

# St Pancras

May 2025



**Free (one per household)**



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## Editor's note:

A big thank you to all our contributors, especially regulars, whose support I rely on each time to get the magazine started. Your continued involvement makes a real difference, and the magazine simply wouldn't come together without you. This issue is slightly slimmer than usual, which is a bit of a shame! Unfortunately, there haven't been many new submissions this time around, so I have had to do a bit of gap-filling myself! That said, it's been really encouraging to see some of our younger parishioners getting involved and sending in pieces. I do hope this will inspire others—particularly the younger members of the parish—to have a go too! Even a short article, a drawing, or a few photos would be very welcome.

Please remember to submit your articles for the next issue by Sunday 24th August to [matilda79r@gmail.com](mailto:matilda79r@gmail.com).

*Yours,  
Tilly Rampley*



Cover image: Coronation of the Virgin, by Peter Paul Ruben 16th Century.

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# 'He is Risen as He said. Alleluia!'

## The Resurrection of the Body and Practice of Cremation

By Father Joseph

We have just celebrated the greatest feast day of the Church's year. On Easter Sunday, we not only recall, we actually participate in, the resurrection from the dead of the Son of God Incarnate. With each passing year the Church is blessed with the outpouring of all the spiritual blessings of the heavenly places (Eph 1:3) that were first poured upon the face of the earth at the moment of Our Lord's resurrection two thousand years ago. The Church's feast days are no mere acts of remembering. Through the theological idea of anamnesis God renews His Church with a remembering that brings the spiritual realities of whichever mystery is being celebrated into the present age, and we who celebrate that mystery are refreshed with an abundant shower of new graces. At the moment of resurrection Christ triumphs over the oldest and most definitive weapon in the devil's arsenal, death.

And although we shall all die when our lives here on earth are ended, nonetheless the full and everlasting consequences of that death are rendered null and void for those who, in this life, join themselves to the person of Christ and become conformed to His likeness, both on the Cross and in His resurrection. Our Lord's resurrected body is the same one in which He was born, lived upon earth, and died on the Cross. Even so, it bears qualities that are glorious, so much so that most of His disciples did not recognize Him when they encountered Him for the first time following His resurrection. Nevertheless, it is the same body, but it is endowed with certain supernatural qualities. First, Our Lord's resurrected body enjoys the quality of impassibility which renders it incapable of any further suffering or pain.

Nor can it undergo death ever again. Second, it enjoys the quality of brightness which renders it as glorious as the sun, not unlike the moment of His Transfiguration on Mt Tabor in the presence of Ss Peter, James, and John. It is true that this quality is not apparent at every moment: the disciples, when they encounter the

risen Lord, are not continuously dazzled! Nonetheless, this glorious quality is truly present. Third, Our Lord's resurrected body enjoys the quality of agility which frees it from the physical constraints of earthly forces such as gravity. His resurrected body can pass as quickly as thought from one place to another (which is how He appeared and disappeared from sight: (Jn 20:19,26 and Lk 24:31). And finally, His body enjoys the quality of subtilty, or subtlety, which means that His body shares in the spiritual existence of His soul, and He can pass through material substances (which is how He could enter a locked room: Jn 20:19). We do not, perhaps, give much thought to the doctrine of the resurrection of our bodies, but at the end of time our mortal remains will be gathered up and our bodies will be raised once more and will be rejoined to our souls.

When that happens, those bodies which are reunited to their souls in heaven (the souls in hell will also have their bodies reunited to them) will enjoy the same supernatural qualities of impassibility, brightness, agility, and subtilty. All of which begs questions about how we should treat our bodies while we are still alive. At Baptism our bodies are consecrated with the Holy Oil of Chrism (also used during the Sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Orders) and we become temples of God, and the Holy Spirit dwells within us (1 Cor 3:16). Therefore, we are called by Almighty God to treat our bodies with reverence throughout life (and this is the chief reason for modesty of dress and for purity of behaviour) and indeed even in death.

We are commanded by our God to become conformed to the likeness of Christ in life by how we live, and we are commanded to be conformed to Him in death also. Just as Our Lord slept in death on the Cross and was laid to rest in the Holy Sepulchre by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, so when we die our bodies should be laid to rest as we also sleep in death. Being asleep in death, we await the sound of the 'last trumpet' which



will waken us from death, and we 'shall rise again incorruptible' (1 Cor 15:52). Having slept with Christ in death, we shall also rise with Christ (1 Thess 4:13). So much of our holy religion is revealed to us through symbolism. We must not set aside this symbolism otherwise we will find that we have set aside our religion with it. God 'created all things that they might be,' and it is not for us deliberately to destroy what God's hand has fashioned. Even though some bodies are destroyed in death (for example, in war or fire) nevertheless it is still contrary to God's plan that we should intentionally destroy what He has made. In other words, it is not for us to destroy our bodies – temples of God wherein the Holy Spirit has dwelt since we were baptized – but that after we die they should be laid to rest in sleep until the last trumpet is sounded.

The proper order of things after a Catholic has died is for there to be a requiem Mass wherein the soul of the deceased person is united to Christ in His sacrifice on Calvary (which is what the Mass is) and for the body to be laid to rest in sleep through burial in consecrated ground. In this way, both soul and body are committed to the keeping of Our Lord so that both may enjoy the fruits of the resurrection – soul and body together – and so be united with our Saviour and 'be always with the Lord' in eternal glory in heaven (1 Thess 4:16). Cremation, then, is not for Catholics. Instead, we are commanded always to be conformed to the likeness of Our Lord both in His life and in His death so that dying with Him we may rise with Him and live forever in the presence of the Beatific Vision, the face of our God.



# A personal Christmas reflection

By Father Pat Cleary

Twenty minutes before the Children's Mass on Christmas Eve, I had a call from my elder sister to say that she had been taken into A&E as her heart was twice as active as is healthy, she was experiencing one or two other symptoms. After the second Mass on Christmas morning, I took her Communion on my way home (her home) as being a daily Mass attendee since childhood (we jokingly say she is the black sheep of the family!) I knew she would appreciate that. Her plan on Christmas morning had been to play the carols at the 9.30 Mass at St Pancras, Ipswich (she being the 4th generation of our family to play that instrument regularly) and then return home to cook lunch for the two of us.

After the hospital visit I headed home and found some chicken in the fridge which I fried and heated up some baked beans. This was followed by an individual Christmas pudding (given by a parishioner with a story attached!) and some cream. As I sat at the table I reflected on Christmases past, going back even to when I was unable to see above the table at which I was sitting, (sturdy fur-

niture was made in the 1930s!). The memory of my father coming down the stairs laden with the eagerly anticipated presents wrapped and hidden until now. Each of us children hoping the large one at the bottom of the pile would be ours! The excitement of the moment is memorable. Our grandmother, in her old age, would make a quiet exit to find more peaceful surroundings while this annual liturgy took place! I used to wonder why she would want to miss the most exciting moment of the entire year; I understand now! Often, when asked, 'did you have a nice Christmas', the answer is 'Yes, thank you; quiet!' I can certainly reply that way this year.

It helped me realise not to take things for granted and that our existence is fragile. Those with whom we spend our time, are precious, and it's those who make a house a home, not the bricks and mortar within which so much is experienced as the decades pass by. On Boxing Day I was catapulted back into the dynamism of family life as my brother, Peter, with 8 of his family covering 3 generations tumbled into the



Father Pat, Rome 2015

house turning it once more into a home. Lovely. The old stories were re told (embellished as the years pass) the rather off-colour poem was recited by a great niece, the 4th generation of the family so to do (it isn't too risqué, and always made my mother, and her's giggle) The passing of the years can worry us but far better to accept that which we cannot change, as the Serenity Prayer has it. We have wonderful examples in our parish of people who are fully alive even in 'old age'.

And I remember one parishioner from 3 parishes ago, now well into his 80s saying, 'I consider myself healthy unless I have papers to prove otherwise!' Let's have grateful hearts and cast off negativity, our time here is limited, we know that, but let's live it fully until unable to do so!

## About Father Pat Cleary

By Theresa Cleary

Canon Patrick Cleary was born in Ipswich and baptised at St Pancras Church in 1949 by Fr James Reidy, the then curate. Pat attended St Pancras Primary School at the time when it transferred from the site of the present hall to Stratford Road in St Mary Magdalen's parish. Aged eleven he went to St Mary's School (before St Alban's was built). He was a popular schoolboy and enjoyed playing football and being involved in Fr Leeder's 12th Ipswich Scout group.

Pat left school at fifteen and went into retail and stocktaking which involved travelling and meeting many people. After seven years he felt a call to the priesthood and went to study at a pre-seminary before being sent to All Hallows Seminary in Dublin by Bishop

Alan Clark. He was ordained to the priesthood on 16th December 1978 in Norwich Cathedral and said his first Mass at St Mary Magdalen's, Ipswich, the next day. He was appointed curate to Our Lady and the English Martyrs, Cambridge, before moving as assistant to Fr Bernard Neasden at St Mary's, Ipswich, following a short time at the cathedral. When Fr Neasden moved to Hunstanton Fr Pat was left in charge at St Mary's before being appointed as parish priest to St Mary's, Thetford, in 1985.

From 1991 to 1999 he was with the St James Society which was founded to send priests to S America for five or more years before returning to their home dioceses. In Fr Pat's case he was in Bolivia for part of that time before being called to their HQ in Boston, Mas-

sachusetts, USA, to take on the fund raising, a task which involved his visiting various US and Toronto parishes to preach and raise the funds for the work in S America. Returning to East Anglia in 1999, he has served in Lowestoft, St Neots, St Laurence's in Cambridge, Wymondham, and now back to Thetford where he has re-connected with some whom he baptised in his earlier time there.

Fr Pat has also been Vocations Director for the diocese and has served in Safeguarding and as Rural Dean of the Cambridge Deanery. He has always retained his Ipswich roots and enjoys his visits back home.

# A week in Japan

By Paul Shilling

On 31st December 2024 I departed for the land of the rising sun, Japan. This country has always intrigued me, with its unique culture and customs. Days 1 and 2 Departing from Heathrow Terminal 2 for the long connecting flight via Seoul, anticipating cherry blossom, Buddhism, interesting cuisine (and a glass or two of Saki!) I had high hopes. Above average airline food (actually edible with the hint of east Asia). Three good films, at least three rosaries, no sleep. Arrived at 10.20pm on Tuesday, nighttime sightseeing from the taxi! Day 3 Rosary, prayers to St Tryphon and my guardian angel followed by breakfast.

Our first destination was Tokyo. Well, it certainly assaults the senses! Extreme urbanisation, three storey motorways, teeming with people, and rain! My first experience of cherry blossom of a few sporadic cherry trees in a typical Japanese garden. Despite the lugubrious and gloomy weather, the blossom still radiant. If you want to experience mass tourism, I would certainly recommend Tokyo's main attractions. Sensoji temple was disorientating with a mass of humanity shuffling around narrow shop-lined streets in one enormous conga line!

It can be difficult to truly appreciate a beautiful temple in such circumstances. The *Bonsho* bells are very common, used to summon monks to prayer. No sign of any today! I refrained from purchasing anything due to the time constraints by the tour guide (yes, we did eventually locate her amongst the teeming hordes). I must mention her as she was an excellent guide. She was called Nori and was an effervescent character with a great passion for her country. Infectious laugh. Our first dinner was on board a cruise boat, sitting cross-legged tucked under extremely low tables eating a curious mixture of hot and cold food in small dishes (some appetising, others most definitely not!).

Suffice to say my stomach couldn't really cope with a bout of Japanese tummy (or whatever the local term is!). Would I recommend Tokyo? Not really, too intense. Day 4, Rosary, prayers, breakfast. Today promised the delights of the

Mount Fuji area. There had been fairly significant snow fall and the possibility of reaching the 5th viewing station of Mount Fuji was not positive. We commenced under leadened skies and drove inland, hoping for clearer skies. The roads close to the base of the volcano were impassable. Improved weather for our cruise on Lake Ashi? Absolutely not. Thick fog descended with visibility down to 100 metres. We had to use our imagination to visualise the reflection of mount Fuji in the calm waters. Better luck when ascending the Komagatake Rope-way (cable car) for spectacular views of Mount Fuji?



Sensoji Temple



Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker

Not when the fog follows you up the mountain side! An information panel pointed into the direction of the great volcano. Use of imagination required again. *Nante yuutsuna* (please use a translator for translation). We wearily made



our way to our over-night stop. I set my alarm for 7am in order to have an early morning run to have a serious prayer session with Our Lord! The alarm duly sounded and I set out. Oh, a little dark this morning I exclaimed! Quite a few commuters about and a few early morning revellers journeying home. At least it was dry. I returned to the hotel. Shirley, my partner, was dressed for breakfast. A cursory look at the watch (which I did not wear for my run) elicited a brief moment of despair. I had neglected to turn off the previous alarm, for midnight. The actual time was 20 past midnight. My first, and possibly only, midnight run! Back to bed! Day 5, Rosary, prayers (for sunshine and spiritual encouragement). The (actual) morning was fairly bright.

Descending to the restaurant for (actual) breakfast I noticed some Asian travellers viewing photos of Mount Fuji on their smartphones. A frisson of envy ensued (venial sin, hopefully covered during last week's confession!). I trudged to the breakfast table, and behold, from the window was the very same image that the Asians had taken with their smartphones. Mount Fuji! Distant but distinct. Joy! I thanked the Lord and left for the train station with the group with my first real smile of the holiday. But it was to improve. Our next journey was aboard the Shinkansen bullet train, bound for Kyoto.

Standing at the platform we were greeted with a curious and very rapid sound, whaa, whaa, whaa etc. This is the sound of a passing bullet train. A remarkable sight, though blurred due to the speed (just under 200 MPH). It is quite surreal travelling of that speed, although you never quite sense that you are attaining at that speed.



I waved goodbye to Mount Fuji as it disappeared behind clouds and 2 hours later we arrived at Kyoto station. Organised chaos ensued as we weaved through the hordes of commuters, so many platforms and staircases! In the afternoon we visited *Fushimi Inari Shrine*. As is usual in Japan tour buses cannot arrive close to the actual shrine so we joined yet another human touristic conga line through back streets lined with more food and souvenir vendors. It was impressive, this regal Japanese temple. There are thousands of vermilion *Tori* gates to travel under. These mark the boundaries between the sacred and the ordinary world, according to the Buddhist religion. Day 6, Rosary, prayers of thanks for a holiday that was at last gaining momentum. Another Kyoto attraction awaited this morning, the *Kinkakuji* (or golden) temple. This is a splendid example of Buddhist architecture and is covered in gold leaf.

There was also a Lake but, unlike the one near Mount Fuji, no fog. Just sunshine and a virtually mirror like surface. Beautiful reflections caught on camera. I always carry my large bridge camera with me (for bird watching purposes) and captured decent shots of the Japanese Dwarf Pygmy woodpecker, foraging in the tree branches. And there was Cherry blossom. At last! More photos ensued! Two authentic experiences were enjoyed later in the day. The Japanese tea ceremony is a highly detailed and lengthy cultural practice. It is more than just drinking tea, it's a spiritual and aesthetic practice focused on harmony common respect, purity and tranquility. Matcha, a strong green tea, is prepared by a host who has to undertake years of training.

We experienced an abridged version (normally takes over two hours!). The calligraphy lesson, using authentic tools, was enjoyable. The highlight of the tour was never included in our itinerary. Shirley and I joined a renegade group that visited an illuminated cherry blossom attraction in Kyoto, whilst the rest of the party enjoyed a fish meal. We commandeered a fleet of taxis and made our way through exceptionally busy streets to the park. All ten of us eventually met up at the entrance. And the human conga commenced again, yet on another scale. Thousands swarmed down narrow lanes lined with (you guessed, food vendors). Our party formed a human chain that was frequently broken, in order stay in touch. We had no idea where the main at-

traction was located, we just followed the flow. Oh, was it worth it. Stunning cherry trees in full bloom, illuminated from below, with parties of locals beneath enjoying evening picnics. One tree was 40 ft high, an ethereal sight to behold. Feeling peckish, I decided to have a noodle dish. Cook stood in front of a hot plate with two paddle boards. Chinese cabbage cooked briefly before an enormous lump of soft noodles mixed with meat was placed on top. The whole pile was manoeuvred with great dexterity for around two minutes before being served in trays with wooden chopsticks. Basic but delicious. Day 7, Rosary, prayers said with even greater verve. Off to Nara. More sunshine and a beautiful Japanese garden. Tranquility is easy to find as these are meticulously laid out. They invite reflection. Praying is easy, the Lord even easier to locate!

Today's Temple is mightily impressive. Typically typical Japanese style on a very, very grand scale. It houses a 15 m tall bronze Buddha; the largest made of this material in the world. All surrounded by exquisite cherry blossom. Sika deer roam the grounds, extremely habituated, taking advantage of the tourists' titbits and food bags sold by local vendors. The afternoon was spent at Osaka castle. This was when I really did experience the cherry blossom. The avenues of pink blossom that I had imagined were finally reality. Just exquisite! More tourists and locals were again enjoying their picnics beneath the blossom. The castle itself was yet another grand eight storeys structure. The views from the top were quite superb.

After an evening meal of eel sushi it was time for an early night as the flight departed at 7 am the next morning back to the UK. Day 8, very early rosary, prayers, no time for breakfast. 4am alarm call! Long return flight via Seoul. Upon arrival I phoned the care home that my father resides at to request an update. He was fine, profuse prayers to Our dear Lady! He had been in my prayers all holiday, as well as my beautiful budgie companion, Gino (who was being tended by a good neighbour). A text from her confirmed he had been 'a little cutie'. More prayers to our Father!

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**Footnote:** I was more aware of the presence of God than on any other trip I had undertaken, offering gratitude for the blessings I received, even the inconspicuous ones. I now appreciate that Buddhism shares many positive traits with the Catholic faith. Compassion, respect, meditation and rejection of materialism are most apparent. Love is at the core of both! It does, however, make one really appreciate the intensity and extreme beauty of our Catholic faith.

Kinkakuji Temple. Kyoto



# Response to Music

## 'Hergest Ridge' – Mike Oldfield

By **Mim MacMahon**

Perhaps I am being, this time, a little self-indulgent. I sincerely hope, and pray, that this isn't true. What I have chosen to do is introduce you, or perhaps reintroduce you, to a beloved friend of my youth – Mike Oldfield's second album from 1974, sandwiched in between the far more famous 'Tubular Bells' and 'Ommadawn', which is often thought to be his best. 'Hergest Ridge' often gets overlooked, even, apparently, by Mike Oldfield himself. He is said to be a sensitive soul, and was, perhaps, adversely affected by criticism of the 'it isn't as good as 'Tubular Bells' type. But, dear listeners, trust me, it is.

For context, Hergest Ridge is the name of an elongated hill which (it says in Wikipedia) traverses the English-Welsh border. Its highest point, which is in England, rises to about 1400 feet above sea level. (Oh, all right then, 426 metres, if you are young.) It was to a house, The Beacon, near the hill, that Mike Oldfield came in the latter part of 1973, seeking seclusion after the overwhelming success of 'Tubular Bells' had caused him some degree of mental overload. He was, at this stage, still only 20 years old, and, as we have said, a sensitive soul. He composed the album that was to take its name from the hill over the winter and early spring of 1973-74.

It was recorded in April 1974 and released on August 30th of that year. Like its predecessor, it straddles the progressive rock and ambient genres – that is, if you have to put it into a category at all. Also, as with 'Tubular Bells', Oldfield himself plays the majority of the featured instruments, including various guitars, glockenspiel, sleigh bells, mandolin, Farfisa organ (those were the days!)

– not an exhaustive list. The work is also scored for two oboes, flute, trumpet, snare drum, and voices used as instruments. There were, apparently, strings, conducted by David Bedford, though I can't find references to string players. Originally mixed in stereophonic sound, it was remixed in quadrophonic sound in 1976 for 'Boxed', the four album set, and Oldfield has said that he wishes for all future releases of the album to be derived from this version. Because music never stands still, the whole album was remixed again and reissued in 2010, with the 1974 original alongside it.

It is interesting to compare the two. At this point you should probably listen to it. Your great friend YouTube contains the 1974 version and the remix from 2010. There can be no doubt that the 2010 version is much sharper and clearer. You can, for instance, hear the words the vocalists are singing – although, as the words are in a made-up language, that won't help you. For me, some passages are now a little too clear, the louder and faster section in Part Two, for instance. You actually can have too much of a good thing. But you don't have to take my word for it. My first exposure to it was played on a Dansette in a bedsit in ... well, let's not say. So I am biased.

My favourite parts of the work tend to be the softer, gentler, less 'rocky' parts. And the music is by now embedded in me like my DNA, through so much listening when I was younger. See what you think. Of course, if you don't like it, I do realise that it will be 40 minutes of your life you won't get back, and I can only apologise. It's an album to which you can't really listen while doing the washing up; at least, that's my response. From this point, it's a great aid to rest,



meditation, and recuperation, because you have to immerse yourself in its sound-world. Many people see sound in terms of (imaginary) pictures, and, if you are one, then this piece can take you anywhere. While it was Oldfield's response to a very specific place on the planet Earth, it has fuelled the imaginations of other listeners to travel anywhere and, indeed, any \*when\*. The responses on YouTube vary from 'a bit muddy, is it bootlegged?' to a vision of Celtic women engaged in a mystic dance – this being, specifically a listener's response to the flutes over strings at the beginning of Part One. (Which is manifest nonsense – it clearly depicts sunrise on an alien planet with two suns).

You see what I mean? If you aren't familiar with the work of Mike Oldfield, you might prefer to break yourself in, as it were, with the slightly more approachable 'Ommadawn', but I do urge you to make room in your life to listen to 'Hergest Ridge' – and just let your imagination wander. From the ethereal beginnings of Parts One and Two to the more 'rocky' parts, you can be drawn into a realm of your imagination – whether mystic, epic, or fairy tale is entirely up to you. But if you haven't, do, please, give it a try. That's all I ask.



**Don't forget the full-colour digital edition of the magazine is available online. Perfect for reading on the go or sharing with friends and family!**

# In Conclave

## By Father Joseph

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They gather, with their striking scarlet plumage  
and imposing wings of black, in the wooded suburbs  
where their pendant seats aspire above  
the gaze of accidental tourists, and their song  
demands an ear to hear their sweetly chanted chirrups.

In solitude, or sometimes with a mate, most often  
they are spotted, but in these days they flock,  
descending in collective flight upon the rooftops,  
and flutter in unruffled agitation, to hear, to sing,  
to see, and to be seen. And in their lofty airs

they carol praises sweetly hymned to resonate  
their choral aspirations. And having gathered  
in their natural habitat they set about, according  
to their breed, to fashion from their midst another,  
to guard and guide their flight towards the heights,

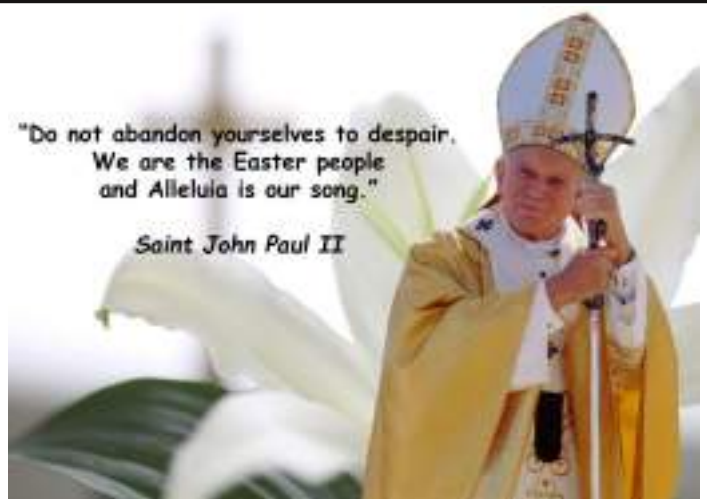
and of whom now they might intone in harmony,  
*habemus papam*. <sup>1</sup>



The male scarlet tanager bird has a remarkable red and black plumage, and belongs to the family of cardinal birds, *cardinalidae*.

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<sup>1</sup> 'We have a pope,' the words proclaimed from the balcony in St Peter's square once a new pope has been elected.





# Monday Book club

By Brian Price

The book that we discussed this time was 'The Cloud Of Unknowing', which was written in the late 1300s by an anonymous English writer. The general assumption was that it was probably a man who wrote the book but we rejected the idea that he was a parish priest on the grounds that a priest was unlikely to have had the time to write such a book, even though it is quite short. Since the book seems to have been written as a guide to a young man who was joining a contemplative order, we were of the view that a monk was probably the author. The Carthusians did much to circulate the book and so someone with links to the Carthusians seemed a plausible candidate. From this point onwards I shall call the author Anon simply because it is slightly more snappy than 'the person who wrote this book, whoever he was'.

There are two issues which need clarification. The book is essentially a guide to a young man as to how to become a contemplative, with advice on what to do and what pitfalls and errors to avoid. So what is a contemplative? Wikipedia says, 'In a religious context, the practice of contemplation seeks a direct awareness of the divine which transcends the intellect, often in accordance with religious practices such as meditation or prayer.' Wikipedia goes on to cite Anon as stating that contemplation is not an act of intellect but a kind of transcendent 'seeing' beyond the usual activities of the mind. Our discussion did bring up the idea that contemplation is seeing the face of God.

The second question is what exactly is 'the cloud of unknowing'? Let me quote from the book itself. The first time you practise contemplation, you'll experience a darkness, like a cloud of unknowing. You won't know what this is... this darkness and this cloud will always be between you and your God...they will always keep you from seeing Him clearly by the light of understanding in your intellect and will block you from feeling Him fully in the sweetness of love in your emotions. So be sure to make your home in this darkness...We can't think our way to God... that is why I am willing

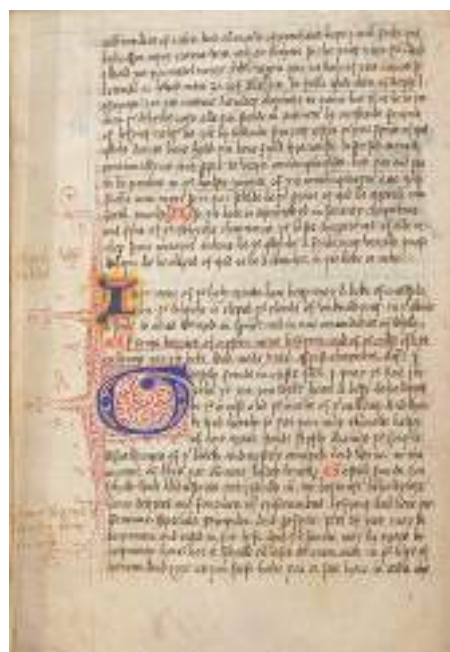
to abandon everything I know, to love the one thing I cannot think. He can be loved, but not thought. Now let the fun begin, Thomas Aquinas wrote: 'It is requisite for the good of the human community that there should be persons who devote themselves to the life of contemplation'. However, there were those of us in the group who were inclined to say, 'That's all well and good, but who's making the tea and sandwiches?'. Anon does open himself to this very criticism since he sees 2 forms of Christian life, the active and the contemplative 'the active is lower, the contemplative is higher'. He devotes a couple of (very short) chapters to the story of Martha and Mary and links this to how 'all actives still complain about contemplatives'.

However, let us cut Anon some slack because in chapter 19 he does say he has no desire to criticise Martha or the actives. 'God forbid that I should say anything in this work that might be taken as a rebuke to any of God's servants'. Obviously, a man who still wanted his tea and sandwiches. Some of us were now taking issue with the idea that there was a form of hierarchy in spirituality, which was probably not too surprising since we all tended to be actives. We felt that some people are actives due to circumstances and others are actives because it is part of their nature to get on with doing things and it seemed unfair to consider such people 'lower'.

One interesting suggestion was to compare life with the designing of a garden in which plants of all shapes, sizes and colours are used to achieve the desired effect, with none being considered as superior to another. There was also a cry of, 'What about the vegetables?' and a general agreement that the vegetables too had their place in the garden design. However, we did come to some agreement that it was possible for the active life and the contemplative life to be reconciled. Contemplative orders provide a structure in which contemplation is possible but there is no reason why an active could not find a time and place for contemplation in his or her own life; after all, chapter 4 is

headed 'Contemplation does not take a long time'. There were also some ideas which were historical rather than religious in nature. We were pretty sure that the book was written after the Black Death, which caused the death of anywhere between 40% and 60% of the population. It is generally accepted that this caused major disruption to economic life and we all assumed that religious beliefs were similarly disrupted. The English mystics, who included Julian of Norwich and Margery Kempe as well as Anon were all writing after the Black Death.

We also noted that 'The Cloud of Unknowing' was written in English and so can be seen as part of the move to the use of English in literature. Chaucer, of course, wrote in English and from 1430 official documents were written in English rather than French. Next time we jump forward 6 centuries to 'God Alone Suffices' by Slawomir Biela, a book which aims to restore the soul's 'smile'.



The opening page of The Cloud of Unknowing in a 15th-century manuscript.

# A Christmas reflection

By Theresa Cleary

I hope the readers don't mind a Cleary double-act this time as I add my penn'orth to my brother Father Pat's article appearing on page 4. "I didn't think you were a hospital person", was the reaction of my fellow Catholic I met on the bus in the new year when we exchanged our Christmas news. It was true: until Christmas Eve 2024 I had only spent one night of my whole life in hospital- in 2016 when some of my fingers went floppy and Father Leeder and Father Pat who happened to be home, advised me to seek medical attention. By Christmas Eve 2024 I had suffered from days of what Father Pat delicately calls "other symptoms" and thought I had better contact the doctors' surgery before heading into Christmas proper.

I did, they saw me straight away and on finding that the heart count was too high they wrote a letter for me to take to A and E that evening. Tilly, our magazine editor, and a friend of hers kindly transported me to our lovely new A and E department where I was seen within a reasonable time. A screen showed the maximum waiting time which only occasionally reached '4 hours' as opposed to '3 hours something'. At first you hope you'll be seen and sent home that evening but no such luck for me. I was seen two or three times and there was talk of going on a ward. That night I spent in a bay in A and E with four armchairs, sitting on 'chair 4' (other patients occupied the other three chairs).

On Christmas Day about 8 or 9 am, a very kind male nurse came on duty and got me some breakfast, a cup of tea and some toast which was just what I felt like. He then prepared a bed in another bay so I could lie down as he real-

ised I had been sitting up all night. In early afternoon I was taken onto a ward, Bramford, and as they positioned me and my bed in a single room, I looked up and there was Father Pat coming in with Holy Communion for me, having just travelled down from Thetford. What a lovely Christmas surprise. I asked him to let Father Joseph know that he had brought me Holy Communion, which he did, but after 5pm Benediction at St. Pancras, Father Joseph himself came and gave me a blessing and the programme of the Benediction.

As Father Pat says, our youngest brother Peter and family came to Ipswich from Norwich on 26th December and they kindly visited me with their presents for me to open and then they took them home (to number 24) as one does not want too much stuff in hospital. Peter's daughter and her daughter kindly brought me some clothes etc., from home as I had come in unprepared. I also had kind people from St. Pancras' visiting me. Then about 1 am, the night between 26th and 27th December they said they were moving me to another ward and when I asked if it was upstairs, they said it was on the seventh floor of the maternity block and that I'd have a good view from up there!

I was moved with my stuff and in the same bed all that way. It's amazing that with all the various departments of the hospital which have been built over the years, they are all linked up. and it was the same bed. It's all done so efficiently. Moving at that time of night gave me a tiny tiny insight into what St. Joseph must have felt when he was told to take Baby Jesus and Mother Mary away from



Photograph by Rosa Patten

the danger from Herod by night. As for the view from my window, the first two mornings I was there, there was thick fog! Again I had a room to myself and again kind visitors came to see me. So my care proceeded. Tablets eventually cleared the 'symptoms' and the heart rate came down a bit, slowly. There were lots of blood pressure tests, drips, monitors etc., but I was very well looked after and I have the greatest admiration for all involved in my care. I never worked out the marvellous skill involved in changing the sheets etc., on a hospital bed!

Fr Joseph came again on Sunday 29th December and brought me Holy Communion. Monday 30th December dawned beautifully sunny and I could appreciate the wonderful view from the seventh floor. The doctor in charge of my case saw me that morning and insisted I drink a lot of water as that makes it easier for the heart to pump the blood around. He said tea and coffee would do but not G and T! Then to my great delight I was discharged that evening. There was an amazing sunset and one or two folks were taking photos of it from my window. About 8 pm, my middle brother Joe came to bring me home. It was an easy journey; Ipswich Town was in action at Portman Road that evening, returning in a victory over Chelsea!

## Standing Orders:

**Please consider making your donations as a standing order instead of cash.**

**Account name: St Pancras Catholic Church, Barclays Bank.**

**Account number: 00775843 Sort code: 20-44-51**





# Poetry

**by Judith Rogers**

There will come a time, and that quite soon  
When I shall not be there  
and the sun will shine as pleasantly  
and the breeze will blow as steadily  
the air as cool and clear

Days will come and go as then  
and numbered years will pass  
Now distant times we call to mind  
And sounds of war we hear  
on moving buses leaping  
down escalators running  
in brick built shelters crouching  
bombs falling, guns a-thunder  
Young we had no fear

There will come a time, and that quite soon  
When all these memories will die  
with us when strength has ebbed  
and minutes slowly count the day  
Mock not for we have lived and that  
You cannot take away.



## Domination

That you who know me will not let me be  
Fingering my soul, to possess  
All that I am, and what I was before  
Or might have been you must ignore

And in your very interest I die  
In part, though not unwillingly  
And forfeit for your love some other thing  
From countless choices, now diminishing.

And make my every action to conform,  
To keep within the maze of your desire  
Denying what I had, and bartering  
All that there was for this to which I cling.  
What seems a gift is only lent  
I turn a blind eye and consent.

# Jonquil

by Father Joseph

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It flourished, and the land rejoiced. At least  
the sitting room did, where the sun had lifted up  
its head and the room was filled with an intensity  
that dispelled the desolate and the impassable.

Budding forth and blossoming, a life revived  
that strengthened and gave courage, the titian  
bell inside the yellow cup, precursor of a hope  
regained, announced the rushing out of streams

into a wilderness. Yet now, it limply hangs its head  
and bows beneath the weight of time frustrated  
by the wonted pattern of a regimen grown stale,  
an expectation that is no longer met, a thirst

not satisfied. The petals droop, a weariness  
described by a stem no longer able to support  
the beauty of a Carmel or the glory of a Lebanon,  
till, flagging now, the joy once felt is gone, a light

put out, replaced with a normality that marks  
an unremarkable set piece of staging props, inert  
as on a scene long since abandoned by an actor  
without lines. A cardboard cutout. Faded, and deceased.

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## Great Catholic minds, Julius A. Nieuwland

by Tilly Rampley

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Julius A. Nieuwland, C.S.C. (February 14, 1878 – June 11, 1936) was a Belgian-born priest, chemist, and botanist who emigrated to the United States at the age of two. After being ordained in the Congregation of Holy Cross, he earned a doctorate in chemistry from the Catholic University of America. He returned to his *alma mater*, the University of Notre Dame, in 1904 as a professor of botany and later, in 1918, became a professor of organic chemistry.

In 1920, Nieuwland developed a method for polymerising acetylene ( $H_2C_2$ ), a breakthrough that caught the attention of *DuPont* company. His research paved the way for the creation of neoprene—the first synthetic rubber—valued for its versatility and durability across various industries. In recognition of his pioneering work with unsaturated hydrocarbons, Nieuwland was awarded the Nichols Medal by the American Chemical Society and the Gold Medal from the American Institute of Chemists in 1935.





# Children's corner!



## Colour in the Miraculous Medal



O Virgin Mother of God, Mary Immaculate, we dedicate and consecrate ourselves to you under the title of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. May this Medal be for each one of us a sure sign of your affection for us and a constant reminder of our duties towards you. Ever while wearing it, may we be blessed by your loving protection and preserved in the grace of your Son. O Most Powerful Virgin, Mother of Our Saviour, keep us close to you every moment of our lives. Obtain for us, your children, the grace of a happy death; so that in union with you, we may enjoy the bliss of Heaven forever. Amen.



## **Sacrament of anointing the sick**

**Colour in the picture below**





# Austrian scrambled sweet pancake

by Tilly Rampley



## Ingredients:

- 3 large eggs, divided
- 3 tbsp unsalted butter, melted
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 tbsp granulated sugar
- 1 pinch of salt
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup milk

## To caramelize:

- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 2 tbsp granulated sugar
- 1/3 cup raisins
- 3 tbsp Rum



## Method:

In a small bowl, soak the raisins in rum (or water if needed, though rum is highly recommended for flavour!).

Separate the eggs. Beat the egg whites in a stand mixer with the whisk attachment until stiff peaks form (about 2½ minutes), set aside. In the same bowl, beat the yolks with melted butter, vanilla, sugar, and a pinch of salt for 2–3 minutes. Gradually mix in flour and milk on low speed, alternating a spoonful at a time. Don't overmix. Gently fold in the egg whites with a spatula until just combined.

Heat 1 tbsp butter in a large (12-inch) skillet over medium heat. Pour in the batter and cook for 6–7 minutes. After 3 minutes, scatter the drained raisins over the top. Check underneath for a golden colour, then sprinkle a little sugar on top, cut the pancake into quarters, and flip. Add a bit more butter as needed.

Cook for another 3–4 minutes until golden underneath. Tear the quarters into bite-sized pieces using two spatulas or forks. Add 2 tbsp butter and 2 tbsp sugar to the pan, and toss the pieces over medium-high heat for 3–4 minutes until caramelised.

Dust with powdered sugar and serve straight from the pan, with apple sauce on the side.

## Reading suggestion, 'Cosmic chemistry' by John C. Lennox by Tilly Rampley

I came across this book a few years ago and thoroughly enjoyed reading it. A light read, this is not—but it is extremely thought-provoking. The book consists of five sections: Surveying the landscape, Science and explanation, Understanding the Universe and life, The Modern synthesis, and The Information age. I found the first two chapters particularly intriguing, though somewhat challenging to read due to their focus on historical context and terminology. But after finishing the entire book, revisiting those chapters made them easier to understand!

One of the central questions the book explores is whether miracles truly happen, and if so, how they can be reconciled with our belief in the 'laws of physics'. John Lennox skillfully compiles evidence suggesting that miracles, as supernatural events, are indeed possible. He argues that even within the framework of natural laws—which predict outcomes based on specific conditions—a miracle is

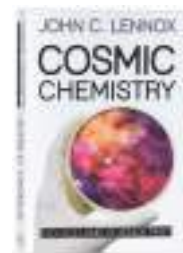
recognised precisely because those expected conditions are altered. In this way, it is our understanding of nature's laws that enables us to identify when a miracle has taken place. The book made me realise how rapidly science is updating itself, and how this ongoing evolution in knowledge could actually lead more people toward a theistic worldview rather than away from it. The growing understanding of life's complexity—particularly in systems biology and genetics—seems to provide increasing support for the idea of a great designer.

Cosmic Chemistry engages directly with the scientific evidence, asking where it genuinely points. It explores thought-provoking questions such as: how should we interpret the fossil record and the sudden burst of complexity seen in the Cambrian explosion? Why does the intricate machinery within individual cells pose a serious challenge to the idea of gradual evolution through random muta-

tion? And how do emerging mathematical models raise new questions about the origin of the information necessary for life?

**'Scientism does not need to be refuted by external argument: it self-destructs. It suffers the same fate as in earlier times did the verification principle that was at the heart of the philosophy of logical-positivism. For, the statement that only science can lead to truth is not itself deduced from science. It is not a scientific statement but rather a statement about science, that is, it is a meta-scientific statement. Therefore, if scientism's basic principle is true, the statement expressing scientism must be false. Scientism refutes itself. Hence it is incoherent.'**

*Cosmic Chemistry, by John Lennox; published by Lion Books, 2021.*



# Habemus Papam: We have a pope!

by Father Joseph

With the death of Pope Francis and the election of a successor many minds are turning naturally to the papacy. With that in mind here is a short list of recommended reading about popes past and present based on titles on my own bookshelves! The *Papacy: What the Pope Does and Why it Matters* by Stephen Ray and Dennis Walters (Ignatius Press 2018) is a look at the office of pope for believers. It explores what the papacy is, why it matters, and how important having a pope is to all Catholics.

The blurb on the back of the book reads, 'The Papacy explains that without the Pope's divinely guided leadership, the Church would suffer the contradictions and the divisions that many Christian groups know firsthand. The teaching passed down from the apostles would be subject to arbitrary, relative, and numerous interpretations; holiness would be only a distant ideal; and the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church founded by Jesus would break apart. In describing the Pope's important and singular role as leader and teacher, the book addresses common misconceptions and objections to the papacy.'

It also explains how the papacy developed and how the Pope is elected. The authors present some great Popes in history, showing the qualities and the accomplishments that made them great. They demonstrate that the Pope is important not only for Catholics, but also for non-Catholic Christians and even non-Christians. Pope Peter by Joe Heschmeyer (Catholic Answers Press 2020). The author considers the beauty of the papal office even when individual popes get things wrong. From the blurb: 'The papacy is no stranger to controversy.'

In many ways it's Catholicism's defining doctrine—but also its most divisive. From medieval pontiffs who acted like princes to a modern pope whose every casual statement sets off a social-media firestorm, there has been plenty for non-Catholics to criticize and for the faithful to feel anxious about. We profess that Jesus made St. Peter the visible head of his Church on earth and that his successors throughout the ages are guided by the Holy Spirit to govern, teach, and sanctify it.

How can we strengthen this belief in the papacy in the face of challenges (both outside the Church and within it) and so strengthen our faith in the One who instituted it? In *Pope Peter*, Joe Heschmeyer says that papal flaws are an opportunity to understand what the papacy really means, not to abandon it (or the Church). Drawing deeply on the scriptural and historical witness, he offers a thorough but accessible defence of the papal office and an edifying picture of the extent—and limits—of its authority. Jesus made Peter the Rock of the Church and promised that the gates of hell would not prevail against it.

Pope Peter will confirm your faith in that promise and help you proclaim its truth to others.' *Saints and Sinners* by Eamon Duffy (Yale University Press 4th Edition 2014). The renowned Cambridge historian gives us a very readable history of the papacy, and the names of all the popes who have held office, from St Peter down to Pope Francis.

*City of Echoes* by Jessica Wärnberg (Icon Books 2024) is a fascinating history of how the popes have shaped the history of the city of Rome.



St. Gregory The Great, by Francisco Goya

An art historian by training, she has researched the history of the papacy, using the Vatican archives, specialising in the papacy and the inquisition in the seventeenth century, but this book reaches throughout the whole history of the papacy. Very readable. *The Modern Papacy since 1789* by Frank J. Coppa (Longmans 1998). A slightly less recent, and certainly more academic, history of the papacy in modern times. From the blurb: 'This volume runs from the French Revolution to the fall of the Soviet Union. It ends with the pontificate of John Paul II, the first non-Italian pope since 1522.'

Its central theme is the response of this most ancient of institutions to the multiplying challenges of the modern age.' *The Pope: His Mission and His Task* by Cardinal Gerhard Müller (CUA Press 2021). Cardinal Müller was Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith under Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis. He offers a theological exploration of the work and role of the papal office. A heavy but rewarding read on the Catholic Church's teaching about Christ's Vicar on earth.

## No bake oat balls:

1½ cups rolled oats  
½ cup almond butter, or nut butter of choice  
¼ cup diced prunes  
¼ cup chopped walnuts  
¼ cup maple syrup  
1 Tbsp orange juice

1 tsp orange zest  
½ tsp ground cinnamon  
¼ tsp ginger  
¼ tsp salt



In a large bowl, mix everything together to form a dough. Chill in the fridge for 30–60 minutes if you like—it helps with shaping. Scoop into portions (about 2 teaspoons each) and roll into balls. Place on a plate or in a container, then freeze for an hour until firm. Let them soften a little before eating. Keep in the fridge for 4–5 days.



# Limbo, by Sister Mary Ada OSJ

Selected by Anne Abbott



The ancient greyness shifted  
Suddenly and thinned  
Like mist upon the moors  
Before a wind.

An old, old prophet lifted  
A shining face and said :  
"He will be coming soon.  
The Son of God is dead;  
He died this afternoon."

A murmurous excitement stirred all souls.  
They wondered if they dreamed —  
Save one old man who seemed  
Not even to have heard.

And Moses standing,  
Hushed them all to ask  
If any had a welcome song prepared.  
If not, would David take the task?

And if they cared  
Could not the three young children sing  
The Benedicite, the canticle of praise  
They made when God kept them from perishing  
In the fiery blaze?

A breath of spring surprised them,  
Stilling Moses' words.  
No one could speak, remembering  
The first fresh flowers,  
The little singing birds.

Still others thought of fields new ploughed  
Or apple trees  
All blossom – boughed.  
Or some, the way a dried bed fills  
With water  
Laughing down green hills.

The fisherfolk dreamed of the foam  
On bright blue seas.  
The one old man who had not stirred  
Remembered home.



By Murillo, 16th C

Continued on the next page



And there He was  
 Splendid as the morning sun and fair  
 As only God is fair.  
 And they, confused with joy,  
 Knelt to adore  
 Seeing that He wore  
 Five crimson stars  
 He never had before.

No canticle at all was sung.  
 None toned a psalm, or raised a greeting song.  
 A silent man alone  
 Of all that throng  
 Found tongue —  
 Not any other.

Close to His heart  
 When the embrace was done,  
 Old Joseph said,  
 "How is Your Mother,  
 How is Your Mother, Son?"

Source: The Mary Book, an anthology by F.J. Sheed.  
 Published by Sheed and Ward, 1950



#### Additional notes:

In the Creed, we say that Christ descended into Hell after His death on the Cross. This is because Heaven wasn't yet open for anyone to enter until Our Lord made it possible by His great sacrifice. He went to the Limbo of the Just, to lead the good people out of their confinement and up into the freedom and joy of Heaven. This poem is about Our Lord meeting in Limbo His earthly father, His foster Father St Joseph. And St Joseph asks Him how was his holy spouse, the Blessed Virgin Mary. We know that St Joseph had died some time before the final sufferings of Christ, and Our Lady was a widow. "How is your Mother, Son?", asks St Joseph. A touching and affectionate glimpse of a moment in what was known in medieval times as the Harrowing of hell.

## Jessie's chat

### By Alex and Jessie

What a woofling shock, there's three of us in Maison Jessie! Every morning Dad asks a question, 'What's the temperature in Ipswich UK today?' A voice answers (the voice is called Alexa), I have looked everywhere for Alexa but can't find her. I was utterly dismayed, as a sight hound nothing gets past my gaze. What was wrong? I slunk back into my arm-chair feeling very sorry for myself. Then Dad said, 'don't worry Jessie, you can't find Alexa because she isn't here'.

Even more puzzling. Dad used a big word – technology, Alexa is a voice that speaks from a box! Who needs that anyway, I simply put my nose outside and sniff the air. Yesterday it was dry, the day before it rained and if we are lucky we might get sunshine tomorrow. Dad says all this is called weather. I hear people talk about it all the time, 'nice day isn't it, windy though, still, it's dry and sunny', and so it goes on! We kgs don't bother as long as we can enjoy a good walk.



What could be better than trotting around the park on a warm sunny day, and if it's cold I have a cosy coat. Of course, we don't go far if it's raining but I know some dogs really love the wet. Mum's dog Bertie was one. His barkingly brilliant thing was hurling himself into water. Most of all, he loved to swim up and down the park boating pool. That's not for me, but then Bertie was a spaniel. My little friend Loulou hates being wet; she even walks round puddles.

She is still recovering from her worst day ever and often tells me about the horror of it. It was when she was taken to a place called Sutton Hoo where it rained all day. Poor Loulou just wasn't a white dog anymore. I don't think I would have liked that either. But as Dad says 'we can't change the weather Jessie'. So now you must have guessed, the subject of our quiz – the weather.



# Alex and Jessie's



Answers on page 22

1. According to the saying what does “red sky at night” indicate?

2. What is the Beaufort scale?

3. What number on this scale shows storm force?

4. In classical mythology what was the name of the west wind?

5. Who was the sun god?



6. Who was god over all the winds?

7. The climate of the UK is often described as maritime, why is this?



8. If there is “rain before 7 am” after what time will it be fine?

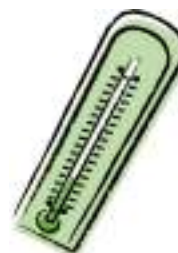
9. But how many winters in the year “if Candlemas be fair and clear”?

10. What kind of weather is indicated by cumulonimbus clouds (mackerel sky)?

11. Which word is in rainbow and also describes part of the eye?

12. What do we call a weather expert?

13. What is the freezing point of water in Fahrenheit?



14. Sometimes parts of a halo appear on either side of the sun. What are these called?

15. What is the device that measures temperature?

16. How did centigrade get its name?

17. What is centigrade now called?

18. Which general defeated Napoleon’s invasion of Russia?

19. In which well-known hymn do these words appear? “His chariots of wrath the deep thunder clouds form.”

20. What does an anemometer measure?



21. Can you name the device used to measure air pressure?

22. What kind of weather is due “when the ass begins to bray”?

23. When many spiders are spinning their webs what kind of weather can we expect?



24. What do all these places have in common – Viking, Forth, Tyne, Dogger, Portland, Wight?

25. In 1795 French cavalry captured a Dutch fleet, how did this happen?

# Blessed Carlo Acutis Group

By Lorin and Sofia Barcella-Kopuk

Our small group of 14-17-year-olds (with a few exceptions!) takes place on the first Thursday of each month, which we attend to learn more about our faith and discuss interesting aspects of the church in a fun way. We are lucky to have Laura who writes very informative pamphlets to help us learn and Father Joseph who runs the group (even though at times he seems to regret that decision!). We also play fun games, testing out drawing skills and bible knowledge, which occasionally becomes just a little competitive. But why is the group named after Carlo Acutis?

Carlo Acutis was a 15-year-old boy in Italy who died from leukaemia. During his brief lifetime, he shocked people with his innate sense of faith, encouraging his older family members to attend church, as all Catholics should do.



He created a website in which he recorded all the Eucharistic Miracles, utilising technology in a holy way. This is what we learnt in the very first group and I think you'll agree that this boy is someone everyone should try to emulate. Blessed Carlo Acutis was due to become Saint Carlo Acutis on 27th April 2025, due to having performed two recorded miracles. But on 21st April, the Holy See Press released a statement saying that this has been suspended, due to the death of Pope Francis.

The Vatican has not yet announced a new date for when the canonisation might take place. But this makes him the first millennial saint. We have been coming to the group for 2 years now and we have loved every session, from making new friends to learning more about our customs and ceremonies that take place all throughout the year. We definitely encourage people to come and join us!

## Carrot and coriander soup

By Peggy Ayers

### Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 lbs carrots
- 1 onion
- 3-4 cloves of garlic
- 1 oz butter
- 2 pints of stock
- Salt and black pepper
- 100 grams creme fraiche or double cream
- Corriander leaves/ ground coriander seeds

### Method:

Melt the butter in a heavy based saucepan, add sliced onion and crushed garlic, fry gently on low heat until soft and transparent but not brown. Meanwhile top and scrape the carrots, chop roughly and add to the garlic and onion, cover and continue to cook for 8 minutes. Pour stock over the vegetables, and bring to boil, then reduce to simmering point on lowest heat and cook for another 30 minutes. After 10 minutes of simmering, add the chopped corriander leaves/ground seeds or both! Allow to cool down before liquidising the mixture, add salt and pepper, serve with creme fraiche or double cream.





# September 1918

## by Brian Price



They were retreating, everyone knew that. They passed the buildings which they remembered from before, when they had been going the other way. Then they had been advancing through this part of northern France towards certain victory for the glory of the Kaiser. The fact that they were passing those same buildings now had to mean that they were going back towards Germany and that was retreating in any soldier's language. The only one who seemed unwilling to accept that this was a retreat and that Germany was obviously losing the war, was the lance corporal. He was a strange one anyway.

It was never clear why an Austrian should be serving in the Bavarian army and he never got letters, only pamphlets telling how great Germany was, how victory was certain and how everything that went wrong was the fault of the Jews. Then disaster struck. They had been doing their best to keep out of sight, no point in presenting an easy target for some British sniper, but they were on the move when the gas shells exploded nearby. Some of them reacted quickly enough to get their gas masks on but others, including the lance corporal, were not so lucky and the mustard gas blinded them, as it was designed to do. Men do strange things in war.

Had they given it just a few moment's thought, the sighted ones would have left the blinded ones behind; Tommy was not a sadist and their blinded comrades would have received decent medical care before awaiting the end of the war

in some prison camp. Instead, they used their precious water to soak rags and wrap them round the eyes of the wounded to reduce the burning sensation. Then a sad little column of sighted soldiers, with the hands of their blinded comrades on their shoulders, set off eastwards. They no longer thought about hiding from Tommy because who would fire on a band of wounded soldiers? Henry had been a soldier since 1910. In that gloriously hot summer of 1914 he had greeted the coming of war with the same mad joy that had gripped the nation.

Although as a professional soldier he did have some doubts as to whether it would really all be over by Christmas, he was swept along by the jingoistic fervour that was all around him. A chance to deal with the Hun once and for all. Ypres, October 1914, had been enough to show Henry that this war was not going to be any picnic. He had lost friends in that desperate battle and realised then that survival was as much a matter of luck as of military skill. He also stopped calling enemy forces the Huns, that was for the yellow press and the politicians who were safely back in Blighty.

He had met a few captured German soldiers in that first autumn of the war and realised that a lot of them were just frightened boys trying their best to be men. So the Hun, a devil that was scarcely human, became Fritz, a bloke in grey who wanted, more than anything, to go home or, if that were not possible just now, to just stay alive. For Henry it had been a quiet day so far. They knew that Fritz was ahead of them but as the defeated German army headed out of France, there seemed little enthusiasm from the German soldiers for setting up defensive positions which were bound to be overrun in short order.

Also the artillery were keeping the Germans on the run with a combination of high explosive shells and gas canisters. Then he spotted them, a little troop of shabby grey figures, some with bandages over

their eyes, shuffling uncertainly away from the battle, if indeed there were a battle; nowadays it was just noise and confusion. Henry unslung his rifle and prepared to fire. He did not sense there was much danger that anyone in that group of Fritzes would shoot back. Then he paused and considered what it was that he was planning to do. Henry was a good soldier, he had survived four years of war and had won a decent chestful of medals but was it his duty to kill a bunch of defenceless Germans? Would that killing bring victory for King and Country one second closer? 'Fritz !', he called out.

The Germans halted and one of the blinded ones turned towards the sound of Henry's voice. Weird looking chap with a Charlie Chaplin moustache. 'I'm about to have a quick smoke and when I've finished my fag, any one of you that I can still see will be a dead man. 'The shuffling at once became more urgent as the sighted ones guided their comrades towards a copse which offered some sort of cover. Charlie Chaplin looked back. 'Danke, Tommy,' he shouted and then they all disappeared. Henry enjoyed his smoke and felt a sense of growing contentment.

The war would soon be over; he had done his bit and he had done it well. It was not a time for killing for the sake of killing. Charlie Chaplin might get his sight back and then settle down to whatever life the defeated Germans would live after the war. Farmer, toy maker, factory worker, husband, father? Who knew? Still, it felt good to save a life, even if it were a German life in wartime.

# My experience as a lifeguard

**By Anthony Bugatti**

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For over a decade my family and I have been a part of St Pancras church, and you might have seen me as an altar server at the church! This article is about my experience as a lifeguard, which started in January this year, when I started the job as part time work for David Lloyds clubs. The decision to do this job wasn't something out of the blue, I have always loved swimming and the seaside. Since I was a child, my parents and I have spent our summer holidays in Italy, enjoying the seaside and Italian summer life. Working as a lifeguard gives me the opportunity to explore and learn from a wide range of life experiences.

Through this job, I interact with both my colleagues and members of the club. My role as a lifeguard is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone using the pool. It's an important job that carries a great deal of responsibility. To do this job I had to undergo lifeguard training, which is examined each month

to ensure competence and effectiveness. I believe it's a beautiful job which gives me confidence and motivation to get myself involved in something amazing that helps people. I wouldn't be able to get this opportunity without the help and support of my parents of course. The most valuable part of this experience is that, we can and are able to make a difference helping people wherever we are not only at work, but in every single day of our life. With this experience, and the constant inspiration and support from my family, I feel even more grateful for the opportunity to help others in need.

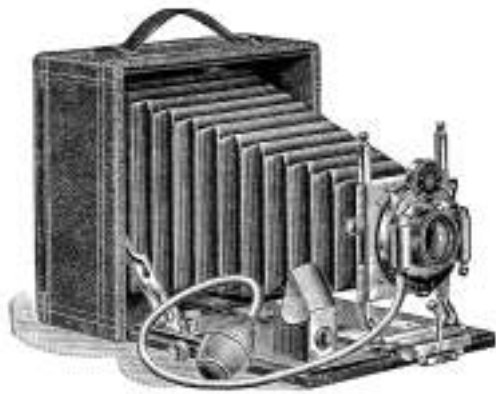
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## Answers to Alex and Jessie's quiz

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1. Fine weather
2. A table of wind speeds devised by Admiral Lord Beaufort
3. 10
4. Zephyr
5. Helios
6. Aeolus
7. We are surrounded by sea
8. 11am
9. 2
10. Rain/showers
11. Iris
12. Meteorologist
13. 32
14. Sun dogs or parhelion
15. Thermometer
16. It is a measure of the 100 steps between freezing and boiling point of pure water.
17. Celsius, after its inventor.
18. General Winter, the French lost an estimated 400,000 men mainly due to harsh weather conditions and disease hence the reference to winter.
19. O Worship the King
20. Wind speed
21. A barometer
22. Unsettled, rain and possibly storms which are often indicated by falling air pressure. Low pressure tends to make animals irritable and restless hence the ass brays.
23. Dry
24. All shipping forecast areas
25. The event took place in January, when the sea froze enabling the cavalry to gallop across and capture all 14 Dutch warships.





# From the archive

**High Altar of St Pancras church, from 1920**







## Carne Vinho de Alhos, a Portuguese Dish for Our Lady of Fatima, Selected by Tilly Rampley

This dish traditionally uses pork spare ribs, but lean pork chops works well too. The marinade is simple: use 1 part red wine vinegar to 2 parts water. For 2 ½ pounds of meat, combine 1 cup of vinegar with 2 cups of water.

### Ingredients:

- Plenty of crushed garlic
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon allspice
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- Salt and pepper to taste



### Method:

Stir the spices into the vinegar and water mixture, then add the meat. For the best result, let the meat marinate in the fridge for two days—this is how I learnt it-. If you are short on time, a shorter marinade will still work! When you are ready to cook, bake the meat at 375°F until fully cooked. Cooking time will depend on the quantity and cut of meat. Be sure to pour off excess fat and liquid at least once during baking. The final result should be tender and well-seasoned, with no liquid left in the pan, but not dried out.

For bigger batches, just scale up the vinegar, water, and spices accordingly. Serve with crusty bread, freshly chopped parsley, roast potatoes and sliced lemon!

# Another year ahead with flowers, fruit and veg!

**By Peggy Ayers**

How lovely that spring is here and so many things are in bloom. Over the winter I enjoyed the yellow flowers of the winter jasmine growing over an arch around my front door. There were also the flowers of the winter clematis called Freckles. The flowers cascade down and you have to look upwards to see the pretty freckled pattern inside the blooms. I try to have winter interests as well as spring etc. For a splash of colour I have cornus (dogwood) and my favourite is midwinter where all the trunk and branches are bright orange. The advice is to cut the Cornus down every year and the new shoots will have a better colour.

I only trim a few branches off as I like it to reach a good height. My two favourites for late winter/early spring are the winter Honeysuckle called Lonicera Fragrantissima and the winter box i.e Sarcococca (I am blown if I can pronounce this name!). Both of these have the most wonderful perfume and the bees certainly love the Honeysuckle which is not a climber but a bush- easy to take cuttings - just break a bit off and stick it in the soil. The birds have also given me a lot of pleasure. I have fat balls in a container quite near my kitchen window. The blackbirds and bluetits love these balls and as they peck at them some bits fall to the ground where

the robin and also the wood pigeons quickly eat them up. I wasn't too pleased with the wood pigeons though as they trampled some of my snowdrops so I had to put a barrier round the plants to save them. The allotment is taking quite a bit of my time now. Weeding - I am collecting the weeds into old compost sacks as my plastic Daleks are full. I did this 2 years ago and this week emptied them onto my runner bean trench and asparagus bed. Really rich crumbly compost! My Dalek at home was emptied in the autumn into tubs made from old leaky water butts cut in half which now have potatoes planted in them.

Sadly a rat got into the new compost in the dalek. I put a piece of broken paving slab into the rats tunnel but it pushed it out So I put it back with 2 bricks on top of it. The rat still got in. Next move - covering the rats entrance with garlic granules; cayenne pepper, and black pepper. This did eventually stop it. However I didn't want all those ingredients in my compost so the bin was emptied again.



As much as possible was saved and chicken wire was put under the dalek So far so good; fingers crossed that the rat will not be able to get in again. Next week is the start of the Easter Holidays and my daughter in law and grandchildren will be helping down on the allotment with planting potatoes and Borlotti beans - 2 rows this year instead of one as the beans from last year made wonderful additions to casseroles. Beetroot already growing in cells at home will also be planted I hope.



My granddaughter has carrot seeds - purple, orange, and yellow, which she is keen to grow and one of my grandsons informs me he has 50 (or 500) brussel sprout seeds - I think he should start these off at home first. So here we go again full steam ahead for a hopefully bountiful harvest.



## Your questions of the Catholic faith answered by Father Joseph

**Q: Were catafalques used to offer absolution for the dead, and do they root in Catholicism?**

**A:** Sometimes a catafalque is used at a requiem Mass when the body of the deceased is not present, and calls to mind the person for whom the Mass is being offered. This has been especially true in some major churches in the wake of the death of His Holiness Pope Francis. The on-line Catholic encyclopaedia, New Advent, tells us what a catafalque is and why it is used: 'Catafalque, derived from the Italian word catafalco, literally means a scaffold or elevation, but in its strictly liturgical sense the word is employed to designate the cenotaph-like erection which is used at the exequial offices of the Church, and takes the place of the bier whenever the remains are not present. It is covered with a black cloth or pall, on which there is a cross either of white or some other colour. The catafalque is usually placed immediately outside the sanctuary, and is the centre of the ceremonies of that part of the exequial office known as the absolution, receiving the same attention as the corpse would if present.'



# Mothers' group update

## by Rosa Patten

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We have been blessed at the Mothers' Group since the re-starting of our monthly gathering in January, with adorable newborns and new families. Our Faith has continued to flourish with the catechetical talks given to us by Father Joseph during these gatherings, along with the participation in prayers and devotions. These talks, prayers and devotions, as well as the activities that we have done, have followed the Church's year and the particular devotion attached to each month. Thus, with our return in early January, we were blessed to be able to say a prayer in front of the Crib and the children got to decorate a shell for the feast of the Baptism of Our Lord.

February saw us dedicate our prayers, meditations and devotions to the Holy Family and we were blessed with being able to recite the Litany of the Holy Family together in church with Father Joseph, along with saying a beautiful (and needed) prayer which was provided for us from the 'Devotions for February' leaflet that Father gives us here at St Pancras- the prayer 'A Prayer for parents, for themselves and for their children'. Father's talk was (as always) thought-provoking, inspiring

and encouraged us with our Faith and its truth! He impressed in our minds the truth of our need of the Christ-given Church and the necessity and truth for the Deposit of Faith. The children got a chance to decorate wooden plaques with the Sacred Hearts of the Holy family to take home. Coming to the end of the Spring term months, we found ourselves in Lent and Holy Week and thus activities, which in the Mothers' Group are aimed towards bringing our Faith home within the family, concerned St Joseph in March with the painting of St Joseph's symbol on a wooden disc and making our own Paschal candle during the Mothers' Group in Holy week.

We were blessed to be able to recite the Stations of the Cross together in church. We enjoyed delicious homemade ginger cake and tea and coffee together. But also, we have encouraged and supported each other and have grown in our Faith, so that we can bring our Faith faithfully in our homes and with our families.





# Semana Santa, Holy week in Malaga

**By Tilly Rampley**

I have long dreamed of witnessing the Easter processions in Málaga, so last June, I finally took the plunge, booked the tickets and marked 'Holy Week' on my calendar! After months of eager anticipation, I arrived in the heart of Andalucía, ready to experience *Semana Santa* in all its intensity. *Semana Santa*, or Holy Week, is the most significant religious event in Spain's calendar, and in Málaga, it becomes an extraordinary blend of devotion, art, and tradition. In Andalusia, there are numerous brotherhoods known as *hermandades*, or *cofradías* that have preserved these traditions for centuries. In fact, Málaga's first recorded brotherhood was established in 1505. The members of these brotherhoods wear distinctive outfit called *Nazarenos* or *Penitentes* (the penitent ones).

They are dressed in robes and *capirote*s, which are cone shaped pointed hoods made of silky fabric that cover the face, leaving only the eyes visible, (these garments, far from having anything to do with the modern hate group Ku Klux Klans), and originate from medieval Catholic rituals of penance. During the Spanish Inquisition, those found guilty of sins or heresy were forced to wear pointed hats as a visible sign of shame and penance. In the 17th century, Spain's religious brotherhoods adopted the *capirote* and robes as part of their Holy Week processions, transforming the garments into symbols of humility and devotion.

Today, the *Nazarenos* wear these robes and face covering hoods not to draw attention to themselves, but to remain anonymous—directing all focus to God. The height of the *capirote*, reaching upward, is symbolic of their desire to be closer to Heaven during repentance. Additionally, the covered faces serve as a sign of mourning for the death of Our Lord. On Easter Sunday, many remove their hoods in joyful celebration of the Resurrection. These are members of the various brotherhoods that participate in the processions throughout the week. There are 45 processions during the Holy Week, organised by the brotherhoods.

These men carry massive, elaborately decorated floats called *tronos* (some weighing up to 5 tons) through the city's narrow streets. Many of them walk barefoot through the streets, some even blindfolded, as a profound act of humility and devotion. Each *trono* tells part of the Passion of Christ or honours Our Lady, surrounded by robed penitents and accompanied by stirring brass bands. There are 8 processions on Palm Sunday, 9 on Holy Monday, 6 on Holy Tuesday, 7 on Holy Wednesday, 7 on Maundy Thursday, 7 on Good Friday and 1 on Easter Sunday. One of the most famous and dramatic moments of *Semana Santa* in Málaga occurs on Holy Thursday with the transfer of *Cristo de la Buena Muerte* by *La Legión* (The Spanish Legion).

The Legionnaires arrive by ship at Málaga's port in the morning, march through the city, and later carry a huge Crucifix in a solemn military-style ceremony. As they march, they sing *El Novio de la Muerte*. It's a powerful fusion of religious devotion and national tradition, and one of the defining highlights of the entire week. What touched me most was witnessing the deep reverence with which these men in uniform show such open devotion, not just to their country but to their faith. Good Friday, in particular, stood out for its solemnity and powerful symbolism.

There was a noticeable presence of women of all ages, both in the processions and among the crowds on Good Friday, dressed entirely in black, wearing the traditional Spanish mantilla and holding rosaries. Unlike the rest of the week, there are no processions on Holy Saturday. This is a day of mourning, a sacred space of silence between the crucifixion and the resurrection. What struck me deeply was how fully the city embraces this pause. Most shops, restaurants, and even grocery shops closed their doors, as if the whole city stops to reflect and grieve. It was also most amazing to see how everyone comes out to witness the processions, young and old alike. Teenagers gathered with friends and family. Elderly people, some



with walking canes or in wheelchairs, waited patiently along the sidewalks for hours just to catch a glimpse of the passing *tronos*. As the *tronos* approached, silence would often fall, some wiping away tears, and many regardless of age would cross themselves as the sacred images and statues passed by. In all my life, I have never seen such crowded places gathered not for entertainment or spectacle, but to take part in something deeply sacred. The trip was both prayerful and joyful, so much so that my son asked if we could return next Easter! We walked for hours each day, and most nights, we didn't return to our apartment until after midnight, though many processions carried on well into the early hours of the morning. The streets were filled with the scent of incense 'the smell of church', as my son calls it! We attended different Masses during our stay, and there was something truly special and comforting about being in a place where one is surrounded by Catholic churches on every corner, nearly all within walking distance from our apartment.





