

The Saint Raphael Link

Some Periodic Ramblings of the Prior

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Email: revgeoffreyrobinson@ntlworld.com / Tele: 07817 825624

Dear Members,



When I was younger, I spent quite a lot of time with my paternal grandmother. She was a lovely person who seemed to have sayings for nearly every occasion that cropped up in life.

I remember well, her intense dislike for anyone who did not tell the truth. When such occasions presented themselves, she would always say:

“Tell the truth and shame the devil”.

Perhaps the older I become, the more understanding I have of her. Sometimes, she would not leave it there though, and would go on to say: **“I would rather have a thief, than a liar”**, and in order to qualify her thoughts, and leave the hearer in no doubt about her meaning, she would add:

“You know what to expect from a thief, but a liar can never be trusted”.

Jesus knows just how easy it is for us to wander from the pathway, and perhaps that is why he spent so much of his time here on earth teaching about good and evil.

In the prescribed readings for this coming Sunday, we are asked to read St Matthew’s Gospel about a sower of seed, and the parable of the tares sown by an enemy among the good seed of the field.

The earlier parables in this chapter focus on the results of sowing the seed of the gospel or the Good News of the Kingdom through the preaching of the word. Some seed falls on rocky ground and so doesn’t sprout; some seed falls on other ground and grows for a little while, but then withers in the heat of the day. Then there is the seed, which falls on good ground and produces much fruit.

The parable of the tares, which we thought about last week, shows the focused opposition of Satan to God’s purpose in “bringing many sons and daughters to glory”

Now, with the parable of the mustard seed, Christ adds another dimension of understanding to His teaching about the Kingdom; and here is the lesson for us all.

When Jesus taught that, the Kingdom of God is like a small mustard seed that would grow large; He was showing the power of God to do His work through whatever instrument He chooses. It will often be in a small way that He works, but that is to His glory!

God gives the power of the Holy Spirit to work faith and righteousness in His chosen people. He raised Jesus from the dead by his mighty power. That same power can work in us to produce fruit for the Kingdom of God. The power is great and significant, but it starts small, just like a mustard seed.

This power of life and faith is available when people realize they don’t have the

real power of God inherent within them.
They must first receive it from God.

Quite frankly, without God's power none of us can expect to see the Kingdom of God. God's Spirit must be a part of our life. Like that mustard seed, that Spirit must be planted within us, and begin to grow to produce spiritual growth.

I often wonder just how many people today know what it means to "repent"? This is not a word, which we hear in today's society very often. It means to stop living the way that brings problems, heartache and tragedy, and can end in broken lives that so often are very hard to fix. To repent then, means to change destructive and addictive behaviour, that not only damages our own lives, but those of our friends and colleagues, and even members our families, who love and care for us.

Now to repent in a biblical sense, means to look into the mirror of God's perfect law of liberty, and ask if we are hearers or doers of the Word of God, as St James puts it. It means to take an honest assessment of our lives; of what we say, and of what we do. Even if we feel that, we know God, and compare that to the standard of righteousness defined by God's law.

Notice how Christ answered His disciples' confusion over their lack of spiritual power, when they hadn't been able to overcome the dark power of the demonic world. When they came to Christ asking what they were doing wrong, Jesus said to them: 'Because of your unbelief, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain [an obstacle blocking what needs to be done], "Move from here to there," and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.

My grandmother had the experience never to underestimate the power of

God's Spirit to begin, and to finish His perfect work in us.

"Tell the truth and shame the devil", she would say. How I wish I had that same wisdom to know who can, and who cannot be trusted.

Nonetheless, God is still working within His Church now, within every small body of faithful believers. A body, which will later be visible and apparent when God's followers will be transformed, and His Kingdom rules over all the nations.

So, while we have time, let us do good and not evil: Be faithful, honest and true. Believe also in what we read in Sacred Scripture - Teach what we believe, and Practise what we teach." Amen.

+Geoffrey – GRAND PRIOR



SICK: Paul Shaw / Sheila Hogarth / Ruth Barr / Kathleen Roberts / Lesley Fudge / Thelma Thompson / Marlene Addy / Tania Walker / Lidia Flemming / 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 & 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 & Barrie Chester / Roy Taylor / Chris McKenna / Barbara Lee / Hazel Smith / Dave Johnson / Johnny & Pat Williamson / Richard Bentley / Brian Warner / Mukhtar Begum / Bob Lee / Lesley & Mick / Alice Beer / Joan & David Howe / Mary Ayrton / Alison Marshall / Janet Illingworth / John Lycett / Shelley

Coulter / Amanda Bannister / Una Kirby /
Graham & his father (Coward) / Garry
Stewart / Martin Harrison / Lynn Bromilow /
Bro Adrian / Thelma Dunkley.

Guess the Locations

1. Peterborough Cathedral
2. Ashton Memorial, Lancaster

Cook's Corner:



INGREDIENTS:

- 2 x 400g can chickpeas, drained
- 2 x 300g pack cooked beetroot, drained
- 2 small garlic cloves
- 2 tbsp tahini
- 100ml extra virgin olive oil,
plus a drizzle to serve
- good squeeze of lemon juice
- 2 tbsp toasted hazelnuts, roughly chopped
- 2 tbsp pumpkin seeds, roughly chopped
- 2 tsp nigella seeds
- 1 tsp sumac (optional)
- pinch of chilli flakes (optional)
- To serve (optional)
- crunchy summer veg, cut into batons (we
used fennel, sugar snap peas, baby heritage
carrots & radishes)
- bread, toasted and cut into
fingers for dipping
- mini mozzarella balls
- olives
- prosciutto-wrapped breadsticks

METHOD

1. Set about 2 tbsp chickpeas aside. Tip the rest of the chickpeas, the beetroot, garlic, tahini, oil and lemon juice into a [food processor](#) with a good pinch of salt. Blend until smooth, then check the seasoning, adding a little more salt or lemon if it needs it. Chill the hummus until you're ready to serve (it will keep for up to two days).
2. Transfer the hummus to a wide, shallow bowl or spread over a platter. Drizzle with some oil, scatter with the reserved chickpeas, hazelnuts, seeds, sumac and chilli (if using). Arrange the crunchy veg and other accompaniments around the platter and let everyone dig in.

Why churches have steeples



The distinctive architectural feature has deep biblical roots.

Sometimes the best way to locate the nearest Christian church is to drive around until you see a large steeple or tower jutting out above all the other buildings. It is one of the clearest indicators of a Christian church and one of the oldest features of church architecture.

In fact, it has become so ingrained into Western culture that many of us couldn't imagine a church without a steeple. But why do churches have steeples in the first place? What is their purpose? In church architecture steeples and towers are essentially the same thing. They are vertical structures built on the side, front, back or top of a church and soar above any other nearby building.

At first these buildings were separate towers and often contained a small chapel at the bottom known as the baptistry. This is where catechumens in the early Church would be baptized. One of the best known examples of this type of building is the baptistry located at St. John Lateran in Rome.



Then over time there developed a need to house church bells to call the people to prayer. Church towers were an easy choice because of their height and ability to transmit sound to a large area.

The spiritual significance of these structures come straight from the Bible. The Psalmist speaks about God as a tower, saying, “Raise me up, set me on a rock, for you are my refuge, a tower of strength against the foe” (Psalm 61:3-4).

Again in Proverbs we read, “The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe” (Proverbs 18:10).

Towers and spires were also used to spiritually point people towards Heaven, which was traditionally thought to be located in or above the sky.

Also, ancient people believed that God could be more easily reached on high places, and this was reinforced in the Christian tradition with the story of Moses receiving the 10 Commandments on Mount Horeb as well as Jesus’s Transfiguration that took place on Mount Tabor.

As steeples continued to be developed, they were also used to distinguish cathedrals and more important ecclesial buildings from smaller country parishes. Basically, the bigger the steeple, the more important the church was. There is no doubt that various

architects kept this in mind and tried to make their steeples the biggest in the area. Steeples were also used to remind a local community to remain focused on God. Other secular buildings were usually built lower than the church steeple, making the local church the highest and most important building of the town. You couldn’t go anywhere in town without seeing the steeple and as a result be reminded about your duty to God.

Fun fact:

The tallest church in the world is Ulm Minster, with a steeple measuring 530 ft, while the tallest cathedral in the world is the Cologne Cathedral with a height of 515 ft.

A Saints Day in June



Blessed Diana - A member of the d'Andalo family, Diana was born near Bologna Italy, and convinced her father to withdraw his opposition to the founding of a Dominican priory on land he owned in Bologna. Dominic received her vow of virginity, but she was forced to remain at home by her family. Later she joined the Augustinians at Roxana but was forcibly removed from the convent by her family. She was injured in the struggle but later escaped and returned to Roxana.

Sometime later

Blessed Jordan of Saxony convinced the family to found a Dominican convent in

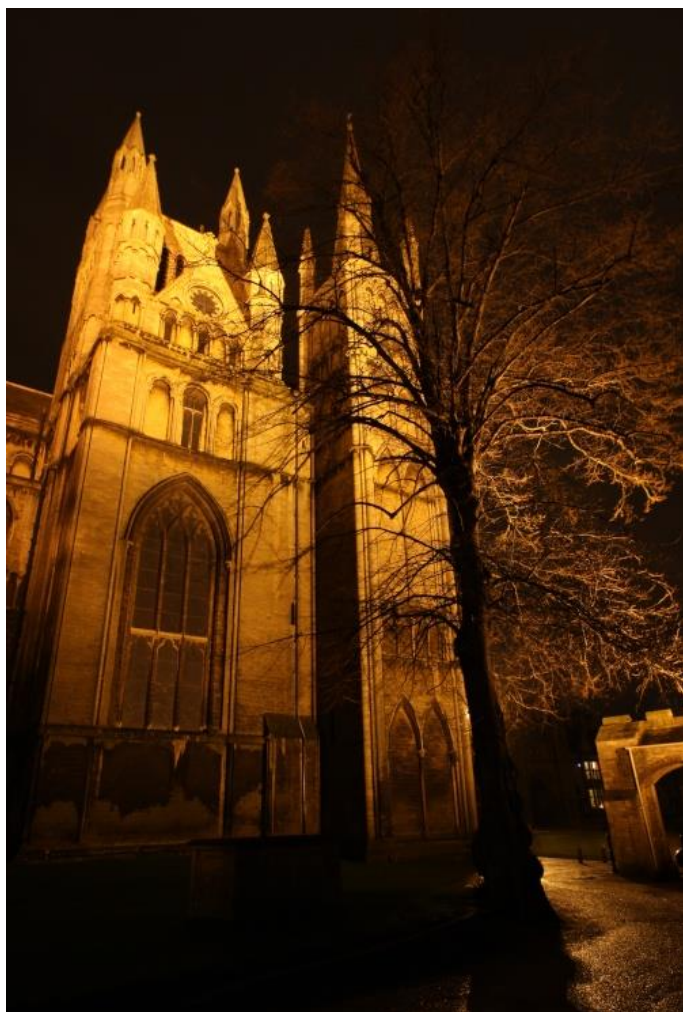
1222 for her, staffed with Diana and four companions and four nuns brought from Rome, two of them Cecilia and Amata. Diana died on January 9, and when Cecilia and Amata died, they were buried with her. All three were beatified in 1891.

Feast day is June 9th

"Life is wasted if we do not grasp the glory of the cross, cherish it for the treasure that it is, and cleave to it as the highest price of every pleasure and the deepest comfort in every pain. What was once foolishness to us—a crucified God—must become our wisdom and our power and our only boast in this world." - John Piper

"If you can't fly, then run, If you can't run, then walk, If you can't walk, then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward." - Martin Luther King Jr.

GUESS THE LOCATIONS



Stay safe



The Healing Teaching &
Chivalric Order of
St Raphael

www.orderofstraphael.org.uk