled by the sins of the fallen angels in the apocryphal book of Enoch.

Disguised as a human in the Book of Tobit, Raphael refers to himself as "Azarias the son of the great Ananias" and travels alongside Tobit's son, Tobiah. Once Raphael returns from his journey with Tobiah, he declares to Tobit that he was sent by the Lord to heal his blindness and deliver Sarah, Tobiah's future wife, from the demon Asmodeus. It is then that his true healing powers are revealed and he makes himself known as "the angel Raphael, one of the seven, who stand before the Lord" Tobit 12:15.

The demon Asmodeus killed every man Sarah married on the night of the wedding, before the marriage could be consummated.

Raphael guided Tobiah and taught him how to safely enter the marriage with Sarah. Raphael is credited with driving the evil spirit from Sarah and restoring Tobit's vision, allowing him to see the light of Heaven and for receiving all good things through his intercession.

### THE ANNUAL INVESTITURE 2020

All Investitures take place during the month of May in Peterborough. There is an opportunity to stay at the local Premier Inn (*Peterborough North - 1023 Lincoln Rd, Peterborough PE4 6AH*) on Friday evening and join the Grand Master for drinks and an informal dinner.



The following morning after taking a leisurely breakfast, members depart for the Masonic Centre in Peterborough for the Investiture which begins at 11am.



Following the delicious banquet lunch, a short meeting follows, after which members and guests depart for their homeward journey.

A thoroughly friendly and enjoyable occasion for all.

*More information from:*



The Grand Chancellor  
R.E. Chevalier David J Haywood OSTJ,  
GCSR, GCSM,  
Tel: 0161 764 4786  
Email: [gc@orderofstraphael.org.uk](mailto:gc@orderofstraphael.org.uk)

2020 Date: Friday 8<sup>th</sup> – Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May



The Healing Teaching  
& Chivalric Order of  
St Raphael

[www.orderofstraphael.org.uk](http://www.orderofstraphael.org.uk)