

Holy Trinity and St. George Parish Magazine

Spring, Lent and Easter 2026



“I suppose the best kind of spring morning is
the best weather that God has to offer.”

Dodie Smith

Issue 36

Suggested Donation: £1

Blessings in Disguise

Dear Friends:

I hope this beautiful, prayerful season finds you well and with Easter preparations well in hand.

I have been thinking (with good reason) of the fact that blessings can come in the most unexpected ways and times.

Over 35 years ago, my sister Clare's ovarian cancer was found during treatment for an unrelated health issue. She beat it, which she almost certainly would not have done had it remained undiscovered until she had symptoms.

Since our last issue, my sister Bernadette was hospitalised with what appeared to be gastric symptoms. It turned out to be a series of very serious conditions: an abdominal aortic aneurysm and Stage 4 lung cancer which is also in her bones (and caused a sudden break in the femur). As much as it has shocked us all (she has never smoked), we were encouraged to learn that she has a genetic mutation which makes her eligible for a special type of chemotherapy which has had very good results.

It is quite a Lenten journey through the desert: she has started radiotherapy and the special chemo, after which there will be standard chemo. But she is in good spirits; she has always been a woman of faith and is trusting God to see her through. And she has been cheered by the outpouring of concern and care with which her diagnosis has been met, not just from friends and family but from an excellent oncology team and even her insurance company (believe me, US insurance companies are NOT known for their solicitous ways!). She is also relieved to be largely symptom-free for now. And this is what keeps occurring to me. If not for the initial gastric symptoms and the ensuing tests, how long would it have been before symptoms developed, and what would have been her treatment options, if any, had things developed to that degree...? Blessings in disguise, for sure.

I ask you to please keep her in your prayers this Easter and I thank you in advance.

Now, on to Issue 36. It feels as if it's fast on the heels of the Winter issue, I know. I hope you enjoy it. My thanks to **Raymond Daley** for his help in getting this magazine to you and to contributors **Pamela Boyes** and **Emily Bleazard** (a rare puzzle contributor!); **Raymond** and **Brian Stabler's** contributions will resume soon.

Now we have a little respite until the summer issue. Plenty of time to work on a contribution, she says hopefully! Take care and Happy Easter!

Celeste



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Spiritual Home

O Cornerstone of our existence
may our lives reflect the light you offer.
Out of the darkness of death you rose,
bringing hope of eternal life to your followers.

A spiritual home you provide
if we place our trust in you.
Urging us to serve
through generous works of mercy
in the footsteps of your first disciples.

Let our belief in you grow stronger
with each passing day
trusting in the Holy Spirit
the light that guides our way.

We live our lives in faith
forgetting not the sacrifice paid
for we are your people
in faith, hope and praise.

JAYNE HELMLINGER, CSJ



The idea for this feature came to me while driving. I get some of my best ideas behind the wheel. While I am not professing this feature to be one of them(!), I think we could have some fun with it. Has a film, play, work of secular art, billboard or song struck you with a message which could have come straight from a homily? This issue cites an entire song, but a verse or even a line is enough to share. Please consider contributing to this or one of our other regular features.

Christian Messages in Popular Culture

This Issue's Media: Song
This Issue's Contributor: Celeste Bonfanti

I still listen to music CDs and have long since stopped being embarrassed at being seen singing in the car! Yesterday I was listening to "The Hollies' Greatest Hits" and was struck, for the millionth time, by the song "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother."

According to www.americansongwriter.com,

"Examples of the phrase "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother" can be found in religious literature dating all the way back to the 19th century. At some point, the phrase was heard by Father Edward Flanagan. He thought it so *apropos* to the mission of his Boys Town children's home that he adopted it as the organisation's motto."

[NOTE: The article was very interesting:

[The Story and Meaning Behind "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother," The Hollies Hit With the Unforgettable Title – American Songwriter](#)]

As a kid, I thought this song was somewhat sappy. Maybe it's age, maybe it's the state of the world, maybe it's my work at the parish thrift shop or a combination of all of these. But my opinion of the song has improved considerably. Listen to it here: [Bing Videos](#). As for the lyrics:

The road is long, with many a winding turn
That leads us to who knows where,
Who knows where?
But I'm strong,
Strong enough to carry him.
He ain't heavy, he's my brother.

So on we go. His welfare is my concern.
No burden is he to bear. We'll get there.
For I know he would not encumber me.
He ain't heavy, he's my brother.

If I'm laden at all, I'm laden with sadness
That everyone's heart isn't filled with the gladness
Of love for one another.

It's a long, long road from which there is no return.
While we're on the way to there, why not share?
And the load doesn't weigh me down at all.
He ain't heavy, he's my brother.



I mean, there couldn't be a more explicitly Christian message, could there...? It's a call to action in the guise of an oldie. I have a feeling this CD will be in the rotation in my ancient Mazda for quite a while!

Pamela Boyes managed to get her contributions in even earlier than usual because of impending eye surgery. She really is a trouper! I love these Small Beatitudes. I was hearing a priest from New York on the radio saying that, instead of the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes should be posted in public places. I'm all for that!

Pamela's Pages

I have taken the liberty of including, in my contributions for our HTSG magazine, an article contributed by two parishioners of St. Mark's Church, Natland, for the prayer page of the *Parish News for Natland & Oxenholme*, which I get every month. I had never seen this prayer before reading it in this February's magazine and I thought it was worth sharing!



THE SMALL BEATITUDES

Blessed are those who can laugh at themselves;
They will have no end of fun.
Blessed are those who can tell a mountain from a molehill;
They will be saved a lot of bother.
Blessed are those who know how to relax without looking for excuses;
They are on the way to becoming wise.

Blessed are those who are sane enough not to take themselves too seriously;
 They will be valued most by those about them.

Blessed are you if you can take small things seriously and face serious things calmly;
 You will go far in life.

Happy are you if you can appreciate a smile and forget a frown;
 You will walk on the sunny side of the street.

Happy are you if you can be kind in understanding the attitude of others
 even when the signs are unfavourable;
 You may be taken for a fool, but this is the price of charity.

Blessed are those who think before acting and pray before thinking;
 They will avoid many blunders.

Happy are you if you know how to hold your tongue and smile,
 even when people interrupt and contradict you or tread on your toes.
 The Gospel has begun to seep into your heart.

Above all, blessed are you who recognise the Lord in all whom you meet.
 The light of truth shines in your life, for you have found true wisdom,



Shrove Tuesday or Pancake Day

Brian Bilston wrote this especially for Shrove Tuesday. The reason for its
 “form” will become clear when reading the poem!



Brian Bilston

I wrote a pancake poem.
 Instead of eggs, I used some nouns.
 Poured in verbs in place of milk.
 Added adjectives for flour.
 I whisked the words together,
 and cooked them golden brown.
 I tossed my poem in the air;
 it landed upside down.

Pancake Poem

Lent



Forty days of giving up,
No chocolate in my coffee cup.
I'm skipping cakes and candy bars,
And wishing upon chocolate stars.

But when the Easter Bells ring out,
I'll eat them all, without a doubt!



Here is a funny and topical poem from the Banksy of Poetry (one of my favourite modern poets) about the time he went online to buy an Easter egg!

Add to Basket



Browse eggs. Click on egg.
Add to basket.

Buy One Egg. Get One Free.
Add to basket.

Buy Five More Eggs to Qualify for Free Delivery.
Add to basket.

Other Recommended Eggs Based on Your Browsing History...
Add to basket.

Customers who bought this Egg also bought these Eggs...
Add to basket.

Here are some other Eggs you might like to consider...
Add to basket.

What other Eggs do customers buy after viewing this Egg?
Add to basket.

Avoid Putting All Your Eggs in One Basket with Our New Range of Baskets...
Browse baskets. Click on basket.
Add to basket.
Buy one Basket, Get One Free.
Add to basket...



*Brian Bilston
aka Paul Millicheap
b. 14 June 1970*

Tony and Dermot on the Radio



Last winter there was ice on the windscreen and Tony had to scrape it off.
He couldn't find his usual scraper, so he used one of those supermarket discount cards.
He only got 10% off....

*

After his recent birthday, Dermot has decided to do something his grandmother did.

At 64, she started walking 10km a day. She's 92 now, and they've no idea where she is....

*

One of the listeners contacted the show to say that they were at the petrol station recently
and got really emotional:
they were just filling up....

*

Dermot has heard about a memo going round the office with some dire consequences
for the employee with the worst posture.
He has a hunch it might be him....

*

Tony said he had signed up for a free Air Guitar course with "no strings attached...."

*

Dermot said his friend's dog swallowed some Scrabble letters,
and there is "no word yet" from the vet...

*

We heard about a trip to the funfair and the ride on the Ghost Train.
The queue was so long and everyone had to wait for ages.
They only had a Skeleton Staff....



Easter Blessings

May God bless you at Easter,
And keep you all year through.

May God give you all the faith it takes,
To make your dreams come true.

May his love and wisdom always help,

To guide you on your way.

May his light shine down upon you now,
To bless your Easter Day.



Wishing you a blessed and joyful Easter.

From E-NEWS: 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.”



For decades, I have regaled (and no-doubt bored) my family and friends with what I consider Three Rules for a Perfect World. I insist that they work on every level, from global to personal, and every time something fits my model, I announce it with, “See...? If they followed the Three Rules for a perfect world, this never would have

happened!” It has recently occurred to me that the rules also work on a spiritual level. For what it’s worth (and it may not be much!), here they are: my....

Three Rules for a Perfect World

by Celeste Bonfanti

Rule 1: Do Your Job.

Do all of your job. And don’t do anyone else’s.



Globally	Personally	Spiritually
<p>Don’t start a war without an exit plan.</p> <p>Follow the “You-break-it-you-buy-it” code. If you destroy the infrastructure of an enemy nation, know that it’s your duty to restore it before you pull out.</p> <p>Honour your obligations and pacts.</p> <p>Every world leader has one country to run. Avoid attempting to dictate to other sovereign nations (<i>whoever could I be thinking of...?</i>) ~ that is not your job.</p> <p>Don’t create industrial or nuclear waste the world cannot cope</p>	<p>Be conscientious with regard to all your obligations, paid and unpaid.</p> <p>Be thorough and finish what you start.</p> <p>Be detail-oriented ~ living in the Big Picture tends to leave a lot undone.</p> <p>Don’t interfere in others’ jobs ~ stay in your lane, so to speak.</p> <p>Resist the temptation to take over a job delegated to others. If you have told your child to clean her room and she hasn’t, that doesn’t make it your job. How will she learn that you mean business otherwise, and how will she learn how to pick up after herself?</p>	<p>We are given explicit instructions on how to live as Christians. We know our mission.</p> <p>Our faith is not primarily about attending church on Sunday, as much as we may love our liturgy. Our faith is about service and love. Ours is a roll-up-your-sleeves-and-give-it-some-wellie faith, like it or not.</p> <p>I think of JFK’s “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country” speech. We should be asking every day what we can do for our parish, our community and our world.</p>

with. Make clean-up a part of the process.	Create consequences if necessary, but do not jump in.	The Church also needs to own its failings and do its level best to make amends. It is here to bring Christ's kingdom to earth; sadly at times it has inflicted grievous wounds on vulnerable people. A betrayal of trust at the spiritual level is surely a dereliction of duty.
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Rule 2: Communicate Clearly and Effectively.

Communicate your whole message... and no more.

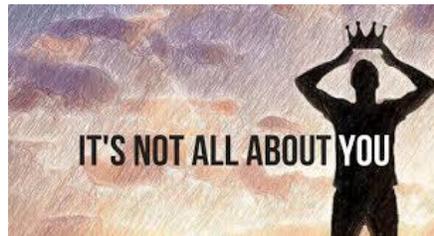


Globally	Personally	Spiritually
<p>Stop believing that subterfuge is a successful strategy in international relations. It isn't. Our most historic global successes have been the result of clear and honest communication on both sides.</p> <p>Recognise that bluster, threats and posturing achieve nothing positive. <i>Au contraire</i>, they foster resentment and ridicule, and can poison future relations. (<i>Again, whoever can I be referring to...?</i>)</p>	<p>How many relationships are ruined by the things left unsaid...? Those unsaid words are like seeds that rot in the ground, bearing no fruit.</p> <p>Explain what you mean; don't assume others understand your message immediately. Other people don't live in your head. Say what needs to be said.</p> <p>Say no more than you mean. We have probably all said things in anger that we later regret. This always happens when the pace of</p>	<p>Jesus said it best: "Let your YES mean YES and your NO mean NO. Anything more is from the Evil One."</p> <p>There are not too many "Pay, Pray and Obey" Christians anymore. Most of the faithful want and need clear communication from the Church. They want to understand what is being asked of them and why it is relevant in our world.</p> <p>I remember standing up and walking out of a parish many years</p>

<p>Effective diplomacy is both honest and respectful.</p> <p>Communication is a two-way street. [Why do we always think it's all about speaking...?] Each nation needs to be as ready to listen as to speak, and that listening needs to be thorough. After all, it's in listening that we gain insight.</p>	<p>communication gets away from us. Take a breath and a beat; let your brain and your heart catch up with your mouth.</p> <p>Listen. Really listen. Don't just wait for your turn to speak.</p>	<p>ago when a deacon told the congregation who to vote for. In that case, he didn't stop at his message; he parroted the words of a politician, which he was not. Once again, stay in your lane. It's a Mass, not a rally.</p> <p>Having said that, we do need to speak clearly and courageously as Christians when we see wrongdoing on any level, personal to political. State your case, by all means ~ but don't profess to think for other people.</p> <p>Remember St. Francis's advice: "Preach the Gospel at all times. If necessary, use words." Our actions speak louder, for sure.</p>
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Rule 3: Remember That It's Not All About You.

Recognise that egocentrism is supposed to be outgrown around age seven.



Globally	Personally	Spiritually
<p>Surely we see examples of the danger of ignoring this rule every day in the headlines [<i>what, him again...?</i>].</p> <p>But it's not just about current events and the way the world's resources are suddenly all</p>	<p>The inability to take the other person's perspective is the root of most interpersonal conflict. We appear developmentally stuck in this regard. Our parents tried their best to teach us this rule, as did every teacher throughout our school years. It's basic but oh, so</p>	<p>"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."</p> <p>"Love your neighbour as yourself."</p> <p>If these directives are not a recipe for the perfect world, I don't know what is.</p>

<p>imperiled by the greed of one man.</p> <p>We would have had none of the abuses of indigenous peoples worldwide if this rule had been followed. So-called First World nations would not have seen the rest of the world through their own biased lens and regarded everything not already theirs as a commodity.</p> <p>Just because you want it and you're strong enough to take it doesn't mean it's right.</p> <p>Adhere to this rule and justice will immediately follow. Crime will plummet. Rampant and egregious income inequality will come to an end. The rainforests of the world would be safe. Poaching would end. The list goes on and on.</p>	<p>hard to master. Resisting it seems an intractable part of human nature.</p> <p>The vast majority of our difficulties would be solved if we and those around us could follow this rule.</p> <p>I remember Enda Lyons saying that one of the problems causing today's marriages to crumble so often is that all too often neither partner had been told "No" often enough in childhood. Both are accustomed to getting their own way so they don't know how to engage in the negotiation and flexibility necessary for a lasting marriage.</p> <p>Anyone who has worked in customer service knows that, with some people, it's all about 'me.'</p> <p>It's easy to see the problem on the road as well. 'I need to get where I'm going ~ damn the torpedoes.'</p> <p>And how often have we received a sharp or sullen response and thought it was directed at us? Chances are excellent it has nothing to do with us. We are not the centre of the universe. As the sign in my retreat house says, "Be kinder than necessary, because everyone you meet is fighting some sort of battle." We simply</p>	<p>Our bountiful, beautiful, God-given world provides more than enough to sustain us and all living things if we can learn to follow this rule.</p>
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	<p>can't take everything personally. It makes no sense.</p>	
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I will go to my grave resolute in my belief that it really is this simple. I truly believe the world would be a much better place if these rules were followed at every level.

Of course, 'simple' and 'achievable' are not at all the same. But what if...? What if we (and world leaders} really did our own jobs thoroughly and without treading on the toes of others? What if we (and world leaders) did communicate effectively in all our interactions? And what if we (and world leaders) constantly reminded ourselves that it isn't, at the end of the day, all about us? But take the world leaders out of it. Wouldn't we ourselves, by dropping our own pebble in the pool, be creating concentric circles of goodness that would radiate into the world and bring just a little bit of the Kingdome to earth...?

I'll bet some of you are already ruminating on your own rules for a perfect world. [Want to submit any for a future issue...? 😊]



I have long admired the poetry of Steve Garnass-Holmes, a retired United Methodist minister with 40 years' experience. These two struck me as perfect for the season. If you'd like to read more of his writing, check out his website: [Steve Garnaas Holmes | The Pastor's Workshop](#)



Jesus Himself Stood Among Them
by Steve Garnaas-Holmes

*Jesus himself stood among them
and said to them, "Peace be with you."
They were startled and terrified,
and thought that they were seeing a ghost.*

—Luke 24. 36-37

Still after all the proof and rehearsals
you startle me.
When I'm forgiven,
or given the opportunity to forgive,
when my wounds shrink under your hand,
when the long unmapped road of grief
leads into a gentle meadow,
I'm not sure what I'm seeing is real.
When you stoop into the wreckage of my life
and reach out to take my hand,
when I have betrayed you and you come to me,
wounded but whole, and bless me,
I can hardly believe.
In my shattered ruins you pick up the pieces,
you gather the dust and breathe life into it
and it takes living form
and it is me, and I am alive and free.
You will understand, then, if like a newborn
I am bewildered, maybe even terrified,
before I come to myself and,
squinting in the light,
cling to you with all my might.



Merciful One,
I enter the garden of your presence

open to the mystery of your love.
The hurt I have caused and the hurt I have borne
I lay to rest in the tomb of your grace.
All resentment, shame, dread and anxiety
I wrap in the linens of your mercy.
All distrust and defiance
I lay in the ground of your patient redeeming.
See if there be any evil in me,
and in your tender mercy lay it to rest.

Dawning One,
let Christ rise in me,
free of all fear, free of the power of doubt
and the shroud of the past.
Let Christ rise to new life in me,
wounded but whole,
radiant, forgiving and alive with your love.
Create me anew: by your grace let there be light.

This is the day you are making;
let me rejoice and be glad in it.



In this feasure, we invite readers to submit beloved prayers. Please send yours!

A Favourite Prayer

Today's Contributor: Anonymous

Let Nothing Disturb You

Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing frighten you.
All things are passing away:

God never changes.
Patience obtains all things.
Whoever has God lacks nothing;
God alone suffices.
Amen.

St. Teresa of Avila



“A lone woman had come to draw water at a well. A Jewish man in that day would never speak to an unknown woman, especially a despised Samaritan. But Jesus was eager to tell her about His “living water.”

[John 4:10]

It sounded wonderful. She wouldn’t have to draw from the well; she’d never be thirsty again. She ran into a snag, however, when Jesus told her to go and bring her husband.

She didn’t lie. “I have no husband,” [4:17] Jesus laid her life before her: five husbands, and a current relationship with one not her husband. When He told her He was the Christ, she believed.

Not only did she go and bring back her companion: she brought the whole town! Jesus stayed two days in the village, offering his living water ~ the good news of God with us.

As the song goes, “Fill my cup, Lord, I lift it up, Lord!”

Carol Knapp in [Walking in Grace 2025: Daily Devotions to Draw You Closer to God](#)



Gift Cards: A Reflection

by Celeste Bonfanti

I have no idea how long it will take for me to fully grasp the fact that I will never again live in Kendal. As I wrote in the last issue, I have taken active steps to cement this reality into my psyche. I expect it is just a matter of time.

I am sure some readers have struggled with fervent prayers made in vain for years and years. This was my one and only. I am well aware that God has his reasons, of course. I'll never know what they are, at least not this side of heaven.

And yet, to have a personal relationship with God, we need total honesty. For me to say, "You know best, Lord," does not ring true to my passionate nature. I am reminded of a story Sr. Marcy Springer told at our retreat house. She is not a proponent of "Thy will be done" prayers. She likened them to taking a child to a toy shop and telling them they can have anything they want, only to have the child reply with a bland, "Oh, anything is okay."

"That's not at all satisfying, is it?" she said. "What you want him to say is, "I want that red fire truck right there!" She believes God truly wants to give us what we most desire, even when it doesn't happen. She thinks an integral part of prayer is stark honesty.

As I grapple with this issue, God gave me a flash of insight.

I have never enjoyed giving gift cards to my loved ones. I love to pick out pressies I think they will really enjoy. I know the generous intention is to let the recipient choose what they want. Maybe the problem is, I don't enjoy shopping at all. I would rather get a gift that isn't really "me" than have to shop.

And yet....

I have been asking God for a gift card.

I wanted to get what I wanted. I didn't ~ and truth to tell I still don't ~ want the gift God has picked out for me.

Like me, God doesn't give gift cards. Like me, he gives the gifts he wants to give with the best of intentions. What looks like unanswered prayer to me is the gift God has given me, and it is churlish to insist that all I wanted was that red fire truck.

I'm hopeful that this insight will help me on my journey toward full acceptance. I think it will.



Scripture scholars contend that the original language of the Beatitudes should not be rendered as "Blessed are the single hearted" or "Blessed are the peacemakers" or "Blessed are those who struggle for justice." Greater precision in translation would say, "You are in the right place if... you are single hearted or work for peace." The Beatitudes is not a spirituality, after all. It's a geography. It tells us where to stand. Compassion isn't just about feeling the pain of others; it's about bringing them in toward yourself. If we love what God loves, then, in compassion, margins get erased. "Be compassionate as God is compassionate" means the dismantling of barriers that exclude.

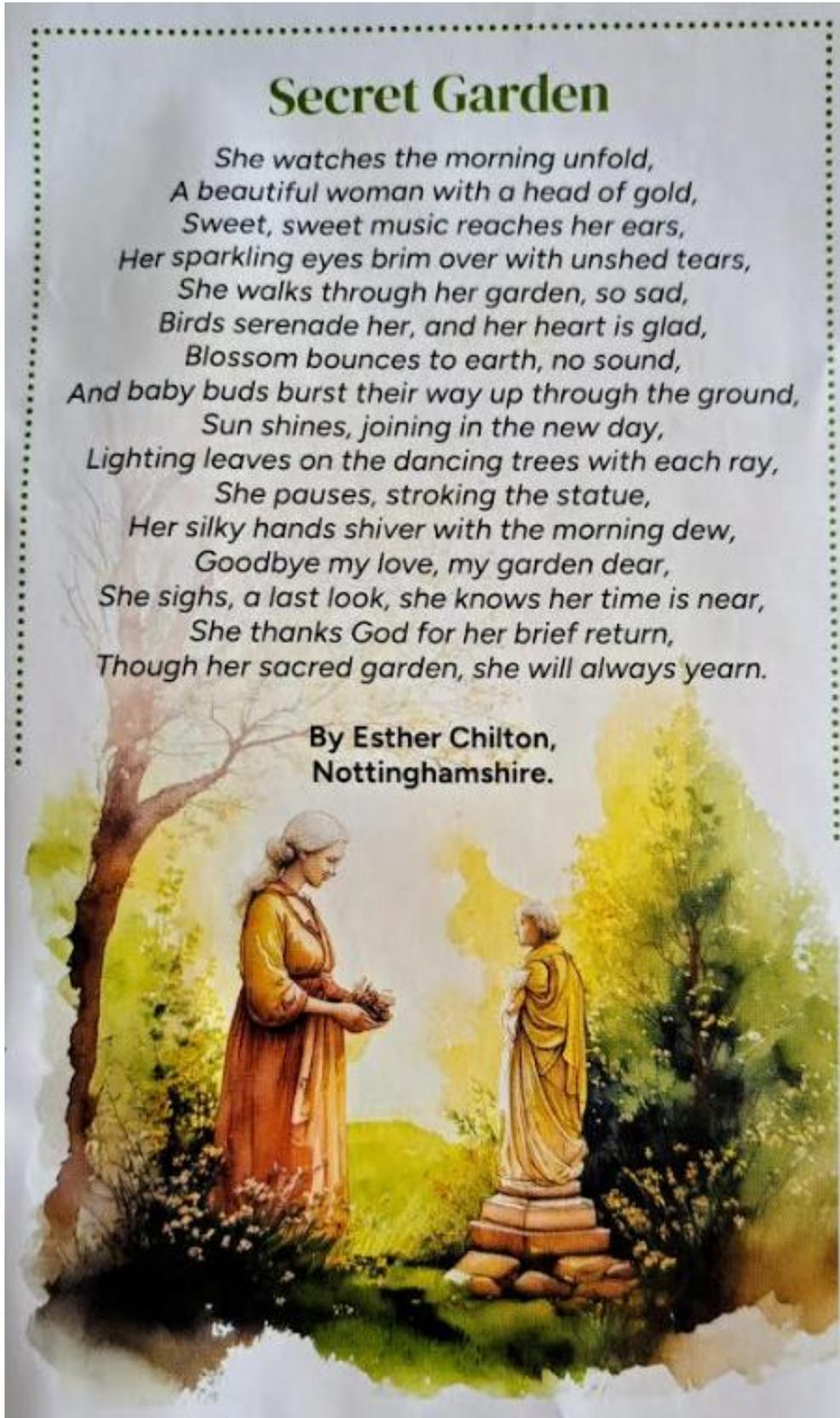
Fr. Greg Boyle in *Tattoos on the Heart*

This was submitted as an email attachment and therefore looks a little different. Many thanks to Emily Bleazard for submitting it and the puzzles!

Secret Garden

*She watches the morning unfold,
A beautiful woman with a head of gold,
Sweet, sweet music reaches her ears,
Her sparkling eyes brim over with unshed tears,
She walks through her garden, so sad,
Birds serenade her, and her heart is glad,
Blossom bounces to earth, no sound,
And baby buds burst their way up through the ground,
Sun shines, joining in the new day,
Lighting leaves on the dancing trees with each ray,
She pauses, stroking the statue,
Her silky hands shiver with the morning dew,
Goodbye my love, my garden dear,
She sighs, a last look, she knows her time is near,
She thanks God for her brief return,
Though her sacred garden, she will always yearn.*

**By Esther Chilton,
Nottinghamshire.**



Much as I love this feature (and I truly do) I don't want its creator and me to be the only contributors! As I mentioned in the last issue, these conversations happen frequently with all of us. Please consider sharing one!

SPEAKING TO STRANGERS

A Feature Established by Anne Townsend

This Issue's Contributor: Celeste Bonfanti

My sister Clare calls my car a rolling opinion. I love bumper stickers. There are probably an equal number of people behind me rolling their eyes and smiling. My stickers are never offensive, but they clearly reflect my love-one-another, give-peace-a-chance views.

When a teacher spends every day in a school, she knows the employees there well, of course. But the nature of my job is peripatetic. I go from school to school, and therefore I never really feel like a full member of any.

Some years ago, I was serving a Deaf boy at a school with an unsmiling ex-Marine of a custodian. I found him quite intimidating although we had never spoken.

One day I was eating lunch in the empty staff room when said custodian came in to empty the bins. I smiled nervously and kept my nose in my book.

Then he said, "Is that your car? The one with all the stickers?"

I inwardly groaned. *Here we go*, I thought. I squared my shoulders and said, "Yes, it is."

To my utter shock, he gave me two thumbs up! "Good on you," he said. "I love it."

We proceeded to have a delightful conversation. He was utterly in line with my views and a funny, easy conversationalist.

Boy, did I learn my lesson that day! We have heard it for years: "You can't judge a book by its cover." Yet I had. Never again. This teacher was well and truly schooled!



***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 would like to look at what I consider the most quintessential of Easter hymns. My principal sources were www.hymnary.org and www.allthelyrics.com.

This Issue's Featured Hymn: Jesus Christ Is Risen Today

I have been a member of seven parishes in my life, and in every one *Jesus Christ Is Risen Today* has been a staple of the Easter season. I love its joy and energy as well as the way, in four short verses, it encapsulates the season.

This hymn was originally a version of the Latin hymn *Surrexit Christus Hodie*, a much longer 14th-century work with many more verses and it was later renamed simply *Easter Hymn*. No one knows who wrote it, and it went through numerous incarnations over the centuries. The only verse which remains of the original is the first; the rest were added/adapted later by various lyricists, including Charles Wesley. The tune, in a more “florid” form, appears in 1708 and was simplified to its present form by John Arnold in Arnold’s Compleat Psalmodist in 1749.

I can practically smell the Easter lilies with this version from the King’s College Choir!

[King's College Choir - Jesus Christ is risen today](#)



Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia!
Our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!
Who did once, upon the cross, Alleluia!
Suffer to redeem our loss, Alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia!
Unto Christ, our heavenly King, Alleluia!
Who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia!
Sinners to redeem and save, Alleluia!

But the pain which He endured, Alleluia!
Our salvation hath procured, Alleluia!
Now above the sky He's king, Alleluia!
Where the angels ever sing, Alleluia!

Sing we to our God above, Alleluia!
Praise eternal as His love, Alleluia!
Praise Him, all you heavenly host, Alleluia!
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Alleluia!



Forgive me for sharing a bit of US (and possibly UK) educational jargon here.

2e: A Reflection

by Celeste Bonfanti

I work for an agency called the Educational Services Unit which is under the umbrella of the Burlington County Special Services School District. We contract with other school districts to provide services such as physiotherapy, speech and language therapy and, in my case, the services of teachers of Deaf and hard of hearing children. For the past two years, we have had a classroom on the Special Services campus. I am constantly telling people that Deaf and hard of children are not Special Education students, otherwise their teachers would be teachers of Special Education. We are not; my certification is specifically for teaching Deaf and hard of hearing children. The fact is that, once the linguistic playing field is leveled, Deaf and hard of hearing children run the gamut: they may need remedial services, they may be gifted, and most are somewhere in between.



Being housed in the Special Services school, however, has made me more cognisant of the issues affecting other students with special needs. And one topic of conversation is the “2e” child. This is a nickname for students who are considered “twice exceptional.” Such students have special needs in one area yet are gifted in one or more others. In less enlightened times, we used the term “*idiot savant*,” I’m afraid. I teach American Sign Language to two classes in this school and I definitely have several 2e pupils. When we were doing a recent project on Deafblind activist Helen Keller and her teacher, Anne Sullivan Macy, one boy who barely reacts to anything at all in class produced the most amazing portrait of Helen, it took my breath away.

The whole 2e concept has got me thinking: I’ll bet we all could use this framework in our quest for spiritual growth. Where are the areas in which we are blessed with success? This doesn’t require a big head! We all have areas of our faith which require less effort to develop. Where are the areas in which we need, and may always need, help?

Speaking personally, I have no trouble making my lists. Here are five items apiece:

THANK GOD, I THINK I’M OK HERE.

I have a very keen moral compass. I don’t think I have trouble determining what is right and what is wrong.

I don’t find it hard to recognise my needy neighbours as brothers and sisters. I am 100% certain my work in the parish thrift shop has helped with this.

I have an inexhaustible supply of patience with

SORRY, GOD. I NEED A HAND.

OK, I can DETERMINE what is right and wrong. Does this mean I can consistently do it...? No. But I do think I’m improving!

I am far less successful in recognising those with opposing political and social views as brothers and sisters, especially when I consider the issues morally crystal clear.

I have absolutely NO patience with those I believe

And its own holy shape,
And the bass and trout hiding in the deep pools of the river
Are canonised by their beauty and their strength.

The lakes hidden among the hills are saints,
And the sea too is a saint who praises God without interruption
In her majestic dance.

The great, gashed, half-naked mountain is another of God's saints.
There is no other like him.
He is alone in his own character;
Nothing else in the world ever did or ever will
Imitate God in quite the same way.
That is his sanctity.

But what about you?
What about me?

Thomas Merton in New Seeds of Contemplation

Which Gospel?

Passiontide and Easter: Part One

by Celeste Bonfanti

This is, of course, the most overwhelming, moving and spiritually rich season in the Church's year and the Gospels all reflect this while shining their own particular colour on the course of events. We are blessed by the fact that the cycles of the synoptic Gospels give us the chance to explore each in turn, but Lent, Passiontide and Easter provide a "skip" in the cycle. The Gospels of Mark and John are particularly highlighted, and they couldn't be more different. Mark is direct and unadorned while John is mystical. In addition, John adds many personal points which bring the story to life. While this Gospel is generally attributed to the *followers* of the Apostle John and not to the apostle himself, he clearly shared many specifics which are included in the account and which lend power and detail in equal portions.

There is far too much to write about here to include in one issue. Therefore, I will start to look at this complex and well-documented portion of the Gospels in this issue and continue it over the next two issues. I'll take it from Palm Sunday through the arrest this time.

Let's look at Palm Sunday. I smile as I write that the Gospels don't agree on which animal Christ rode into Jerusalem! Luke records that he rode a colt.

Both Mark and John say it was a donkey. Matthew? He splits the difference and says Jesus rode both! John really emphasises the frustration of the Pharisees as they lament: "You see, you are making no progress; look,



the whole world has gone after him!” And Luke is the one who quotes Jesus as saying that, if his followers were quiet, “the very stones would cry out.”

All four Gospels mention the conspiracy against Jesus. But John mentions the awful detail that the authorities also planned to kill *Lazarus* because so many people were flocking to Jesus because of the miracle of his raising Lazarus from the dead. John also writes that everyone was wondering whether Jesus would celebrate Passover in Jerusalem and that the authorities told everyone to be on the lookout for him so that he could be arrested if spotted.

Luke mentions that Jesus spent his last days teaching in the Temple and sleeping on the hillside. Those readers who have been to the Holy Land may picture sitting on the hillside, looking across the Kidron Valley to the city of Jerusalem and think of Jesus sleeping there. I know I do.

There is so much written about Maundy Thursday.

- All three synoptic Gospels mention Jesus telling the disciples to inform a man that they need his room in which to celebrate the Passover.
- John’s is the only Gospel that mentions the Washing of the Feet at the Last Supper. It has been proposed that John was dismayed at the fact that the synoptic Gospels placed such an emphasis on the establishment of the Eucharist that ministry and service to others was all but lost (although Luke does include “greatness through service”). Hence the inclusion of this example of Jesus acting as the servant of his disciples. John also records the New Commandment: “You must love one another as I have loved you. It is by your love for one another that everyone will recognise you as my disciples.”
- The variations in how Jesus foretells the treachery of Judas is interesting:
 - In Matthew, it’s “the man who dips into the bowl when I do.”
 - In Mark, it’s “the man who dips into the same bowl as me.”
 - In Luke, it’s “here on the table is the hand of the man who is betraying me....”
 - And in John, it’s “the one to whom I give this piece of bread.”
- When it comes to the foretelling of the denial of Peter:
 - In Matthew and John, it’s “before the cock crows,” and in Luke it’s “*by the time* the cock crows,” which may be no more than a semantic difference.
 - In Mark, it’s “before the cock crows *twice*.”
- Of course, John’s Gospel includes the lengthy and lovely “Priestly Prayer.”
- Regarding the Suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane:
 - Matthew and Mark have Jesus returning to the disciples three times.
 - Luke has Jesus returning to them only once and is the only evangelist who mentions his sweat “like drops of blood.” [Modern science has confirmed this phenomenon under conditions of extreme stress.] He also mentions an angel coming from heaven to give Jesus strength.
 - Surprisingly, John doesn’t mention Gethsemane.
- The Arrest offers a number of conflicting details:
 - All three synoptic Gospels mention Judas’s kiss. John does not.



- Then there is the matter of the high priest's servant's ear. Everyone agrees that it was cut off in the struggle. Matthew and Luke say the perpetrator was "one of his followers." In Mark, it's "one of the bystanders." John names Peter. [I have heard it argued that a poor fisherman would not have had a sword and that, in fact, such weapons were expressly forbidden by the Romans.] John and Luke include the details that it was the servant's right ear. John tells us that the servant's name was Malchus. And Luke the physician mentions that Jesus says, "That is enough," and heals the man. I remember being deeply relieved about this when I was a child.

In the next issue, we will look at the events which follow through the Crucifixion, and in the autumn issue, we will look at the Resurrection stories. So for us, the Easter season will extend far beyond Pentecost!



Grant, O Lord, your protection;
 and in your protection, strength;
 and in your strength, understanding;
 and in your understanding, knowledge;
 and in knowledge, the knowledge of justice;
 and in the knowledge of justice, your love of it;
 and in that love, the love of existence;
 and in the love of all existence, the love of God,
 the God of all goodness.

Early Welsh

With That Moon Language

Admit something:
Everyone you see, you say to them,
"Love me."
Of course, you do not do this out loud; Otherwise,
someone would call the cops.
Still though, think about this,
This great pull in us to connect.
Why not become the one
Who lives with a full moon in each eye
That is always saying
With that sweet moon
Language
What every other eye in this world
Is dying to
Hear.

Hafez Shirazi

1325 ~ 1390



In a world where one could be persuaded that darkness is winning, sending us into a downward spiral of despair, it is comforting to know that we are connected to Jesus even when he seems hidden and our vision becomes dimmed. What a promise that we all have access to a perfectly self-directed Saviour! And like the sun, when he rises in us, darkness has no choice but to flee.

Heavenly Father, when the world seems ensconced in darkness, help me remember that you have already sent the Light.

Jacqueline F. Wheelock in Walking in Grace 2025: Daily Devotions to Draw You Closer to God



I have included excerpts from the “Little Book” series in the magazine from time to time. They are produced by the Diocese of Saginaw, Michigan, USA and often given away free in American parishes. This reflection is from Lent 2023.

From “The Little Black Book: Six-Minute Meditations on the Passion According to Luke”

Homeless Jesus

When the “Jesus the Homeless” statue first was installed in front of St. Alban’s Episcopal Church in Davidson, North Carolina, in 2014, in the middle of an upscale neighbourhood, someone called the police to report a homeless person sleeping on a park bench.

At first glance, the bronze statue looks like a homeless person under a blanket. But the crucifixion wounds on Jesus’ uncovered feet reveal his true identity.

Catholic Canadian artist Timothy Schmalz created the sculpture after seeing a homeless person wrapped in a blanket to stay warm. He was struck by the thought: *This is Jesus.*

Initially, the statue ~ inspired by Matthew 25 ~ was homeless. Two Catholic churches, one in Toronto and another in New York, rejected it.

But Pope Francis received and blessed the original wooden model in November 2013. Now, installations of the statue can be found in cities all over the world, including Chicago, Orlando, Rome and Dublin.

Some people love the statue. Others are troubled by it.

St. Mother Teresa once said, “I see Jesus in every human being.... I say to myself, this is hungry Jesus. I must feed him. This is sick Jesus. This one has leprosy or gangrene; I must wash him and tend to him.”



A Prayer for Hope

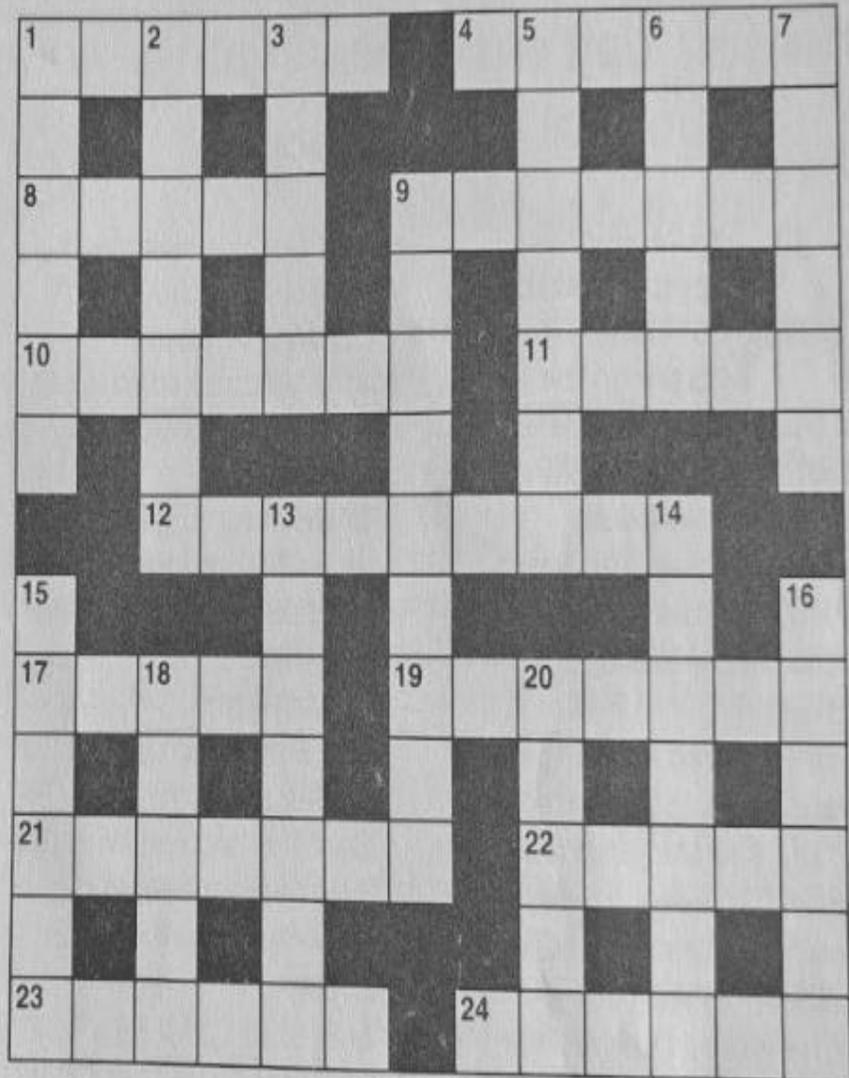
written in the Jubilee Year of Hope

God of all love, at times I am in darkness and worry with uncertainty. Fill my heart with hope and strength that you are with me always. Your love and your grace are enough for me. Help me to be a source of hope for others. Our Lady of Hope, pray for me.

Puzzle Pages

ACROSS

- 1 Religious book for girl, a novice (6)
- 4 Nudge on time? (6)
- 8 Feel cry of pain after time (5)
- 9 Meander around, given new title (7)
- 10 Beethoven is only eating meat (7)
- 11 Suffer, given some plain curry (5)
- 12 Casually arriving at a ball? (7,2)
- 17 Sicken buddy following snake's disembowelment (5)
- 19 Trio leader's peculiar favourite instrument (7)
- 21 House-holder puts strange boy outside (7)
- 22 Live with daughter by spring (5)
- 23 Hear about promotion of capital city (6)
- 24 Continue to shed tears about a colouring pencil (6)



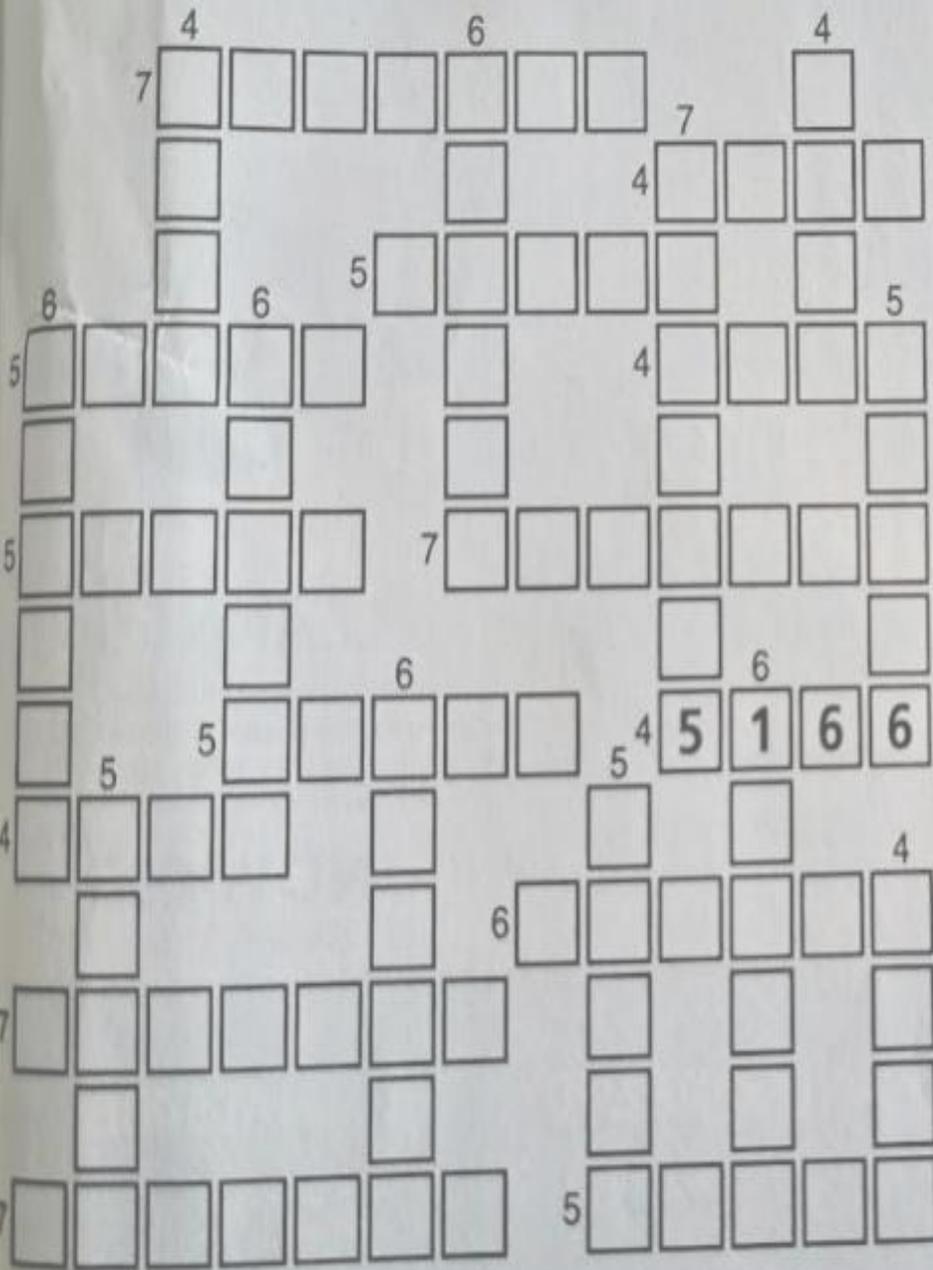
DOWN

- 1 Propose putting it back inside for a reason (6)
- 2 Very attractive thing with a taser? (7)
- 3 Sporting trophy remains (5)
- 5 Splitting call about result (7)

- 6 French girl caught with impersonator (5)
- 7 University department head involved in sort-out of 16th-century rulers (6)
- 9 Endlessly call boy detective in search of screen dog (3,3,3)
- 13 Perhaps I'll pay daughter for a pond leaf (4,3)
- 14 Sergeant finds last of curry hot (7)
- 15 Look for waterbird (6)
- 16 Russian leader in last revolution (6)
- 18 Brash, yet modest after higher return (5)
- 20 Communist turns on international organisation below (5)

Number Fit

Can you fit the listed digits into the grid?



4 digits

2572

3536

4486

~~5166~~

6025

6347

6925

6 digits

178647

432367

468245

574616

671679

801814

7 digits

3325285

3372873

6573683

8786830

9502410

5 digits

26086

38776

41383

44464

44686

51541

90123

93743

THE HOLY SPIRIT WORD SEARCH

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

ANOINTING

GUIDANCE

PEACE

SANCTIFICATION

BAPTISM

HEALING

PENTECOST

SPIRIT

COMFORTER

HOLY

POWER

TRANSFORMATION

CONVICTION

INSPIRATION

PRESENCE

TRUTH

COUNSELOR

INTERCESSION

PROPHECY

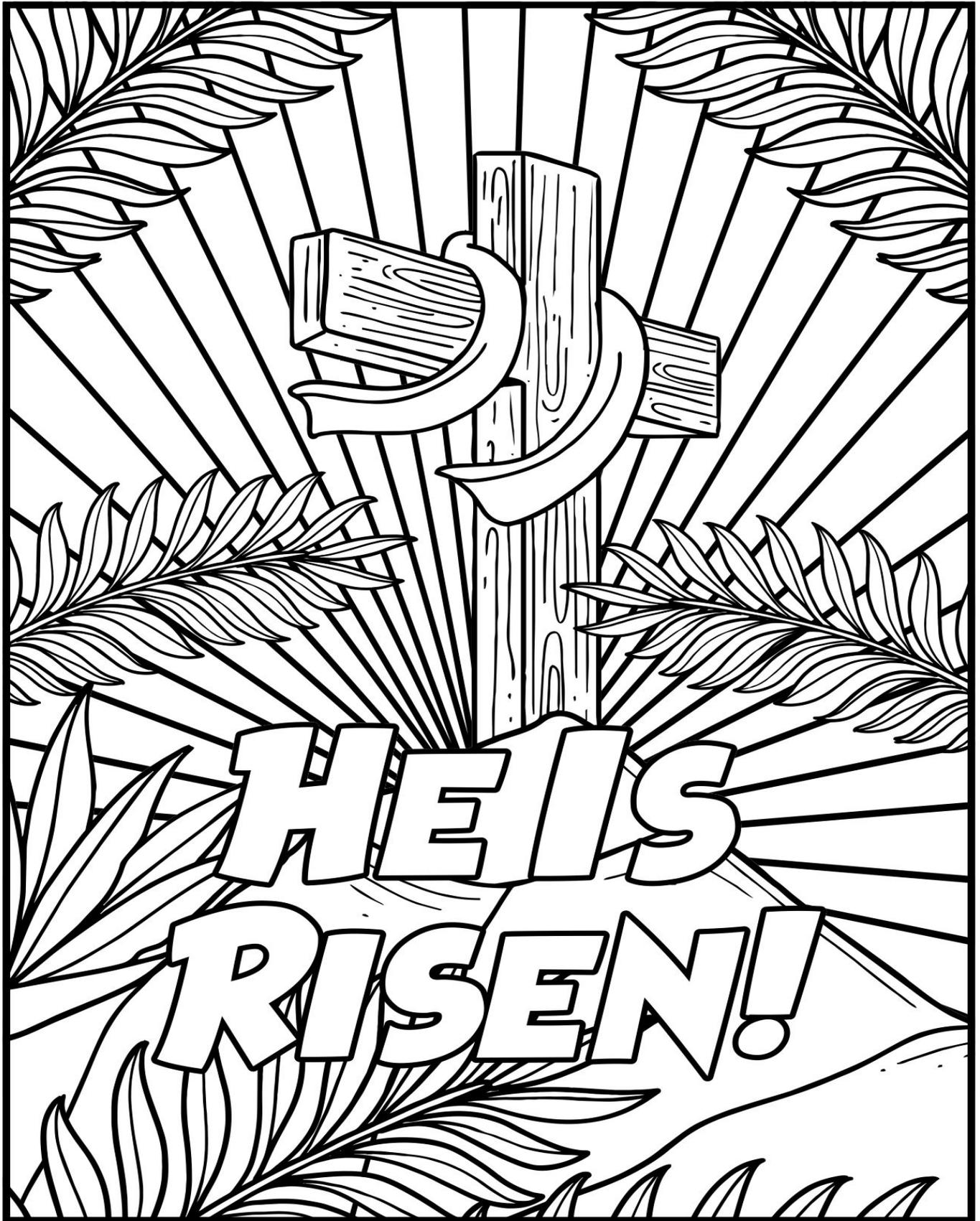
UNITY

FRUIT

LOVE

REVELATION

WISDOM



HAPPY EASTER

