

Holy Trinity and St. George Parish Magazine

Winter 2025



I pray this winter is gentle and kind ~
A season of rest from the wheel of the mind.

John Geddes

Issue 30

Suggested Donation: £1

Cold, Within and Without

Dear Friends:

Happy New Year. Welcome to Issue 30. This issue begins our **SEVENTH YEAR** since the reboot. The winter issue always comes fast on the heels of the Advent/Christmas one; now we get a bit of a respite until Lent.

As I write, the snow is falling thick and fast. We have had some brutal cold in New Jersey this winter, and this week will bring us the coldest temperatures in two years, with lows of about -15. As a lover of snow and winter, I am in the minority, for sure. And this year, the cold and frost seem especially appropriate to me.

On 21st December, on my drive to the parish thrift shop, I received a shocking phone call from my supervisor. My friend and colleague, Molly DeVito White [pictured below], had died by suicide the day before at the age of 34, leaving no note. A week later, on a bitterly cold day of glittering sun, we were at her graveside service, still in shock. We are still checking on each other, still bursting into tears unexpectedly, still struggling to understand and live with the unanswerable questions.

I had been instrumental in getting Molly hired nearly ten years ago. Her mother was a well-known advocate for Deaf children; her sister Rebecca was Deaf, and Rebecca's terminal cancer had broken Molly's heart. She had married in haste and quickly divorced, had relocated and become involved with a fellow she barely knew. But she was a passionate, talented teacher of Deaf and hard of hearing children with a wicked sense of humour and the heart and soul of our department. She had mentored young teachers who are struggling mightily in her absence. We had all been together the week before her passing at a holiday meal. Molly had been subdued, but we knew she had been ill and was exhausted from the heavy work schedule. No one had expected her to be the life and soul of the party. No one knew we'd never see her again.

Molly's passing, of course, cast a pall over the season, and the current icy winds and snow reflect our internal weather. She leaves an unfillable hole. I hope she knew how much she was loved. I am striving every day to channel her commitment as I teach my pupils, some of whom were once hers. And I hope I am becoming a better and more perceptive friend through this bitter lesson. Please keep Molly and her family in your prayers.

We have done our best to provide a meaty issue for you here. Many thanks to **Fr. Hugh, Raymond Daley, Pamela Boyes, Jenny Davies, Andy Callaghan and Brian Stabler**. As always, we welcome your contributions. Enjoy the read.

Celeste



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Well, we are living in exciting times at the moment, as four new parishes ~ Kirkby Lonsdale, Grange, Milnthorpe and Arnside, have joined (not merged) with Kendal and Sedbergh. Fortunately, we have Fr. Simon with us now (who is far more organized than I am) and he keeps me straight on timings, etc. It has been a great pleasure to have him with us, and you would never think that he was recently ordained.

The Christmas times for the various Masses seem to have gone down all right, though I am not sure 11.00 on Christmas Day was too welcome instead of 10.00, but there it is. The biggest change has been moving the Kirkby Lonsdale Mass to Saturday night and cancelling the Saturday Vigil Mass in Kendal. I know that has not been welcomed in either church and we have lost some parishioners over that. Some have found other Masses which suit them better, which is fine (I found three Kirkby ladies at Milnthorpe, which they seem to have adopted). It has meant moving Confessions in Kendal to Saturday morning, which means we can have Adoration too, though I think it is taking people a little time to get used to this. We have just been planning the Easter Masses (I cannot believe we are doing that already, but January is flying by, and Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on 5th March). It will be here only too soon, even though Easter is quite late this year (20th April).

School is settling down nicely, though I doubt our Head Teacher, Mrs. Ritchie, would say that (Sarah Tansey's time with us came to an end after many years of good service in Catholic education; we thank her for her service and love of the schools she was in). We are delighted to have Mrs. Ritchie now in post and, as many of you know, she knows the school very well. But after a bit of a stormy time getting used to the Multi-Academy Trust (MAT), things have improved. Sometimes people ask why we had to join the MAT, and many are against it for a number of different reasons. It seemed inevitable once Cumbria's Educational Authority appeared to be getting weaker and weaker and not able to supply all they used to. Many other Cumbrian schools have had to do the same. Also, the Bishop has asked us to unite with other Catholic schools and give them a stronger base ~ the stronger helping the weaker, hopefully. We have found that, when it came to Ofsted, the MAT were very helpful ~ but then we discovered we had to pay for much of that help, which was a bit of a surprise. But nevertheless, the school was graded 'Good' which was a success, after all the upheaval.

There are various other things going on. First will be a young persons' trip down to London for Flame, which is a predominantly youth-centred Catholic gathering in Wembley Arena. They are doing it in one day with a very early start. I have been before and it is a great experience, full of energy, and you see young Catholics from all over the country coming together (I have been invited but am mulling it over. Just have to see how 'youthful' I am feeling.)

Dodding Green, where Cenacolo were for a good number of years, is about to find a new use with a group doing similar work. As ever it takes time to set all the checks and paperwork up, but it would give the place a new lease of life and have it fully occupied for a good purpose. The Musone family have been looking after it for us while this all gets organized. An empty building out there would not have been a good idea. It will be great to see the building in action again.

Spring will eventually be on its way. The weather has certainly not been springlike as yet, but no doubt the snowdrops will be with us soon.

God bless,
Fr. Hugh

Pamela's Pages

If every contributor were as timely with their items as Pamela, you would not have to wait so long between issues! Thanks as ever for the interesting tidbits from here through page 9. I know they are one of the magazine's most eagerly anticipated reads. The third poem she includes here brought a smile to my face, as my mother used to sing it as part of a medley which she learned at school. As she was born in 1924, I know it's been around awhile!



Beginning a new year is like opening a new book on its very first page. Jackie Kay's poem is a toast to all of us at the start of the year.

Remember, the time of year
When the future appears
like a blank sheet of paper
a clean calendar, a new chance.
On thick white snow

you vow fresh footprints
then watch them go
with the wind's hearty gust.
Fill your glass. Here's tae us. Promises
made to be broken, made to last.

Jackie Kay
Born 9th November, 1961



A very topical subject at present is the consistent rain! Have you ever wondered why rain shoots down in little thin jets rather than in some other strange shape? Well, Spike Milligan has an answer for you.

Rain

There are holes in the sky.

Where the rain gets in.

But they're ever so small.

That's why the rain is thin.

Spike Milligan

16th April, 1918 – 27th February 2002



Here, to help offset any winter gloom you might be experiencing at the end of January, is another funny four-line poem - this time about peas!

I eat my peas with honey,
I've done it all my life,
They do taste kind of funny,
But it keeps them on my knife.

Anonymous





Rufford Old Hall (Lancashire)

I first visited this National Trust property many years ago when I lived in Lancashire, where it was practically on my doorstep. It was lovely to see it recognised in the National Trust Book of Scones and certainly deserves a mention. It's one of the smaller National Trust properties, but it has an amazing history, full of unusual twists. It boasts a good second-hand bookshop and a tearoom and is certainly worth a visit if you are visiting Lancashire.



It was built in 1530 for Sir Robert Hesketh. However, only the Tudor Great Hall survives the original structure. A brick-built wing in the Jacobean style was added in 1661, and in the 1720s, Sir Thomas Hesketh (1st Baronet) created the East Wing. In 1798 the Heskeths moved to Rufford New Hall, and in the 1820's Thomas Henry Hesketh moved back in and remodelled it. In 1846 Sir Thomas George Hesketh (5th Baronet) married Lady Anna Fermor, sister and heiress of the 5th and last Earl of Pomfret.

Amongst the history surrounding Rufford Old Hall is the name William Shakespeare. In around 1580, Shakespeare had been sent by his Stratford schoolmaster to be an assistant teacher in the household of Alexander Hoghton at Lea Hall near Preston, and the "Wilim Shakeshaft nowe dwellynge with me" referred to by Hoghton in his will is almost certainly Shakespeare. Sir Thomas is believed to have kept a company of players, and there is credible evidence that Shakespeare could have performed in the

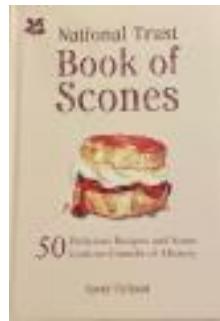


Great Hall. In his will Hoghton who died in 1581, "...has bequeathed to Sir Thomas Hesketh his musical instruments and "player clothes." This interesting story unknowingly secured fame for Rufford Old Hall.

And, like a lot of historical properties, it has its ghosts. Rumoured to have been spotted at the ancient Tudor building are a grey lady, Queen Elizabeth I and an eerie man in Elizabethan costume. Also, a mysterious figure of a man floating over the canal nearby is also said to have been spotted by eagle-eyed visitors.

The hall was occupied sporadically before being sold to the National Trust by the first Baron Hesketh in 1936.





Cherry and Almond Scones

Studded with cherries and subtly flavoured with a hint of almonds, these are perfect for afternoon tea.

450g self-raising flour
1/2 tsp baking powder
100g butter, cubed
75g caster sugar
175 glacé cherries, roughly chopped
1 egg beaten, plus extra to glaze
A few drops of almond essence
150 to 180ml milk
2 to 3 Tbsp flaked almonds

Preheat the oven to 190c. Grease a large baking sheet.

Sift the flour and baking powder into a mixing bowl. Using your fingertips, rub in the butter. Add the sugar, cherries, egg, almond extract and enough milk to make a soft but not sticky dough. Knead lightly until smooth.

Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and roll out to about 3cm thick. Stamp out using a 7cm round cutter and place on the baking sheet. Brush the tops with beaten egg and sprinkle with flaked almonds.

Bake for about 20 minutes until well risen, firm and golden. Transfer to a wire rack to cool. Serve with butter or clotted cream and jam.

These are delicious if you are a fan of cherries and enjoy the taste of almonds. It's a lovely combination.





ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

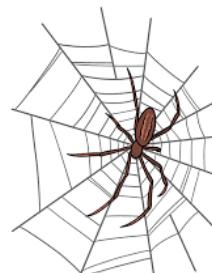
An i-Phone and a firework were arrested on New Year's Eve.

One was charged and the other was let off.



What's a spider's New Year's resolution?

To spend less time on the web.



What happened to the man who shoplifted a calendar on New Year's Eve?

He got 12 months.



NEW YEAR PRAYER



Dear God,

As we begin a new year, we ask for your guidance and wisdom.
We seek your blessings as we set out to achieve our goals and dreams.

Help us to stay focused on what is truly important
and to always remember the importance of your love.

We pray for peace and healing in our world
and for an end to the hatred and violence that seems to be so prevalent.

We ask that you bless those who are struggling
and give them the strength to carry on.

We give thanks for all the good things in our lives,
and ask that you continue to bless us in the coming year.

In Jesus name.

Amen.





Thanks to Raymond Daley for this item. His points here are well-taken (although I am as horrified as anyone about the Post Office scandal). I am more and more incredulous that the plight of the poor in our prosperous countries remains largely out of the public discourse. It is surely a disgrace worth addressing.



St. Vincent DePaul Society Update

www.svp.org.uk

The SVP operates several soup runs to provide food, warm drinks, blankets and companionship to homeless people.



It is not just only about food provision; it is also about meeting people, befriending and engaging with them. This is an example of how the SVP seeks and finds those in need: reaching out instead of just waiting for people to come to us.

Over 20,000 people benefit from our SVP soup runs every year. The projects are supported by 200 volunteers committing an average of 150 voluntary hours each week. The SVP are always keen to receive donations of goods, funds and volunteer support.

When visiting some SVP colleagues in London, I was offered the opportunity of helping on the Westminster Soup Run. I accepted without hesitation.

Our team for the night met at 5pm on a dark winter Tuesday evening in the basement which serves as the parish centre underneath London's St. James's Church in Spanish Place. Local businesses and individuals brought freshly made soups, drinks, sandwiches, loaves of bread, and various prepacked meals down the steps into the centre. We sorted these into crates ready for loading up our minibus to go to Lincolns Inn Fields.

After a group prayer we set off for our destination. I'd never been to Lincolns Inn Fields before. We

parked up at the side of what looked like a huge public park and waited to see if anyone was there. People gradually approached us out of the dark. Just a few to begin with, then more and more once they realised who we were. They had been expecting us. There must have been a hundred or more people waiting for us to arrive.

We started serving soup from the back of the van and offered sandwiches from the side door. It was busy! A friend and I took crates of food & drinks around the area outside the van. We walked around offering what we had while chatting to everyone, meeting all sorts of people. One was a man originally from Leeds who had been homeless, sleeping rough on the London streets. He had been helped by the SVP and now lived in a flat nearby. He didn't really need food from the soup run now, but always comes down for the company and the chance to meet other people in the situation he'd once been in. Most of the others were sleeping rough and were grateful for anything we could provide. There is a massive rough sleeping problem in London.

Under a tree, we met a young mother who was sleeping rough with her three-year-old daughter. This rang alarm bells with us. Definitely one for the local SVP to follow up. We arranged for them to come to the SVP shop in Hackney so we could kit them out with warm clothes and provide further support.

Once people had eaten and left, we got our brushes and bin liners out, making sure we tidied up the area by clearing away any litter.

After most people had gone, I was surprised to still see a sizeable number waiting around to see us off. I wasn't expecting anyone to be waving to us as we departed, but they did. It was quite moving. They knew we'd be back again on Friday.

The SVP soup runs are these:

Arundel & Brighton Brighton: Operates seven days a week on several Brighton seafront locations.

Brentwood Clacton-on-Sea: Operates in the Tendring District.

Bedford Every Thursday evening (7.00 pm) at the De Parys Avenue 'Taxi Rank'.

Westminster St. James's Spanish Place: Operates Tuesday and Friday evenings at Lincoln Inn Fields and Embankment, Central London.

Farm Street Mayfair: Operates on Monday evenings. Fr. Dominic Robinson, S.J. is Parish Priest at Farm Street.

Wirral Charles Thompson Mission, Birkenhead CH41 4AP. Times: Monday & Tuesday 5:30pm - 8:30pm, Saturday 7am - 9am



Locally, our SVP supports Manna House and the Food Bank as well as families and individuals.

For further information, please get in touch with us on 07462014088 or email RaymondD@svp.org.uk

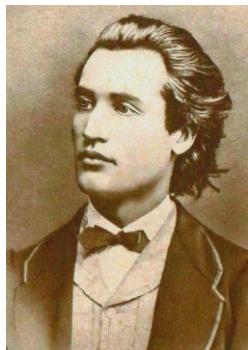
Alternatively, call SVP National Office on 0207 703 3030 or email info@svp.org.uk. We'd love to hear from you.

Raymond Daley - Kendal SVP President.

The following items have been submitted by faithful contributor Brian Stabler. I appreciate being introduced to a new poet. And I had to laugh at the last item in this issue's "Castaway." I long ago gave up on trying to understand cricket, and my hat is off to Joanna!



This issue's poem is chosen by **Joanna Howard** (Joanna and her husband Daniel are also our "Castaways" this time). The poem is by Joanna's Romanian countryman **Mihai Eminescu** [1850 ~ 1889] and is a big favourite of Joanna's. Eminescu is considered Europe's last great Romantic poet. The first of the Romantic poets was our very own William Wordsworth.



Gloss (Glossă)

by Mihai Eminescu

1/ Time goes by, time comes along,
All is old and all is new
What is good and what is wrong
Ask yourself and ponder, too;
Do not hope and do not fear
What is wave, like waves will roll
If it tries to pull you near
Remain cool, be in control.

3/ And don't let its tongue so strange,
To incline the reason's scales
To the moment that will change,
To the phony happy trails,
Which are rooted in its death
And will disappear like dew;
But for those who know at length
All is old and all is new.

2/ We see things of every kind
And we hear a lot of stuff
Who can store them all in mind,
Who can listen well enough?...
But you'd better sit aside,

4/ Like spectators at a show
Be forever in your life:
If one plays four roles, you'll know,
And if watches you with strife
Or against you takes a stand

Brace yourself, be ever strong
When with noises and vain pride
Time goes by, time comes along.

5/ And the future and the past
Are two sides of the same card
See the outset very fast
Those who learn them really hard;
All that was or that will be
Nowadays, we have in view
If it's vain for you and me,
Ask yourself and ponder, too.

6/ Because these, as it appears,
All obey – the strong, the weak,
And for many thousand years
We've been happy, we've been bleak.
Other masks, the same old play,
Other mouths, the same career,
When you're cheated every day
Do not hope and do not fear.

7/ Do not hope when knaves you'll see
In the triumph making bridge,
Because all the fools will be
Above you, on top the ridge;
Do not fear, for they will try
To pursue another goal
Do not join them, remain shy,
What is wave, like waves will roll.

Stay within, where you belong,
From his art you'll understand
What is good and what is wrong.

8/ With a mermaid song they know
To bring people in their arms;
To replace those in the show,
They will lure them with their charms;
But their call, do not abide,
And whatever you may hear
From your path don't step aside
If they try to pull you near.

9/ If they touch you, shake their vice,
If they curse, don't try to speak;
What's the use to give advice
When you know they're fool and weak;
Let them speak, to have no fear,
In the world to play their role;
To reject what they hold dear,
Remain cool, be in control.

10/ Remain cool, be in control
If they try to pull you near, what is wave,
like waves will roll.
Do not hope and do not fear,
Ask yourself and ponder, too
What is good and what is wrong;
All is old and all is new,
Time goes by, time comes along.



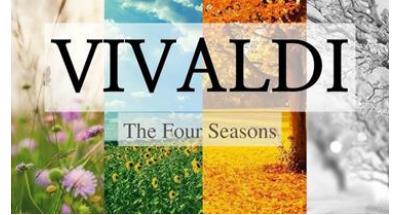
CASTAWAY



This article is based upon the famous Radio 4 show, 'Desert Island Discs' created by the legendary Roy Plomley. After being imaginarily shipwrecked, it shows how our chosen guest will keep themselves busy by remembering some of their favourite things. Our Castaways this time are: Daniel and Joanna Howard.

Favourite Music 1: From five favourite pieces of music, what is your first choice?

(Joanna) Summer - 3rd movement, from Antonio Vivaldi's Four Seasons, because it never ceases to amaze me how accurately he captures the summer lightning and rain showers through dueling violins. If you close your eyes, you can almost see the rolling hills in the heat of July, and out of nowhere clouds gather and heavens resound with the crack of thunder. And fifteen minutes later it has all stopped, the sun is out and the air is fresh... and if you're lucky, you might even see a rainbow.



Your Favourite Place to Visit:



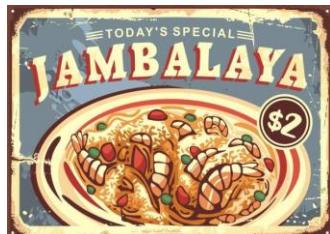
Our favourite place to visit is **the Eternal City - Rome** - a place both of us were fortunate enough to call home. Between 2011-12, we both found ourselves working within the city and living in a seaside village just half an hour outside. We met through mutual friends after Sunday Mass. We both have a fascination with ancient Roman history, and Rome is essentially an open-air museum. We've gone back together since, but there's still much more to explore.

Music 2:

(Joanna) "Somewhere over the Rainbow" as sung by Judy Garland in the 1939 famous musical "The Wizard of Oz". I had read and enjoyed the story as a child, so when I eventually got to see the movie, I loved this little song so much I learned it by heart and sang it often.



Favourite Food: Your food on the island might be just fruit and nuts, so what other of your favourite foods would you love to be eating?



We both enjoy cooking together however sometimes have conflicting views on how best to do so. Often Joanna will be trying to add more water to a stew at the same time I'm adding more chopped tomatoes to thicken it up! A simple but favourite dish of ours is **Chicken and Chorizo Jambalaya**, which is a bit of a mix between contrasting Spanish and Louisiana recipes.

Music 3:

(Joanna) "Largo al Factorum," Figaro's aria from "The Barber of Seville" by Gioachino Rossini. As a schoolgirl, I discovered this song in a Tom & Jerry cartoon episode, and my parents happened to own the full vinyl record set, libretto included. I didn't quite manage to learn to sing much of this one, but that didn't stop me trying to a lot of times! One wonders there were any neighbours left in our apartment building! Alas, it's still a wonderful musical piece I'll hum along to and listen to the professionals sing it.



Your 'Man' or 'Woman Friday' ~ Someone, alive or dead who you would love to meet and spend a little time with?

(Daniel) Returning to that interest with Ancient Rome, someone I find fascinating in the Roman senator, orator and philosopher, **Marcus Tullius Cicero**. Cicero's lasting legacy impresses me, considering that in the Late Roman Republic, where leaders typically came from either rich, noble

or martial pedigree, Cicero came from none of these. Despite being a contemporary of Julius Caesar, Pompey, and Mark Antony, Cicero's oratory made him the most influential voice in the Senate and one of the last bastions against the fall of the Republic.

Your Favourite Book - Apart from the Bible.

While we both have personal favourites, one we share is **JRR Tolkien's Lord of the Rings trilogy**. It's the classic fantastical tale of good striving to triumph over evil against impossible odds, while also creating a rich world lore to escape into. Written by a Catholic who had survived the horrors of the First World War as a young soldier, Tolkien infuses a lot of good Christian morals without reducing them to a blunt allegory.



Music 4 - Your Favourite Hymn



(Joanna) "Thine Be the Glory," a positive and uplifting hymn we both like, celebrating Christ's Resurrection. It seems to perfectly capture that exuberant joy that fills one's heart on the night of the Easter Vigil. It was also a pleasant surprise to discover this hymn was translated and is sung in Greek Catholic Churches during ordinary time; it was a favourite of mine growing up in Romania.

Finally, One Special Item - If you could save one thing from the wreck, or one thing from your imagination to help you while away the time, what would it be?

(Daniel) A cricket bat (and ball). Part of my 'civilising' education of Joanna to all things English is a constant lecture on what's happening in Test Match cricket. Joanna kindly listens to these with apparent enthusiasm. Time on Castaway Island would be well spent playing cricket together.



The Secrets Behind the Vatican's White/Black Smoke



Do you know how the Vatican chimney works?

All Catholics are familiar with the ritual of the white and black smoke that accompanies the election of a new Pope. When white smoke emanates from the roof of the Sistine Chapel in Rome, it means a new pope has been chosen. If black smoke emerges, an agreement is yet to be reached. But not many people may know how this centuries-long ritual actually works. Here are some key facts that reveal the secrets behind the “conclave smoke.”

1. The smoke's colour is created thanks to a chemical process.

Both white and black smoke are created by burning the electoral cards used by cardinals during the papal conclave. These envelopes are then mixed with different substances to obtain white or black coloured smoke. Thanks to combustion of specific materials, such as metallic zinc with elemental sulfur, a thick white gas can be generated, resulting in the famous “white smoke.” Burning carbon-heavy materials like wood releases compounds that look grey or black, thus resulting in the “black” smoke.

2. The smoke originates from two cast iron stoves located in the Sistine Chapel.

We can all see the smoke emitted by the external chimney on the roof of the Sistine Chapel. But where does that smoke originate? The answer lies in two cast iron stoves located in the Sistine Chapel. The stoves are about 3.2 feet high and have two openings, one at the bottom to start it up and one at the top to insert the envelopes and other materials needed for the combustion.



3. The current stove system was first used in 1939.

The iron stove system was first used for the election of Pope Pius XII in 1939. It has been used seven more times since then: in 1958 (Pope John XXIII), 1963 (Pope Paul VI), 1978 (Pope John Paul I and Pope John Paul II), 2005 (Pope Benedict XVI), and 2013 (Pope Francis). Each of these dates is engraved in Roman numerals on top of the stove.

Cathopedia

4. The stove system is 98 feet long.

From bottom to top, the stove system measures approximately 98 feet. The first part is made of a total of 32 tubes while the final part, reaching the roof, is made of a single 65-ft long tube made of steel and copper.

5. Bells and smoke are the only permitted ways to communicate the election of the pope.

Together with white smoke, the election of a new pope is communicated by the ringing of St. Peter's Basilica's bells. Any other form of communication about the papal conclave's result, including text messages, is forbidden.

6. A seagull that flew on top of the chimney became a social media celebrity

During the last papal conclave in 2013, a white seagull stepped on the external part of the chimney right after black smoke was emitted, evoking a symbol of hope. Curious groups of onlookers filmed the seagull and the video became viral on social media. The bird eventually flew away after 30 minutes of fame.



This prayer means a lot to me. I am sure many of you know it well. I have it on my wall and reflect on it often.

It feels incredibly personal, as if Cardinal Newman has walked a path familiar to me.

In this tough time, I take comfort in these words. I hope you do, too.

Purpose: A Prayer

by Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman

I am created to do something or to be something for which no one else is created;

I have a place in God's counsels, in God's world, which no one else has;

whether I be rich or poor, despised or esteemed by man,

God knows me and calls me by name.

God has created me to do Him some definite service;

He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another.

I have a mission – I never may know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next...

I have a part in a great work;

I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons.

He has not created me for naught.

I shall do good, I shall do His work;

I shall be an angel of peace,

a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it,

if I do but keep His commandments and serve Him in my calling.

Therefore, I will trust Him.

Whatever, wherever I am, I can never be thrown away.

If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him;

in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him;

if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him.

My sickness, or perplexity, or sorrow
may be necessary causes of some great end,

which is quite beyond us.

He does nothing in vain;

He may prolong my life, He may shorten it;

He knows what He is about.

He may take away my friends,

He may throw me among strangers,

He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink,

hide the future from me – He still knows what He is about.

I ask not to see – ask not to know – I ask simply to be used.



[1801 ~ 1890]

On Christian Nationalism in the US

by Celeste Bonfanti

I began writing this on the day of agent of chaos Donald Trump's second inauguration.

There are no more miserable words in the history of US politics, as far as I am concerned.

I could barely believe he was elected once, but at least that time one could blame the ridiculous Electoral College and comfort oneself in the knowledge that most voters didn't pull the lever for him. This time, they did.

There are many factors at play here and, while it makes me queasy to go into them, I think I have to, in order to arrive at the topic of this article. They include:

- The Democrats' inability to develop a clear, cohesive message. This is not a Biden Administration problem; it is a party problem. The last Democrat who knew how to talk to John Q. Yankee was Bill Clinton. Barack Obama was a wonderful President and won in large part because of his oratory skill, but once elected, the speeches tailed off significantly. Clinton had a designated team whose sole job was to counter Republican attacks clearly and thoroughly within 24 hours. Why this didn't become part of the Democratic playbook, I don't know, because it works like a charm. Instead, the Dems typically stay silent in the face of attack and appeal to the common sense of the American people: Mistake #1, as common sense ain't so common here anymore.
- Not only did this administration not counter attacks, it did not explain the very significant achievements it had enacted which truly do affect average American lives. Nor did it remind the public of where the administration had begun: namely, in the teeth of the pandemic. This made it impossible for many voters (who don't read or, sadly, think very much) to measure progress from the bottom of a very deep well to an economy which is in large part the envy of the world.
- This leads to Issue #2: The American refusal to see themselves as part of the world and not as a world unto themselves. Compared to most economies, the American economy 2020 – 2024 was quicker to rebound and steadier in growth, yet because of the lack of messaging on the Left and the constant drumbeat of disaster on the Right, many voters were convinced things were much worse economically than they actually were.
- The determination on the part of the Republicans to rewrite history re: the 6th January insurrection rather than to cast out the man who had fomented it.
- The insistence of right-wing media that issues such as trans rights outweigh every major challenge facing the majority of Americans.
- The American fascination with celebrity. Trump has been in the national public eye for fourteen years c/o his programme "The Apprentice." He was well-known as a real estate developer and huckster in the New York metropolitan area long before that. The fact that he has presided over multiple bankruptcies and was infamous for stiffing the average worker at his properties and for decades of shady dealings and sexual immorality was swamped by his self-aggrandizement and permission to write his own narrative and pawn it off as truth.
- The rise of social media, which is the way 48% of Americans get their news. There is no fact-checking, there is no concern about sources. It is an echo chamber which posits the most ridiculous conspiracy theories and the most ludicrous fantasies as truth, and these are perpetuated *ad nauseum*.
- The "I'm all right, Jack" mindset of the haves in this country. They are blissfully unconcerned with problems such as inadequate medical care, childhood poverty and homelessness. An administration which spends too much time trying to address the needs of these unfortunates is not only not credited with compassionate governance: it is seen as weak and beholden to the underclass.
- The seemingly perpetually aggrieved Americans in the heartland who carry on voting for incumbent idiots while at the same time crying that no one understands their problems.



- A right-wing activist Supreme Court which has the confidence of a mere 47% of Americans (and, to tell you the truth, I am surprised it is that high).

I could go on, but you get the picture. It is complicated, to be sure, and overwhelmingly depressing as the country is handed back to a narcissist with no respect for democratic norms, an insatiable desire for revenge on his opponents, a fascination for dictators, a lack of interest in climate change and no discernible moral compass. And remember, his party is in control of all three branches of government. My friends, we are in for a rough four years. As Gina McCarthy (former administrator of the Environmental Protection Administration) said on telly this evening, “The dangerousness of this administration is surpassed only by the ignorance of this administration,” as was surely on international display when Trump blamed the horrific air crash in DC on DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) programmes.

But something which can fly under the radar with all this fur flying is the steady rise of the Christian nationalist movement and the inroads they have been able to make across most demographics. Trump is no more a Christian than I am a poodle. But many evangelicals are in his thrall because of his willingness to pack the Supreme Court as well as lower courts with right-wing fundamentalists. Of course, the right-to-life issue is as far as some Christians look as they choose their elected leaders, and although Trump has vacillated wildly on this issue, in recent years he has been putty in the hands of the religious right. Right-to-life for most of these voters is more rightfully called right-to-birth, as they have no interest in maintaining the support systems which keep children fed, housed and educated. In fact, they are eager to slash most government programs which benefit those in the most severe need.

Trump has already begun his reign of terror, pardoning insurrectionists who beat Capitol police, rolling back environmental standards, appointing the most inappropriate people possible to his cabinet, doing his best to end birthright citizenship and demanding an apology from the wonderful bishop (the Right Rev. Mariann Budde) who addressed him thus on Inauguration Day:

"Let me make one final plea, Mr. President... In the name of our God, I ask you to have mercy upon the people in our country who are scared now.

There are gay, lesbian, and transgender children in Democratic, Republican, and Independent families, some who fear for their lives.

And the people who pick our crops and clean our office buildings, who labor in poultry farms and meatpacking plants, who wash the dishes after we eat in restaurants and work the nightshifts in hospitals. They may not be citizens or have the proper documentation, but the vast majority of immigrants are not criminals. They pay taxes and are good neighbors. They are faithful members of our churches and mosques, synagogues, gurdwaras, and temples.

I ask you to have mercy, Mr. President, on those in our communities whose children fear that their parents will be taken away. And that you help those that are fleeing war zones and persecution in their own lands, to find compassion and welcome here.



Our God teaches us that we are to be merciful to the stranger, for we were all once strangers in this land."

Christian nationalism is defined by Britannica as "an ideology that seeks to create or maintain a legal fusion of Christian religion with a nation's character." The website Faithful America states, "With hundreds of far-right politicians using Christ's name to deny election results, demonise their opponents, enact a theocratic agenda, and spread dangerous conspiracy theories ~ all with the blessing of pastors and televangelists ~ Christian nationalism is the single biggest threat to both democracy and the church today." It bears little to no resemblance to the message of Jesus Christ. Recall the image of Trump waving an upside-down Bible while peaceful protestors were gassed. It is complicit in rolling back the modest, hard-won gains in equity and justice since the George Floyd tragedy while removing evolution from school curricula.

The US is the most diverse country in the world. For hundreds of years, we have been a nation of immigrants with a wide variety of cultures and religions. In addition, after many years of leading the Western world in the number of people actively practicing their religion, in recent years there has been a marked decline. Many more are reporting themselves as agnostic or atheist when polled. It is brazen and completely unacceptable of the administration to support Christian nationalism in the face of this diversity. It is not at all what the framers intended when they built such a clear division between church and state into the foundations of the republic. I very much doubt whether any of them would recognise what is going on these days in Washington as in any way connected to the government they formed. And all the while, those on the right behave as if they are bringing the country back to its origins.



As I wrote in our last issue, my anger at the state of affairs here is unabated, and a primary source of it is the way Christian nationalism has insidiously crept up to the highest levels of government, cloaked in righteousness and brainwashing more and more churchgoing Americans. I am fortunate to attend a parish with a very clear-eyed sense of economic justice, working hard with those at the bottom of the social and economic ladder. We have a pastor who was an immigration lawyer and has arranged for his former colleagues to meet with our Latino brothers and sisters to assist them in protecting themselves from the coming storm. But there are far too many unchurched people who look at what the government is doing in the name of Christianity and assume we are all hypocritical monsters. Far too few of those who truly do espouse the command to love our neighbours are speaking out against this movement and saying that the policies being enacted by Trump and his cronies have nothing to do with Christ.

I carry on with my subversive work in a poor city, telling myself that it is only in the trenches that I can make a difference during this bleak and raging political season. I try to spread the light of my faith in my community and speak my truth. But it would be so much easier if I didn't know that the damage which is done by this heartless administration wasn't being wrapped in a Christian package with a cheap dime store halo perched on top.

Lord, I offer you my temper. Replace it with your patience. Let me see those who anger me as my brothers and sisters.

Chris Brolly SJ

"Beyond cure and healing, Jesus was always hopeful about widening the circle of compassion and dismantling the barriers that exclude. He stood with the sinner, the leper and the ritually impure to usher in some new, remarkable inclusion, the very kinship of God. Living the gospel, then, is less about 'thinking outside the box' than about choosing to live in this ever-widening circle of inclusion."

Fr, Greg Boyle

Barking to the Choir: The Power of Radical Kinship

From E-News from the Sisters of St. Joseph, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia:

Creation spirituality is the belief that divinity permeates all things. As such, it embraces the diversity of the cosmos, recognizing that there is a profound connection between earth and each one of us. Ideally it merges Eastern and Western spirituality with modern religious thought to revitalize our culture and promote social and ecological justice.

A basic premise of the spirituality of creation also centers on the belief that the Universe and all that is within it is part and partial of our very being. Though it may be difficult to grasp its full impact, this concept is central to the fullness of our own spirituality, our relationship to the Community, and to the world around us. As such, it is important that we honor the rich diversity that embodies multiple cultures, religions, and ancestral traditions expressed in each individual.



This lovely little prayer was submitted by Jenny Davies who got it from a friend. Jenny says it every day. It is perfect to keep in a purse or pocket. Developing personal prayer traditions is like building a muscle. Just like gym rats feel out of sorts when they miss a workout session, we can feel at sixes and sevens when we miss our prayer routine!

Calm me, O Lord, as you stilled the storm.
Still me, O Lord, keep me from harm.
Let all tumult within me cease.
Enfold me, Lord, in your love and your peace.



Many thanks to Andy Callaghan for this submission. It is wonderful that the parish has been able to be so instrumental in assisting our brothers and sisters across the globe.

An Update on the Overseas Aid Group

by Andy Callaghan

As you know, our Parish of Holy Trinity and St George have sponsored schools through Mary's Meals for a number of years. Our latest school is the Chabwera School in Zambia; we are working towards a target of raising £5,610.95.

So far, we have done wonderfully well and have raised over £4,000! The money we have raised has come from our popular coffee morning and the money box cash we collect throughout the year. We have also gratefully received generous donations from individuals, alongside raising an amazing £600 in the collection after Mass when Fran, our Mary's Meal contact, came to visit and presented a small talk to the congregation. The money raised is amazing and is hugely appreciated by all, especially the children at the school, who now benefit from wholesome meals on a regular basis. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you.

As we have not raised the full sponsorship for this school, we will be allocated a new, smaller, school for the following twelve months.

Our next coffee morning will be on Saturday, 1st March, 2025. Tickets will be on sale soon, or you can pay on the door for £1. Who can resist a hot drink, biscuit, delicious cake and even a raffle? The coffee mornings have proven to be a fantastic social event, a special time for people to chat and catch up whilst supporting a very worthy cause. Please come along if you can; you will be warmly welcomed, and we look forward to seeing you.

We will keep you informed about our next school and any future funding raising events. Thank you for your support and all you do for Mary's Meals.



Turn to God

When your spirit's heavy-laden
And your sorrows get you down,
When your heartaches overwhelm you

And your problems make you frown...

Don't weep bitter tears of sadness
Nor give way to dark despair;
Don't give up. You have a Father
You can always reach with prayer.

Just remember He is waiting;
He can make all things come right;
You can reach Him when you're troubled,
Be it day or darkest night.

He is always there to listen
And to help you if you ask;
He can soothe your worried spirit;
He can lighten every task.

*Delphine LeDoux
"Let Your Spirit Soar"*



I learned about the passing of dear Fr. Parker, aged 88, in Faith Billington's Christmas card. He was one of the first friends I made in Kendal, and until quite recently Faith and I would whisk him away for a meal during my visits. I hope you enjoy the following personal reflection on this extraordinary man.

Fr. Alf Parker: A Loving Remembrance

by Celeste Bonfanti

"I met the pastor of the local church," I wrote home to my parents in May of 1989. "He looks kind of like Spencer Tracy. I love him." So did my parents when they later visited, as did all my US friends. It is impossible, in my estimation, not to love someone who so thoroughly embraced his vocation, his parish, indeed the whole human experience in all its imperfection.

I have been incredibly blessed in my life to know some remarkable priests, and Fr. Parker was certainly one. For over thirty years I have been fortunate enough to know, love and learn from him, and it's hard to realise we won't be sharing another cuppa. But he made an indelible impression on my life, and I will never forget him.

I was deeply moved by his kindness to those struggling with substance abuse disorder, to the unhoused, to the friendless and the questioning. I was proud of the fact that his reputation had spread far beyond Kendal, that people in need of help from far and wide turned up at the presbytery knowing that they would be treated with compassion and understanding. I was awed at the way he could reach troubled young people, gaining their trust by discerning the heart of the matter, not merely delivering them back to families who were not always equipped to handle them.

He was a wonderful spiritual advisor, and I was often surprised and humbled by his mentorship. He caused me to reflect deeply on issues such as pride, honesty, judgmental behaviour and always, always the love of God. I found myself unable to say no to him when he asked me to help run the confirmation preparation programme for the parish. "I am not the one you need," I said. "I have too many questions myself."



"That's exactly why you're the one I want," he told me.

One Ash Wednesday after Mass, he pressed several of us to go with him to the Little Chef because he hadn't yet had his meal. Once there, I ordered a cup of tea as I had already eaten. "You must have a collation," he said. I insisted I was fine with the tea and excused myself for the ladies'. When I returned, a toasted teacake was waiting for me.

He spent a lot of time on his own in church, particularly before Mass, and would share with us anything that struck him during his meditations. I clearly remember him telling us once that the image that came to him in prayer was of a hand with the index finger pressing on an ice cube. Imperceptibly, the ice cube melted under the warmth. "That is what God wants to do with us," he assured us. "He wants us to be still long enough to touch us and change us."

During one of his vigils in church, he heard a bell and watched a phantom eucharistic procession which entered through the wall, made its way across the front of the sacristy and exited through another wall.

Subsequent study of the original layout of the church showed that the procession originated and ended where earlier doorways had been. When I expressed surprise that he believed in ghosts, he seemed equally surprised at my doubt. "You believe in souls, don't you?" he asked with that arched eyebrow we all know so well.

I loved it when he preached to the children. I remember one homily when he began with his fist in a jar. He went to all the children at the front of church and asked them to pull off the jar. None could. Finally, one boy advised him to open his fist. He did, and the boy easily pulled off the jar. Fr. Parker went on to tell them that God asks us to open our fists, to avoid fighting, to keep our hands ready to give to those who need it, etc. I admired this profound message communicated in such an accessible way.

He was scheduled to read at one Sunday evening Mass, and immediately beforehand I received a call from home that my friend's 25-year-old sister Robin had died of a blood clot a day after giving birth. I was of course an absolute wreck and Fr. Parker held my hand until I had gotten myself together, starting Mass a few minutes late. As it happened, the Gospel was the one about the man who pulls down his barns to build bigger ones, only to be told

by God that he has reached the end of his life. Fr. Parker abandoned whatever he had planned for a homily and instead preached a eulogy for poor Robin. It was a great comfort to my friend to know her sister had been remembered 3,300 miles from home.

He made no bones about his belief that the Church's refusal to ordain married priests was financial in origin: it was prepared to employ a single priest but not to support a family. He was happy that we had lost all the great cathedrals in the Reformation because of the enormous financial drain they were on the Anglican Church. And he lamented the way Catholics sometimes made a religion of ritual. After his heart attack, when he had been moved to the little church at Cottam, I went to visit him at the presbytery toward the end of a Holy Hour. He had me go with him to close up the church. "Here we go, Lord," he said as he removed the host from the monstrance and replaced it in the tabernacle. "We know where we are, we're safe as long as we keep you here in your box."

Over tea later that evening, he expressed frustration that the diocese had put him out to pasture in the tiny parish. He was sure they were afraid he wasn't going to be able to handle anything more strenuous, and he was feeling strong enough for a new challenge. In short, he was champing at the bit.

And so he was moved to Grange-over-Sands, or the "Costa Geriatrica," as he liked to call it (his sense of humour was, of course, legendary). On one of my visits there, he lamented the lack of baptisms in the parish.

"Yeah, I guess you get more funerals, huh?" I asked.

"No!" he said. "They don't die!"

He joked that he was waiting to be asked not to visit the priests' home at Boarbark Hall as they were starting to call him the Angel of Death; every time he came to see one of the residents, they passed soon after!

I learned so many life lessons from this larger-than-life man, I could fill a book. This little farewell will have to suffice. But I know I am not alone in knowing the world lost a good'un when it lost Alf Parker and wishing him Godspeed. If anyone earned his rest, it was this good and faithful servant.

This Issue's Featured Hymn highlights a beloved hymn and provides a link to a recording of it, along with a little information about it. [All are welcome to submit a hymn.](#)

This issue, I want to share BABA YETU, which is Swahili for "Our Father." My principal source was the [genius.com](#) website.

This Issue's Featured Hymn:

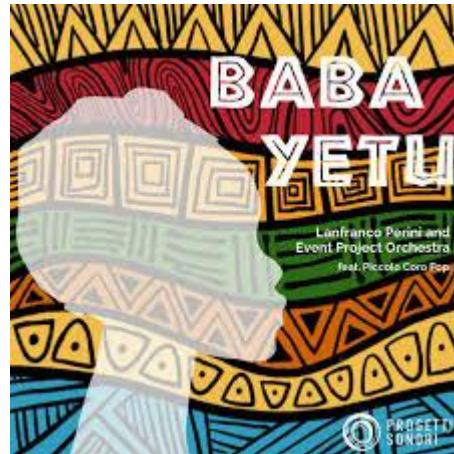
Baba Yetu

Years ago, I was sent a link to this hymn, a translation of the "Our Father," which I immediately bookmarked and play any time I feel the need for a lift. I sent it to the members of my house group there, to my nephew the music teacher, to anyone I thought could appreciate the sheer, unmitigated joy of it. I find this version by the Stellenbosch University Choir absolutely overwhelming:

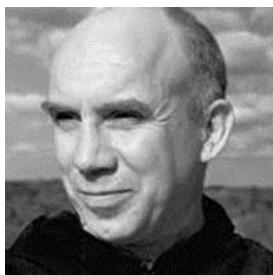
[Baba Yetu - Stellenbosch University Choir](#)

Imagine my surprise at learning that the hymn was written in 2005 by Christopher Tin as the menu theme for the video game “Civilization IV!” In 2009, he re-recorded it for his first album... and it became the first song composed for a video which won a Grammy!

Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine such a prosaic birth for such a glorious work! Give it a listen and see if you don’t agree!



Merton Corner



Lord, I will raise
Wide and bright
Faith-filled eyes
In the night
You are my protection
Bring me home

And receive my prayer
Sweet as incense smoke
Rising from my heart
Free of care

Thomas Merton in Entering the Silence

Here are two final excerpts from the theology of African-American Servant of God Thea Bowman. It has been a pleasure to share some of her spirituality with you. These, like our previous quotations, are included in We Are Beloved: 30 Days with Thea Bowman [part of the Great Spiritual Teachers Series]. This short book is loaded with wonderful reflections. I highly recommend it.

The first quote is from "Trusting the Prophetic Call," an interview with Catherine Browning. The second is from a 1991 video directed by Aaron Mermelstein entitled "Sr. Thea: Her Own Story." And I find this second quote so moving, considering that she died at 52 and was, in fact, already dead when the video was made. It is reminiscent of Martin Luther King's speech about the mountaintop.

A Moment with Servant of God Thea Bowman



"We become the miracle when we love one another.

"Jesus says, 'As the Father loves me, I love you.' And 'As I have loved you, love one another.' He doesn't say, 'Love anyone that looks like you, thinks like you, prays like you, dresses like you, talks like you. 'Love one another as I have loved you. Greater love than this nobody has than to lay down life.'

"Jesus said, 'They will know that you are mine, because you love one another.' When we love one another, we become the miracle. We witness to the miracle. We are transformed by his love, and the world beholds his glory in our transformation.

"It has to be love, love that overcomes fear, that shares and makes sure that nobody is hungry, that unites us when we learn about each other, when we share our gifts, when we believe in each other, when we take time to listen to each other, and to share our stories, our arts, our customs, our traditions, when we break bread together."

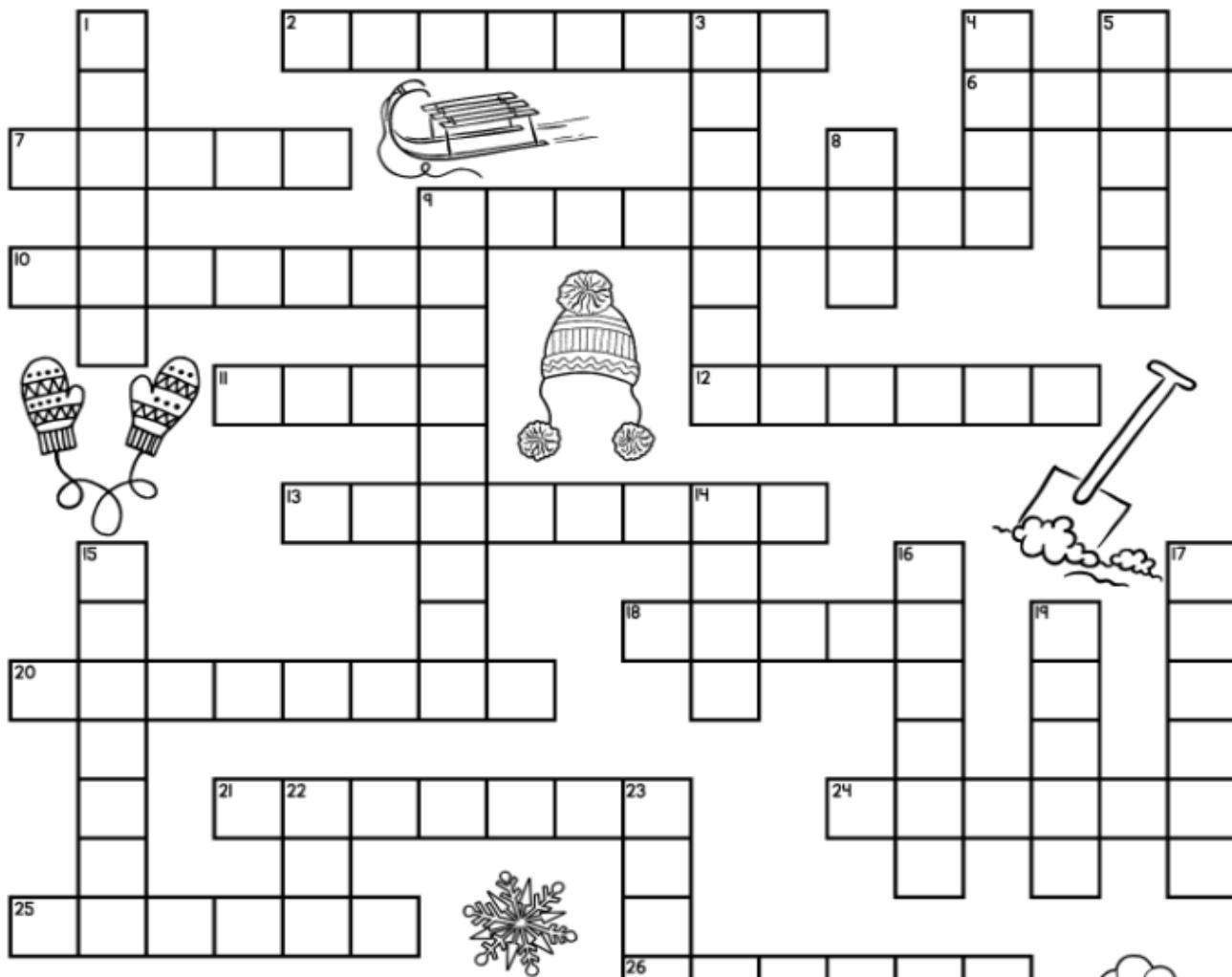
"I feel sometimes that I have something I want to do. I have something that I want to say before it's all over.

"I'm a Franciscan. I want to be an instrument of peace. I want to be an instrument of hope. I want to be an instrument of faith and joy.

"We are a pilgrim people traveling together in sorrow and joy toward that land of promise. Where there will be no more sorrow, no more moaning, no more weeping and wailing, no more goodbye, but just hello.

"I want people to remember that I tried to love the Lord and that I tried to love them, and how that computes is immaterial."

WINTER



ACROSS

2. a jacket and matching pants that children wear outside
6. a small sled used for racing down an ice track. The rider lies on his or her back with their feet forward.
7. a long piece of fabric that's worn around the neck or head
9. a board like a wide ski that is used for sliding down hills of snow while standing
10. a black-and-white bird that cannot fly and lives in or near the Antarctic
11. a vehicle that clears and pushes snow off the roads
12. clothing for hands that has a separate part for each finger
13. the shortest day of the year is on the day of the winter ____
18. partly melted snow
20. winter begins during this month, in the northern hemisphere
21. clothing for the hands, with each having a part for the thumb and a separate part for the other 4 fingers
24. one of the four periods into which the year is divided
25. to be very cold
26. to shake slightly because you are cold

DOWN

1. a piece of clothing similar to a coat but not as warm
3. a very large piece of ice floating in the ocean
4. kids like to ride on this in the winter, especially down a hill
5. a house made of blocks of snow or ice in the form of a dome
8. worn in the winter to keep the head warm
9. a small, soft piece of frozen water that falls from the sky
14. an unpleasantly low temperature
15. a warm knitted piece of clothing worn on the upper body
16. a tool with a long handle used for lifting and throwing snow
17. the activity of using skis to glide on snow
19. Jack ____
22. water in solid form
23. long narrow strips fastened under the feet to move on snow

Winter Word Search



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| S | R | L | R | G | N | S | N | E | R | T | V | G | F | G | X | L | L | N | E |
| O | E | A | A | O | B | O | T | O | A | W | J | N | P | G | L | E | N | O | I |
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| K | E | A | J | W | E | C | N | U | H | U | L | W | H | M | N | H | Z | L | E |
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| M | S | S | T | H | G | I | L | E | L | C | I | C | I | G | Y | L | N | O | J |
| Q | X | J | E | H | W | F | I | R | E | P | L | A | C | E | O | O | N | A | H |
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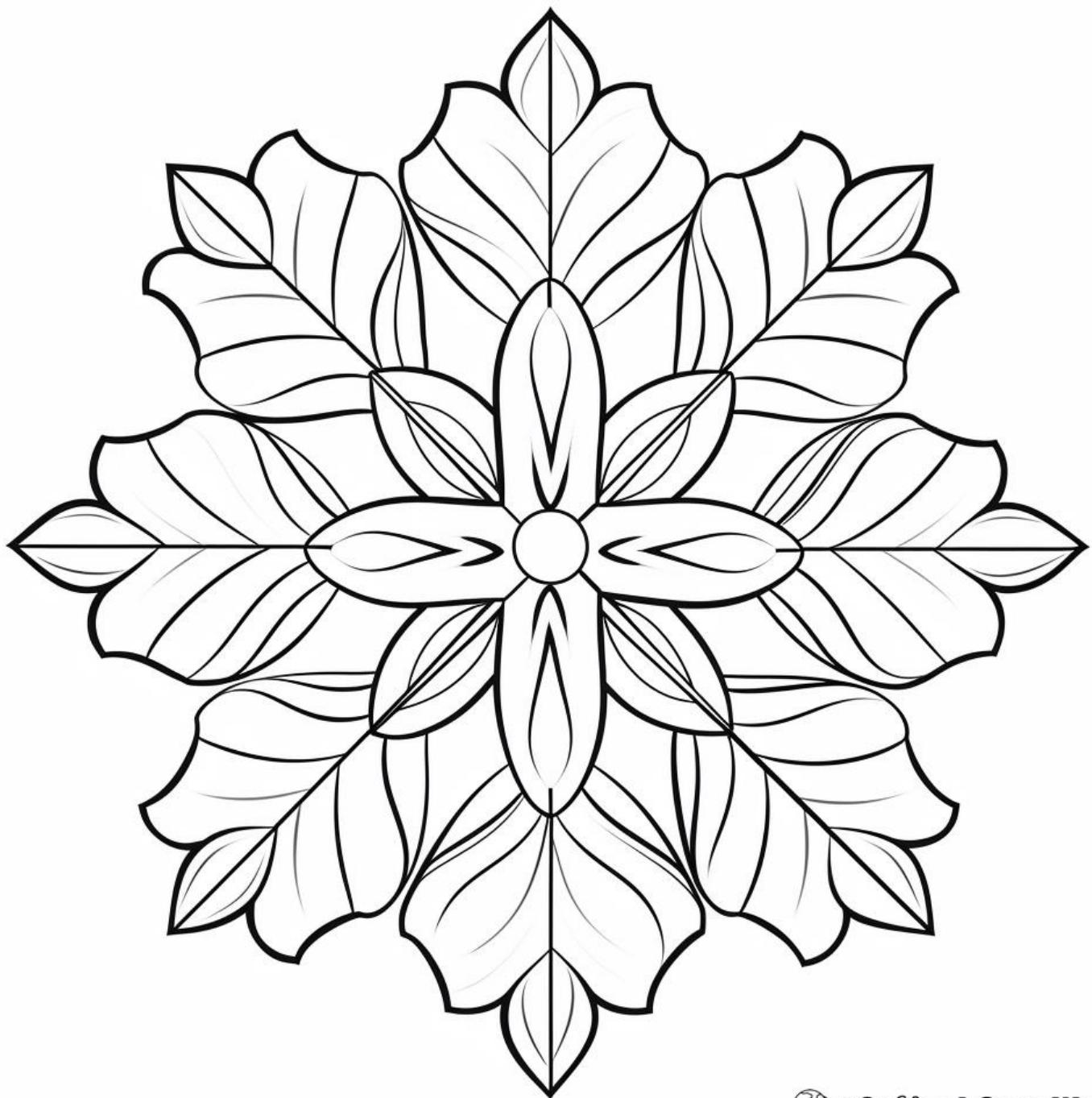


- ❖ Sleigh
- ❖ Sled
- ❖ Mistletoe
- ❖ Scarf
- ❖ Icicle
- ❖ Hot Chocolate
- ❖ Evergreen
- ❖ Snowflake
- ❖ Winter Hat
- ❖ Snowplow
- ❖ Fireplace
- ❖ Reindeer
- ❖ Igloo
- ❖ Sweater
- ❖ Snow Globe
- ❖ Blizzard
- ❖ Snow Boots
- ❖ Mittens
- ❖ Ice Skates
- ❖ Snowman

- ❖ Snow
- ❖ Frost
- ❖ Chimney
- ❖ Coldweather
- ❖ Skiing
- ❖ Sledding
- ❖ Cookies
- ❖ Icicle Lights
- ❖ Landscape
- ❖ Eskimos
- ❖ Winter
- ❖ Popsicle
- ❖ Glacial
- ❖ January
- ❖ December
- ❖ Skiing
- ❖ Polar
- ❖ Flurries
- ❖ Avalanche
- ❖ Pajamas
- ❖ Heberenate
- ❖ Winterize
- ❖ Ski Resort
- ❖ Snowshoes
- ❖ Windchill
- ❖ Snowsuit
- ❖ Scarves
- ❖ Penguin
- ❖ Snowball
- ❖ Winterize
- ❖ Snowstorm
- ❖ Snowfall

Colouring Pages





 Crafting A Green World