

Holy Trinity and St. George Parish Magazine

Summer 2026



“All in all, it was a never-to-be-forgotten summer – one of those summers which come seldom into any life, but leave a rich heritage of beautiful memories in their going – one of those summers which, in a fortunate combination of delightful weather, delightful friends and delightful doing, come as near to perfection as anything can come in this world.”

– Lucy Maud Montgomery

Issue 37

Suggested Donation: £1

Marvelous Malala

Dear Friends:

Thank you for remembering my sister in your prayers. She is in the midst of treatment, having completed radiotherapy and taking the promising immunotherapy tablet. She is as yet unable to commence chemotherapy due to various factors. We're hopeful it can start soon.

As you may know, in the US, alongside network, cable, satellite and streaming services in the media landscape, we have "public broadcasting," telly and radio stations available to all and supported by those of us who value it. I am a member of the public broadcasting station in Philadelphia, WHYY, and when my busy schedule permits I take the train to the city to volunteer at events there.

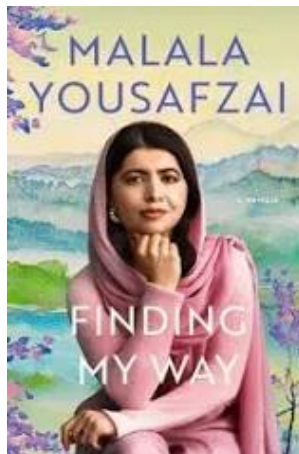
Recently I was able to help out at an event I will always remember: the station was honouring Malala Yousafzai with the 2026 Lifelong Learning Award at the tender age of 28. We scurried around helping those who had paid generous sums toward Malala's initiative to promote education for girls worldwide, and while we volunteers did not meet this living legend, we were able to see the interview which preceded the award-giving.

She discussed many things with Terry Gross, the station's premiere interviewer, including her new book, Finding My Way, her time at Oxford, marriage, PTSD, the struggles she continues to have balancing multiple cultures, etc. We were rapt. But for me, the most memorable and profound impression was her quiet dignity and courage. When asked whether she was ever afraid leading such a public life when the men who attempted to murder her fourteen years ago had done their time and were now walking free, she paused and then said that, while she was well aware of the dangers, her mission to open doors for powerless girls was far more important. All I could think of was Mary's "yes." In these times when so many leaders are anything but admirable, this soft-spoken girl is a towering figure of honour and bravery.

It's been a while since we have had an issue, hasn't it? I hope it's worth waiting for! My thanks to our contributors **Raymond Daley**, **Pamela Boyes** and **Richard Hannant**.

I look forward to seeing many of you in August! Meanwhile, take care.

Celeste



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The Parish Magazine and You

by Celeste Bonfanti

Here we are again, meeting between the pages of our little magazine. Our regular contributors and I appreciate your readership and, as always, invite you to be part of the action! For those of you who like to write, the possibilities are endless! Our readers are clamouring for articles of local interest, so I am especially pleased that Richard Hannant submitted his article on Kendal Market. But formulating a full article may be daunting for some. For those parishioners, we have a number of “bite-sized” ways to contribute:

- Talking to Strangers: *Had an interesting encounter? Tell us about it!*
- Christian Messages in Popular Culture: *Heard a song or a movie line which resonated with you? Please share!*
- This Issue’s Featured Hymn: *Tell us why it’s your favourite.*
- Ministry Updates: *We’d love to read about the good work you are doing!*
- A Favourite Prayer: *Let us see what moves you.*
- Our New Feature, Simple Pleasures: No need to get all spiritual here!
- Holiday Adventures
- Reflections on Retrets or Days of Recollection
- Poetry
- Recipes
- Puzzles
- Quizzes
- Book Reviews
- Cartoons



I thoroughly enjoy working on the magazine and love the connection it gives me to the parish I love. I have a fat satchel of items for future issues, so we are never likely to run out of material! But it was never my intention to write/contribute the lion’s share of our features. Everyone most enjoys those issues with numerous voices and points of view. So don’t be shy! Send something in for an upcoming issue! I am happy to help with the editing, formatting, etc. and can add the graphics for you.

We hope the breakdown of issues works for you. At present we have issues in:

- ❖ Winter
- ❖ Lent/Easter/Spring
- ❖ Summer
- ❖ Autumn
- ❖ Advent/Christmas

Our deadlines are most flexible in winter, summer and autumn; we are forced to be timelier for the Lent/Easter/Spring and Advent/Christmas issues due to the liturgical calendar.

The magazine has come a long way over the years and hopefully it will continue to improve with the input of a growing number of readers and contributors.



Focus on the Loving

by Keri Joy Walker

Waking in the morning
I'm starting a new day
If worries come to visit
I let love send them away

As the day progresses
If it puts me to the test
I focus on the loving
And let go of all the rest

There is a greater truth
That's not defined by me
I choose to see the loving
For love created me

Christian Messages in Popular Culture

This Issue's Medium: Film

This Issue's Contributor: Celeste Bonfanti

I am a major cinema buff. I lament the closure of so many cinemas as everyone stays home to watch whatever they want. I will never forget my friend Jo and I tramping through the cold on Christmas Eve to watch the Brewery screening of "It's a Wonderful Life," only to be turned away at the door as it was sold out! I still think the communal experience of seeing a good film with strangers on the big screen is worth paying for. But I must admit, my friend Dawn and I can be found most Saturday nights with a bowl of popcorn, my sleepy cat between us, lights out, telly on, diving deeply into a film.

One film we greatly enjoy is 1994's "The Shawshank Redemption." It is based on the Stephen King short story "Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption" and is an intense, memorable and ultimately inspiring prison drama. For more on this film, see [The Shawshank Redemption \(1994\) - IMDb](#), where it was awarded 9.3 /10

stars. It garnered three Academy Award nominations. The cast is very strong and includes Tim Robbins, Morgan Freeman [nominated for Best Actor] and James Whitmore.

The film has several notable and oft-quoted lines. My favorite is delivered by Andy Dufresne [Robbins], who tells “Red” Redding [Freeman]: “I guess it comes down to a simple choice, really. Get busy living or get busy dying.”

This line resonates with me personally: most of my family and friends think I am too busy living! I am, I must confess, at the end of my capacity for adding strings to my bow. The current menu of activities includes teaching, tutoring, running the parish thrift shop, running a social group for Deaf and hard of hearing children and youth, active membership in the Associates in Ministry of the Sisters of St. Joseph, reading and singing the litany at church, serving on the playreading committee for the local dramatics society, membership in a writers circle, writing and publishing my plays and editing this magazine!



But of course, I see the quote as a Christian call to action. I clearly remember as a teen coming to the realisation that confirmation gave me a duty. We are all called to be “priests, prophets and kings” in our own space, in our own way. Sealed by the Spirit, we have been given a mission, and it is up to us to discern what it is and to fulfill it to the best of our ability.

Let’s face it, friends: the world has never been more in need of dynamic action on behalf of the downtrodden and powerless. Anyone who believes that our faith begins and ends with gathering to worship together on Sundays is, I fear, missing the mark. We are Christ’s eyes, ears, hands, feet and voice in our world today. We are called to be labourers in the vineyard, not spectators. As someone once said, “Jesus didn’t say, ‘Worship me.’ He said, ‘Follow me.’” We have a God-given job to do. There is not a ministry or community outreach organisation which could not benefit from our involvement (and I know Raymond is nodding his head vigourously as he reads!)

Frankly stated, it’s simply not time to “get busy dying!” Our time and talents are needed to further the Kingdom!

A whole lot of us go through life assuming that we are basically right, basically all the time, about basically everything: about our political and intellectual convictions, our religious and moral beliefs, our assessment of other people, our memories, our grasp of facts. As absurd as it sounds when we stop to think about it, our steady state seems to be one of unconsciously assuming that we are very close to omniscient.

Kathryn Schulz



I know you all appreciate Pamela's contributions. But I need you to understand how faithful she is to our little magazine! She sends me contributions while she is on holiday, when she is ill... she is remarkably faithful! And I thoroughly enjoyed both Brian Bilston poems as well as the travelogue. Thank you, Pamela!

Pamela's Pages



This May we had two trips to Ireland, visiting the Republic and later Northern Ireland, with our family. And no matter how many times we visit, we see and enjoy new and interesting places alongside the old and familiar.

We have always found it relatively easy to get to a Mass in Ireland, whether it's in a local church in the town or city where we are staying as our base, or in a chapel, an abbey or a monastery that invites the public to join their communities for Mass and prayer. Kylemore Abbey in County Galway, the home of a community of Benedictine nuns, is an example, and one we enjoyed visiting a few years ago.



This year, while staying in Mullaghmore, we went to a Sunday Vigil Mass in a chapel housed in what was previously the convent and home to the Sisters of Mercy (originally from Sligo).

The Sisters of Mercy have a deep historical presence in Mullaghmore, County Sligo. In 1929, they purchased four three-storey lodges that had been burned down during the War of Independence. They converted them into a convent with accommodation for thirty sisters. A further plot was purchased in 1935, and this supplied vegetable and potatoes for the convent.

In the 1970's, the convent began opening its doors for holidays, retreats and days of renewal. A major overhaul took place in the late 1990's, and in 2010 a Peace and Reconciliation Garden was developed, later acting

as a meeting place for locals, visitors and royalty. The then-Prince Charles and Camilla visited in 2015.

In 2013, due to declining numbers, the sisters handed the convent over to the Diocese of Elphin, while continuing its legacy as a retreat centre. The building now operates as the Star of the Sea Retreat and Conference Centre, offering Christian retreats, healing services and hospitality. It does not have its own resident parish priest but is served by the parish priest based in the neighbouring village of Grange, where Masses are more frequent.

It's a lovely chapel and was full, on the Saturday evening we attended Mass: a thriving community boosted by regular holiday visitors, many who (the priest told us) come back year after year for the summer season.



*Stella Maris, a serene retreat
by the Irish Coast*



It's located among lovely gardens on the south side of Donegal Bay. It is a modern friary built in the 1950's and set in beautiful, tranquil gardens that are open to the public, with access to the beach behind the friary. A parishioner told us, smiling, that this was his regular morning walk after Mass. Lucky fellow.



The original friary (founded in 1474 by Nuala O'Connor and her son, the chieftain "Red" Hugh O'Donnell) was not located in Rossnowlagh, but rather on the outskirts of Donegal Town, where the River Eske meets Donegal Bay. The ruins can still be seen in the town centre.



The modern friary was built in 1952 to re-establish the Franciscan presence in the county after a gap of nearly a century! As well as the beautiful shrines starting with the Annunciation and ending with the Nativity, the Sacred Heart Garden and others, there is "The Way of the Cross" walk. To quote *The Lonely Planet*, "The Way of the Cross ...a religious walk with spectacular views meanders up a hillside smothered in rhododendrons. The sense of quietude and calmness is enticing." Sadly and disappointingly, it was taped off when we were there (for safety reasons), but we will be back!



It has an active and friendly community, with daily Masses, and has a lovely and well-stocked piety shop which is open seven days a week. In establishing a friary at Rossnowlagh, it was the aim of the Franciscans to provide a place where people could come to pray and to find peace, and they do, from all over the world. It has become one of Ireland's most beloved retreat houses.

Brian Bilston (the Banksy of Poetry)

He is described as the Poet Laureate of Twitter (now X) by his many followers and a laureate of our fractured times. His work is witty and clever, blending gentle humour with poignant social commentary. His pieces are also usually short, making them incredibly easy to digest and share. Hope you enjoy reading these two poems as much as I do; the free verse "Book Group" is one of my favourites: so clever.

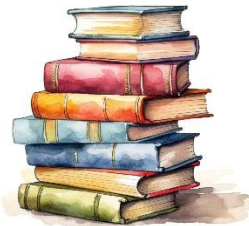
Prayer for Uninteresting Times



Send me a slow news day,
a quiet, subdued day,
in which nothing much happens of note,
save for the passing of time,
the consumption of wine,
and a re-run of *Murder, She Wrote*.

Grant me a no-news day,
a spare-me-your-views day,
in which nothing much happens at all,
except a few hours together
some regional weather,
a day we can barely recall.

Book Group



The last Thursday of every month was Book Group,
when the books would gather together to discuss Brian.

“It’s no fun here anymore,” remarked *Bleak House*, glumly,
“Why doesn’t he read us?” whined the *Grapes of Wrath*. “It makes me so angry.”
“I’m sure he only bought us so he can show me off to his friends.”

“I bet he can’t even remember my name, *The Idiot*,”
muttered a voice from the Russian literature section.
“That’s because he avoids you like *The Plague*,” said another.
“*C’est vrail*” came a cry. “It is like I do not exist.”

“Let’s not give up on him yet.” It was *Brave New World*.
After some *Persuasion*, they agreed to give him one last chance.
“Be quiet!” cried *Waiting for Godot* with *Great Expectations*.
“Here he comes now!”

Brian entered the room with his phone.
He sat down and watched some videos of baby pandas falling over.
After an hour or so he started googling cats dressed as celebrities.

On the shelf, the books waited with uncracked spines,
their silence speaking volumes.

At this time of writing my contributions for the magazine, we have just come back from Belfast! I won’t comment on what we saw on the news just a week after we had returned home, other than to say how shocked we all were, having just visited the area of the current troubles!

We had a lovely break in Belfast, visiting the Giant’s Causeway and the *Titanic* Museum, but for Graham and I, the highlight was the Sunday morning 7:00 AM Mass at Clonard Monastery (home to a community of Redemptorists) in West Belfast, situated in the Falls area. It was lovely to be finally in the church we visit online. It’s a beautiful church with an active and multicultural community ~ a very well-attended church, even



at the daily 7:00 AM Mass. The people are friendly and we felt very much at home. Parishioners stopped to chat, and we had offers of a lift back to our hotel as we waited in the porch, out of the rain, for our taxi to return for us.

Positioned along the interface between the Catholic Falls Road and Protestant Shankill Road, the monastery found itself directly on the frontline, and the monks regularly acted to protect local residents during outbreaks of violence. It also played a highly significant, quiet role in the Northern Ireland peace process. Clergy from the monastery, most notably Frs. Alec Reid and Gerry Reynolds, facilitated secret, foundational talks that paved the way for the 1994 ceasefire.



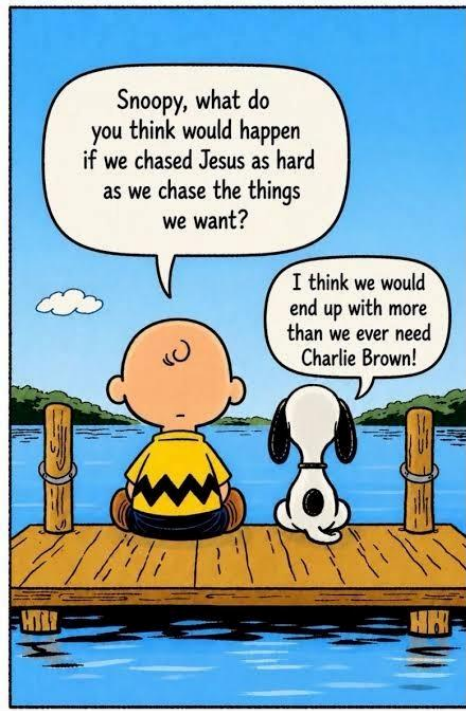
Later on after breakfast, we all took the bus to “Cupar Way,” West Belfast, to see the “Peace Wall.” This is the most famous, accessible and heavily-decorated section where the barrier separates the Protestant/Loyalist Shankill Road from the Catholic/Nationalist Falls Road.

On Bombay Street, just off Cupar Street and a short walk from the monastery, is The Clonard Martyrs Memorial Garden, dedicated to civilians, political activists and IRA members from the Greater Clonard area who died during the Troubles.



Give peace in our time, O Lord:
peace and reconciliation among the nations;
peace and unity within the churches;
peace and harmony in our communities and our homes;
peace and love in all our hearts;
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

AMEN



This is a new feature offering short, simple pics of those moments in life when some everyday thing has an outsized, positive influence on your day. It is inspired by the Rob Thomas song "Little Wonders," [[Rob Thomas - Little Wonders \[Official Music Video\]](#) ~ don't bother with the visuals which relate to the animated film "Meet the Robinsons"]. I heard the song for the first time in January when my friend and I went to a benefit concert Thomas and his wife held for homeless animals. He laughed about how, when he was bone-tired after a show, his dog still wanted a walk and, when he complied, the pup looked up at him in utter delight as if to say, "Dad! We're WALKING!" 😊

Simple Pleasures

This Issue's Contributor: Celeste Bonfanti

Ever since I was a child, the silliest thing has given me a tremendous amount of satisfaction: simply running out of something ~ anything from shampoo to cereal ~ and having the replacement already purchased and waiting. It's dumb, I do realise that! And I have always wondered why on earth this everyday occurrence gives me such a jolt of pleasure.

I think it has something to do with a sense of competence, preparedness: "I planned for this and it will not throw me into a tizzy, I'm ready!" But maybe there's a deeper source.

My parents grew up during the Great Depression and knew real want. although they always agreed neither of them felt "poor" because everyone around them was as well. My mother remembered with utter

clarity their family being evicted when they couldn't pay the rent and her mother's shame when the neighbours saw all their worldly goods on the pavement.

My father, though he never benefitted from higher education, was a wonderful provider and we wanted for nothing growing up. But my parents were keenly aware of waste. Plates left the dinner table clean as we ate what was served (although my mother permitted us a tiny "no-thank-you portion" if it was something we didn't want!)

So maybe this simple pleasure of mine relates to that: simply having enough was a source of deep satisfaction for them when placed against the backdrop of real poverty. Maybe something of my grandparents' immigrant souls has remained in me.

Whatever the source, this morning as I reached for the coffee and a new supply was waiting, I reveled in this simple pleasure and sent a quick prayer up to the parents and grandparents: "I planned for this and it will not throw me into a tizzy, I'm ready!"



The Personalist Communitarian

by Peter Maurin

A personalist
is a go-giver,
not a go-getter.
He tries to give
what he has,
And does not
try to get
what the other fellow has.
He tries to be good
by doing good
to the other fellow.
He is altro-centred,
not self-centred.
He has a social doctrine
of the common good
Through words and deeds.
He speaks through deeds
as well as words,
for he knows that deeds
speak louder than words.
Through words and deeds

he brings into existence
a common unity,
the common unity
of a community.



Raymond Daley for this SVP update. The horrors facing asylum seekers worldwide is an issue the Pope is trying to keep front and centre and which should weigh on the hearts and minds of us all.



This SVP Social Justice Campaign is to end the inhumane treatment of Asylum Seekers. This is a joint campaign with our friends at Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN), Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and other Christian organisations and communities across the country,

Today, people seeking asylum in the UK are facing laws and policies that deny their dignity.

Families are kept apart. People are forced into poverty and isolation. Many live in fear, unable to rebuild their lives even after being recognised as refugees.

As Christians, we cannot accept a system that treats people as problems to be managed rather than neighbours to be welcomed.

Together, we can build a society that welcomes, protects and stands alongside people seeking safety.

Together with our friends at Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) and Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and other Christian organisations and communities across the country, we're calling on the UK Government to:

END IMMIGRATION DETENTION and support people through their asylum claims in the community. Every year, tens of thousands of people are incarcerated without time limit in prison-like conditions for the purpose of administering immigration procedures. ***We don't want to be a society that treats people like this.***

RESTORE THE RIGHT TO ASYLUM so that everyone seeking safety has their claim heard fairly. All of us deserve to live in safety and dignity. *If we were ever forced from our own homes, we would want the opportunity to rebuild our lives safely elsewhere.*

PUT DIGNITY AND PROTECTION AT THE HEART OF THE ASYLUM SYSTEM to allow people to live, work and rebuild their lives in community. Everyone wants to live safely in community and to access essential services without fear.

When people arrive in the UK they are often met with a system that forces people to live in limbo for years, unable to plan or work for the future.

**Refugees are forced to flee their home because of war, persecution and violence.
This is not a choice - it's to protect their lives.**

This is not inevitable: it's the result of political choices, and political choices can change.

With increasingly hostile policies and rhetoric undermining the ability of refugees to rebuild their lives, urgent action is needed now.

That's why, as Christians, we're standing together this summer – through prayer, public witness, and advocacy – to defend the right to asylum.



If you have five minutes... Send a postcard to the Prime Minister asking him to restore the right to asylum, end immigration detention, and put dignity and protection at the heart of the asylum system. Put up a poster to show your support for refugees in your church, school, or workplace. Request postcards or posters at www.jrsuk.net/defend-asylum.

If you have fifteen minutes... Write to your MP, asking them to defend refugees in Parliament.

For further information visit www.svp.org.uk

Raymond Daley
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The world of learning is so broad, and the human soul is so limited in power! We reach forth and strain every nerve, but we seize only a bit of the curtain that hides the infinite from us.

Maria Mitchell

Unable to ignore the big orange elephant in the room, I can at least limit my political angst to a single article which you can easily skip, should you choose!

The Politics of Gardening

by Celeste Bonfanti

My garden is a lovely place. The landlady is a keen gardener herself, but for this property she employs a team of landscapers. They were here for the big summer clear-out this week and the place is worthy of a magazine, with roses of various colors, day lilies, my butterfly and pollinator bed and happy flowering pots. Pansies and petunias have even seeded themselves in the cracks between the bricks of the patio and are blooming happily there.

I do my best to keep the garden looking beautiful. I love to read my paper out there with a cuppa and



look for the baby bunny who comes to call, to listen to the wind in the trees and catch a waft of the many scents of the natural world. But the proverbial rose is not without its thorn. It has become increasingly difficult to rescue the lilies and shrubs from an insidious vine which arrived some years ago and returns each spring, doing its best to overrun everything. I don't know its name, but gardeners all over town have been battling the same problem, and it's a source of colossal frustration.

What powers me through hot, sticky session after hot, sticky session in the garden?

Political rage.

And I assure you, I have never spent so much time in gardening gloves.

I need not tell you what a nightmare the current Administration in Washington is. We are sharing our misery with the rest of the world. And I channel my frustration into my gardening, adopting a phrase from our free church neighbours as I yank out the hateful vine: "Not today, Satan!"

As I work, it has become clear to me that my observations and efforts in the garden have become a metaphor for the work we all have to do to combat the political darkness in these unprecedented times. Here are some of the things which have occurred to me:

- **The most destructive things can actually look pretty good on the face of it.** My nasty vine is rather attractive, with heart-shaped leaves and delicate tendrils. Yet, if I don't go out several times a week to do battle with it, it will quickly overrun and kill all the beautiful things in the garden. In the same way, to some, the "Make America Great Again" message is a positive rallying cry and not a movement hellbent on destroying most of what is good in this country. [Don't ask me: I have no idea how (if?) they think.]
- **What starts as a small danger can quickly become unstoppable if we are not careful.** My garden parasite starts as a very tender, tiny curl. Yet each year, the attacks of this vine become more coordinated and destructive. This year, it has "learned" how to entwine itself together strand upon strand into a thick rope. It spirals up its chosen victim, then divides to try to choke the hapless plant from multiple angles at once. The lilies are in particular danger as the strands wrap themselves around the heavy buds. Unwinding the vine, it is very difficult not to damage the very plants I am working so hard to save. Those of us in the Northeast have known Donald Trump for decades as a snake oil salesman

and real estate cheat, and we rolled our eyes at his running for President. Yet here we are, with a toxic, addled narcissist at the top of the power pyramid (AGAIN!), doing his best to ruin the country and much of the world. His victims are many. Some lives he gleefully intends to ruin, but there is plenty of collateral damage as well. Just ask the farmers who voted for him and who now have no one to pick their crops as their reliable help is rounded up and either incarcerated in appalling conditions or deported, leaving many wives and children stateside.

- **The insidious problem grows with assistance from the most innocuous support.** Sprouting here and there among the lilies and shrubs, there are plants which could, under other circumstances, grow innocently beside them and cause them no harm. But the vine uses these plants as props to get to its intended victim. There are plenty of good people who, wittingly or unwittingly, aid and abet the Administration in its war on American values and ideals. Many are single-issue voters who consider themselves “right to life,” by which they mean “right to birth.” They mean no harm. Yet their support, in these days of razor-thin majorities, opens the door to wholesale destruction: senseless wars, an end to foreign aid and a host of other policies which cause irreparable harm to hundreds of thousands of innocent people all over the globe.



- **Mass efforts to stop the destruction are ineffective and dangerous. The work requires individual efforts.** If I spray chemical herbicides on this hateful vine, it will harm the lovely plants it is attacking. I will throw the baby out with the bathwater, as it were, and imperil the fauna as well. The only way to win this garden war is for me to untwine the vine by hand from each plant and shrub and yank it out to the best of my ability. The mass demonstrations we have seen throughout Trump’s second term, while somewhat encouraging as a bellwether of public opinion, feed into the narrative that the opposition is a noisy gong, braying about what they are against while remaining light on specifics as to a viable alternative. The Democratic Party has not been able to take advantage of the discontent in the general public. Its poll numbers (though improving) are dismal. What works is dialogue and interpersonal contact, person to person conversation, reasoned discourse (of which, it should be clear by now, I am incapable in my current state of apoplectic rage) across the political aisle. Joe America can hate “immigrants”; it’s much harder for him to hate Jose, the friendly greengrocer.
- **It’s easy to be overwhelmed by the enormity of the task.** My impotent political ire regularly carries me through punishingly hot temperatures, insect attacks and exhaustion. It is a wonderful source of motivation when I’m tired and busy with a dozen other chores. But I must confess, there are times, when I have been working in the garden for ages and look up to see another seventeen vine clusters which need attention, when I want to sit in the grass and weep. This Administration unleashes a water cannon of outrageous attacks on its population and on democracy itself, literally on a daily basis. There are countless lawsuits inching their way through the courts. When they don’t go Trump’s way, there are immediate appeals which usually allow the status quo to stand for the present. A new day brings a new menu of horrors and new lawsuits trying to stem the tide. The task is seemingly endless. People are shellshocked. And this, according to my hands-down favourite politician, Pete Buttigieg, is exactly what

the Administration is counting on as they go about their busy way, burning the house down. An overwhelmed opponent is an ineffective opponent.



- **Eradication of the problem is almost certainly impossible.** It is depressing to admit this, but hard as I try, it is rare when I can actually uproot the vine. It is too tender; it breaks in my hand with the root system intact and mounts a new assault within days. All I can do in most instances is nip it close to the ground and buy myself and my plants a bit of time before it returns. Most Americans have high hopes that the midterm elections in November may stop the bleeding brought about by all three branches of government ~ the venal Executive, the supine majority in Congress and the largely hand-picked Supreme Court ~ working in concert to realise the radical right-wing agenda to which we have all been subjected. But I harbour no illusions that, however effectively

the snake is defanged, we will resume the largely harmonious reality we seem to have enjoyed in the past (you know, back in the halcyon days when people who storm the Capitol and beat police officers with poles are brought to justice). And I do say “seem,” because of course the hatred was always there. People of my persuasion say it was underground where it belonged. People had not yet been emboldened by Trump’s river of hate speech, and they believed that naked greed, power lust, overt racism, sexism and hatred of The Other should probably be kept under wraps in polite company. But underground hatred remains dangerous, and when the heavens once again smile on this benighted country and rational heads are once again at the top of the aforementioned power pyramid, no one will be under any illusions. The hate, closeted though it may be, will remain, a strain of poison which will raise its ugly head the next time a bloated demagogue somehow charms enough gormless voters to win a ticket to the Big Dance.

I have no idea how anyone could have looked at what Donald Trump was peddling and thought, “That’s what I want for America. That’s who we want to be.” I wrestle every day with more anger than I ever dreamed I had inside me, not just at this disgusting Administration but at the voters who visited it upon the rest of the world (many of whom appear to be shaking off the torpor now that his asinine attempts to run the planet are hitting them in the pocketbook). I don’t know how many years it will take to sweep up after the elephants or who will be chosen as the sacrificial lamb to grab a broom and make a start.

I don’t know how or why this awful vine found its way into my garden and the gardens of my neighbours. I hate it with a passion, hate the way it dominates my summer and keeps me out in the blazing sun, up to my elbows in itchy vegetation, swatting insects and trying to blink the salt out of my eyes. But I will fight it with all I’ve got and channel just a bit of that torrent of anger with each mighty yank and each bitter “Not today, Satan.”

This may be the one clear truth of the so-called border issue. Put a poor country next to a rich one and watch which way the traffic flows. Add impediments, the traffic endeavours to flow around them. Eliminate disparity, the traffic stops.

George Saunders

Many thanks to Richard Hannant for this snapshot of Kendal Market. I adore market day in Kendal and every time I've visited, since moving away, I have bumped into someone I know. If I hadn't already booked my summer trip, his lovely poem would have made me quite homesick!

Market Day

by Richard Hannant



The charter of AD 1189, granted by Richard I, established a Saturday Market in Kendal. A Wednesday Market was added in the nineteenth century, and these two market days saw the place filled with stalls and crowds of people from the town and surrounding villages seeking the best bargains. It is still busy today and also now stages monthly Farmers Markets.

Kendal through the ages has seen a wide variety of markets. The Fish Market, now held at the start of Stramongate, used to be held at the top of Finkle Street. Fish were sold there for over 200 years. That site is now home to a glass and steel shelter very different from the surrounding buildings.

Fruit of every kind was once sold along Highgate on market days. On "Plum Sunday" each autumn, the damson harvest from the Lyth Valley could also be seen. In 1926, this was moved to the main marketplace, which was more extensive in those days. Today, Highgate is home to two lanes of traffic following the one-way system through the town.

Other markets in Kendal included the Saturday market in Stramongate, where farmers' wives were allowed to sell their produce from wheeled carts, stalls not being allowed there at the time.

There was also an "Indoor Market" held in the Market Hall which was built in 1887 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Jubilee. The Market Hall is currently undergoing an extensive restoration and is closed for general use.

Attendance has changed a lot over the years, and the following verse, penned in 2011, reflects the stalls as they were then on a normal market day.

It's Market Day in Kendal.
You've been up since the crack of dawn,
Determined to get a bargain
This fine autumnal morn.

Into town on the very first bus,
Where your bus pass is allowed,
You head straight for the Market Place.
Already there's a crowd.

First port of call is the burger van,
A great place for folk to meet.
A hot dog and a mug of tea,
For young and old a treat.

Further down it's "Beds for Pets",
Baskets and blankets galore.
All shapes and sizes, padded and warm,
That your dog or cat will adore.

On yet again there's fruit and veg,
There's no time now to rest.
Bananas, apples, grapefruit, pears:
Be quick if you want the best.



There's potatoes, carrots, parsnips and swedes,
And all types of greens to be had.
Look them all over, you must pick and choose,
As time passes, some look quite sad.

Down at the far end is a plant stall,
With plants for inside and out.
There are shrubs for your patio, in pots and in tubs,
There are now lots of people about.

Moving on round there's a large butchers van,
With a serving hatch cut in the side.
There is meat of all types, cut just to suit,
Look for the name "Country Wide."

If you want a good pair of slippers,
The market has plenty on show.
You can get them in all shades and sizes,
And you'll find that the prices are low.

There's also an Indoor Market,
With tabletop sales you can view.
There are watches and clocks, and soft-topped socks,
A bookstall and greeting cards, too.

It's Market Day, you are hungry, best head for Greggs,
A hot sausage roll will do.
You sit on a bench and watch people go by,
They, in turn, look back at you.

There's still quite a bustle, the atmosphere's great,
You are having a final look around.
You spot a good bargain that cannot be missed,
A hand-knitted scarf for a pound.

The café's at the side of the market
Are doing an excellent trade.
You can sit with a coffee and chat for a while,
With old friends or new ones you've made.

You've had a good day – you've bought a few things,
You've met up with a couple of mates.
It's time to go home, you head for the bus.
There your kettle and teapot awaits.



You always own the option of having no opinion. There is never any need to get worked up or to trouble your soul about things you can't control. These things are not asking to be judged by you. Leave them alone.

Marcus Aurelius

In this feature, we invite readers to submit beloved prayers. Please send yours! This issue I want to submit another prayer by James Garnass-Holmes. In these combative times, it seems to me that gentleness and wisdom are about the best things we can pray for.

A Favourite Prayer

This Issue's Contributor: Celeste Bonfanti

WISDOM AND MERCY

by James Garnass-Holmes

*Show by your good life that your works are done
with gentleness born of wisdom.*

*The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable,
gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits,
without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy.*

—James 3.13, 17

God,
let gentleness be the air I breathe,
wisdom the well I drink from:
wisdom from you,
pure as a mountain spring,
willing, not willful,
the wisdom that is mercy,
a strong river of grace
a tree with life-giving fruits.
May mercy be my muscles
and gentleness my bones,
and your wisdom the breath
within my breath.
Calm and resourceful,
I face the world
with courage and love
born of your grace,
gentleness born of wisdom.



Statues and Rituals: A Celebration

by Celeste Bonfanti

May Crowning is a beloved tradition in many churches, and Sacred Heart in Camden, New Jersey, is no exception. We have a parishioner who is a retired art teacher who always makes an incredible floral crown for our lovely statue of Our Lady. This year, one of my shop volunteers was selected to place the crown at the start of Mass. She climbed up to the pulpit with the crown and reached over to place it on Mary's head. Whoosh! Mary's head popped through and the crown was suddenly a floral turtleneck! I grinned from ear to ear as the poor flustered woman retrieved the crown and put it in place. And then and there I started planning this article on statues and rituals, their place in my life and the happy memories they have given me.



The whole floral crown adventure brought back memories of my schoolgirl angst over the crown each student was expected to bring in May for our classroom statue of Our Lady at St. Gregory the Great School. We were each assigned a date to bring one. Many kids brought ready-made crowns like floral candle rings which sat jauntily and effortlessly on Mary's head. Others brought professional-looking works of art. All I knew was that I wanted a fresh floral crown, but my options in the garden were limited. I usually settled on lilac, but the blossoms were over-large for the size of Mary's little head and she ended up looking as if her head were wrapped in a fragrant purple turban. I well remember placing my crown in a box on the kitchen table and carting it in on the school bus, desperately afraid it would escape the wire that held it together.

On the subject of classroom statues, my friend Nita's classroom had an Infant of Prague which was supposed to be changed to match the vestments of the priest each day. One year, she was kept in from recess for dressing him in green for St. Patrick's Day when he should have been in white. She remembered crying to the teacher, "But then he would have been the only one in the class who wasn't wearing green! I felt sorry for him!"

One ritual my mother kept was bringing us on "visits" to church during the week. I have written before about how these visits brought home to me an understanding of awe. Once in a while, Mom would bring me to visit the Church of St. James in Trenton, New Jersey, where she and my father were married. This inner-city church has some of the most amazing statues I've ever seen, including one of St. Lucy with her eyes in a dish!

Surely one of my most memorable statue adventures took place in New Orleans. I had just gotten a hurricane (the unofficial cocktail of the city) and was sipping it as I strolled through the French Quarter (perfectly legal there!) when I found myself at the gates of the Ursuline Convent. The signboard said that Mass was starting in ten minutes, so I chugged my drink and went in. Wow, what a sensory experience THAT was! The lighting was very dim, the music was provided by a harpist and the statues, life-sized and realistically painted (including angels holding lit candelabra aloft) appeared to be changing expressions as I watched. Yeah, THAT was definitely the hurricane!

I remember once being asked to help with the wrapping of the statues for Holy Week at Holy Trinity and St. George. This is a tradition which is rarely kept these days in the US. I have always loved it and the spooky solemnity it lends to the worship space. My experience of the wrapping was neither spooky nor solemn,

however, as the Sacred Heart and I played an extended game of peekaboo as I struggled to get the cloth tied while properly draping him.

Catholic statuary and ritual is the source of much sardonic commentary by non-Catholics and was, of course, a point of bitter contention during the Reformation. The suspicion and distrust surrounding such “Papist” traditions were brought to the New World as well, and the earliest churches in the US are stark affairs: lovely in their own right, but stripped-down and unadorned.

As I have shared before, I am a very sensory person and have always appreciated the varied sensory diet in our tradition: the candles, the incense, the stained glass and all the rest. I love the way such traditions reach through time, connecting us not just with God but with those who have gone before us in the faith. Good religious ritual is both profoundly moving and sweetly innocent. I feel the divine reaching into the moment, touching us, blessing us, bathing us in familiar words and actions steeped in memory.



But sometimes ritual can be confusing, especially for young members of a congregation. My father was an altar boy in the 1920’s and ‘30’s at St. James Church, and he always remembered with a grin the time when, after Mass, the priest gave him the censer and told him to “throw it out.”

Dad looked at him blankly. “Throw... throw it out?”

“Yes, yes,” the priest responded irritably. “Throw it out.”

Dad was mystified. “Where, Father?”

“Out the back door,” the priest replied before returning to the rectory.

Well, you can imagine, can’t you...? 😊 Dad says he did it with aplomb, swinging the censer over his head in circles several times before letting it sail into the garden and hurriedly retrieving it, wondering no doubt about this unusual post-Mass ritual!

I love the Advent wreath I create each winter, snipping my holly for it at the back of the garden and timing the burning of the candles so that they last until Christmas. I love the church bells that chime so beautifully across the street from my house. The sacraments, the sacred oil, the holy water (which Sacred Heart bottles for us to bless the waterways of the world when we travel), the palm procession, the stripping of the altar, staying behind in the hushed church after Maundy Thursday Mass, the lighting of the Easter fire and the paschal candle and the sweetness of the crib scene at Christmas (thank you, St. Francis).... I wouldn’t trade one of them for all the tea in China.

During the years with our previous pastor, Sacred Heart added rituals of its own: tiny glasses of wine to drink a toast to God when we read about the Miracle at Cana, packets of blessed hay to bring home for our crib sets, peaches to celebrate the Transfiguration (as it was the marrying of sun, air and earth which brought said peaches forth), etc. We distributed palms as well as details about our Holy Week and Easter services throughout the neighbourhood surrounding our church. Our Easter Vigil started at 4:30 AM in the dark and we emerged into the pearly early-morning light with bells and incense with which to bless the neighbourhood as we sang our Alleluias. These traditions were all moving and very effective. In fact, the only one I could never take seriously was the tradition of liturgical dance around the statue of Our Lady of Camden (a commissioned work by Fr. Leonard Carrieri) which stands outside the church. Others engaged in it with gusto; for me it was a bridge too far!

Many of us keep secular rituals as well, don’t we? I love the workday morning ritual, which includes singing two songs to my cat while petting him, toasting two pieces of bread for the birds to supplement their

seed (it's four on Sundays and in the winter) and listening to *Pray as You Go* [[Pray As You Go](#)]. If I need an extra jolt to get me out the door, I listen to "Baba Yetu" [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PCa8RxaOPW8>].

William H. Houff writes, "Every ritual is an opportunity for transformation. To do a ritual, you must be willing to be transformed in some way." I don't know whether my morning ritual qualifies as an opportunity for transformation! But the lovely rituals of our faith certainly fit the bill, and I love and welcome them.

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 introduce a hymn which encapsulates my life as an Associate in Mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph. My principal source was <https://ministryofhearts.org>.

This Issue's Featured Hymn: Because We Love God

Chances are you have never heard of this hymn. Allow me to introduce it to you.

Francis House of Prayer, a retreat house run by the delightful Sr. Marcy Springer, was initially situated close to Burlington, the New Jersey town I moved to when I returned from Kendal. Those were deeply painful days. I was desperately homesick and feeling stranger than ever in a country that had never quite felt like a good fit for me. I was a frequent visitor to Francis House once I found it, and attended programs and retreats all through the year. There were lovely gardens and outdoor Stations of the Cross as well as a tiny outdoor chapel Sr. Marcy called the *Portiuncula* after the one in Assisi. It was at Francis House that Sr. Marcy first approached me about becoming an Associate, and after praying about it, I was commissioned in an outdoor ceremony on a very windy day with most of my sisters in attendance. There were two cardinals which flitted nearby through the entire ceremony and we all agreed these were sent by my mother and father who had passed on by that time; cardinals had always been their favorite birds.

Soon after the commissioning, the diocese sold the land on which Francis House stood and purchased another site with a much bigger house next to a horse farm, miles to the north. Most of the Associates had no idea where the new site was. For me, it was cosmic. Francis House was reestablished a stone's throw from where I attended high school. I had cycled past the new location countless times. Again, it felt directed by my parents from above. I find the new Francis House, a former bed and breakfast, extremely evocative.

Sr. Marcy likes to use music as part of Associate days of reflection, and this song was introduced to me there. It perfectly reflects the call to mission we Associates (and so many of you) share. This is the only version of it I have ever heard and it is sung by the composer, a Sister of St. Joseph named Kathy Sherman. It is also used in a vocation slide show produced by the ICM Missionaries [[Bing Videos](#)]. It is written of Sr. Kathy that she is "*...a writer, singer and activist who believes that all life is permeated with the sacred. She is passionate about writing*



music that fosters hope and healing for our world. Kathy is deeply committed to working for non-violence, racial justice and advocating for the protection and healing of our planet, especially through songwriting."

This song is a clear call to action as well as a reflection on what drives us to live a Christian life. I love it and it always stays with me long after the last note fades away. I hope you enjoy it as much as I do.

[Bing Videos](#)



Why do you feed the hungry?
Why do you comfort those in sorrow?
What is the source of your passion, your joy?
Why are you calm in a storm?
Why do you hunger for justice?
Why do you give your heart away
To the weary, the poor, the unloved, the unfree?
Why do you do what you do?

*Because we love God.
Because we love God and all that belongs to God.
Because we love God,
We are who we are, and we do what we do...
Because we love God.*

Why do you forgive those who hurt you?
Why do you call the stranger 'friend'?
What is the hope that you cling to at night?
Why is your dreaming so bold?
Why are you friends with the outcast?
Why does your table welcome all?
Yes, and why does your fire never burn out?
Why do you do what you do?

*Because we love God.
Because we love God and all that belongs to God.
Because we love God,
We are who we are, and we do what we do...
Because we love God.*

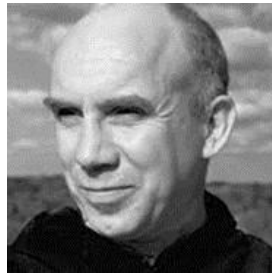
Why do you bless the children?
Why are you concerned about the future?

Why do you protect Earth and all her creatures?
Why is your vision so wide?
Why do you love without boundaries?
Why is your song a song for all?
And why do you dare to believe that all are one?
Why do you do what you do?

*Because we love God.
Because we love God and all that belongs to God.
Because we love God,
We are who we are, and we do what we do...
Because we love God.*



Merton Corner



It is God's love that warms me in the sun
And God's love that sends the cold rain.
It is God's love that feeds me in the bread I eat
And God that feeds me also in hunger and fasting.
It is the love of God that sends the winter days when I am cold and sick,
And the hot summer when I labour and my clothes are full of sweat:
But it is God who breathes on me with light winds off the river

And in breezes out of the wood.
His love spreads the shade of the sycamore over my head.
It is God's love that speaks to me in the birds and streams;
But also, behind the clamour of the city.
God speaks to me in His judgements
And all these things are seeds sent to me from His will.

Thomas Merton in New Seeds of Contemplation

This article continues where Issue 36's article left off. In the interest of issue length and because of the density of the material, it seemed best to divide the study. I hope this isn't too disjointed for you as we are now deep in Ordinary Time! Even two issues are not enough space for this all-important, central part of the Gospels!

Which Gospel? Passiontide and Easter: Part Two

by Celeste Bonfanti

Of course, all four Gospels give accounts of Jesus in front of the Sanhedrin as Maundy Thursday gives way to Good Friday, and there is broad agreement among the accounts. John is the only one who names Annas as present; everyone agrees that Caiaphas was heading up the proceedings. It is here where Jesus is accused of saying he would rebuild the Temple in three days. Jesus does not answer to the accusation.

When asked if he is the Christ, there is some variation in the Gospels:

- Matthew records Jesus as saying, "It is you who say it."
- In Mark, he simply answers, "I am."
- Luke records him as saying, "If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I question you, you will not answer."

All three synoptic Gospels cite Jesus as saying that they would see him at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of Heaven, and all record this as the blasphemy for which he was doomed to die. In John, Jesus strikes a



challenging figure. He reminds them that he has spoken openly and said nothing in secret, adding, "Ask my hearers what I said." A guard slaps him for speaking so to the High Priest. All the other Gospels agree that Jesus was spat upon and hit at this point.

I wonder how many of you recall “The Easter Stories” which Channel 4 ran in 1994, late in the evening? Perhaps they’ve run them regularly, for all I know, marooned as I am across the Atlantic. They were astonishingly good and have stayed with me for 32 years. They featured well-known performers in modern dress, in the roles of a number of characters from Holy Week ~ Judas, Mary Magdalene, etc. ~ speaking directly to the camera. Let me say at the outset that the day a mainstream American broadcaster would air something like this would be a very cold day in a very hot place....

These short films greatly affected me at the time and inspired the liturgical dramas I have written. I mention them now because we’re up to the Denial of Peter, who in “The Easter Stories” was played by Tony Robinson (is there anything the man cannot do...?), and I have never read or heard the biblical story since without thinking of his performance. In writing this piece, it occurred to me that it might be online... and it is! I saw it for the second time in over thirty years last night (and for the third time this morning) and it literally kept me awake: I love it just as much. Here is the link, and if you read our print edition, search “Tony Robinson as St. Peter the Easter Stories.” PLEASE watch it. You’ll never forget it: [Bing Videos](#)

There is wide agreement on the Denial of Peter, which is mentioned in all four Gospels. All agree that he followed at a distance as Jesus was led off to the house of Caiaphas and all agree on most of the particulars (the number of cockcrows notwithstanding!). In John, Peter is in the courtyard because he isn’t known by the household staff, and the “other disciple” (John?) has him admitted to the house. Matthew has one of the accusers telling Peter that his accent gives him away. Luke has Jesus in the presence of Peter as he is denied; at this “...the Lord turned and looked straight at Peter.” I hope this wasn’t how it happened, for poor Peter’s sake. But whether or not his denials were overheard, all Gospels agree on Peter’s instant remorse and his bitter tears.



I find it very surprising that the death of Judas is mentioned in only one Gospel, Matthew’s. It is surely considered in our time a vital aspect of the story of Holy Week, yet three of the four evangelists didn’t even mention it. It’s hard not to wonder whether this was a bitter, conscious omission.

We examined Jesus’s interrogation by Pilate in Issue 36. Now let’s look at what came next:

- Luke is the only evangelist who does not mention the crown of thorns. He is so meticulous in his detail elsewhere in the Gospel....
- John skips most of the Via Crucis. Again, I wonder about whether the omission is because the recollection brings the writer back to the darkest imaginable hour....
- On the subject of Simon of Cyrene, the other evangelists differ a little:
 - Matthew refers to him as, “A man from Cyrene named Simon enlisted to carry the cross.”

- Luke calls him “...a man, Simon from Cyrene, who was coming in from the country.”

- Mark gives the most information, calling him, “...a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, father of Alexander and Rufus.” I have always found it intriguing that Rufus was later a prominent Christian in Rome. Imagine how it felt to know that his father helped Jesus to carry his cross!



- It is Luke who has Jesus speaking to the daughters of Jerusalem and asking God to forgive his executioners.
- Matthew and Mark both mention the wine mixed with gall which Jesus tastes but refuses to drink (John records that Jesus says, “I am thirsty” and is given “sour wine”).
- Matthew and Mark both include the soldiers throwing dice for his clothes.
- Matthew mentions the guard sitting down to keep watch.
- Everyone but Matthew mentions the INRI sign which was hung over Jesus. John adds that the Jewish leaders tell Pilate he should have clarified it to say, “This man SAID he was King of the Jews,” and Pilate replies, “What I have written, I have written.” [No less than three evangelists tell about the sign, but only one mentions the death of Judas...?]
- All but John mention Jesus being mocked while he hung in agony, and Luke adds that the soldiers joined in.
- It is also Luke we have to thank for the story of the “good thief.”
- Of course, John is the evangelist who has the beautiful scene with the Blessed Mother and “the disciple whom Jesus loved.”
- Everyone but John records the fact that there was “...darkness from the sixth to the ninth hour,” and Matthew and Mark both have Jesus quoting Elijah as his end nears.
- As for Jesus’s final words:
 - In Luke, they are “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.”
 - In John, depending on the translation, they are either, “It is finished” [the only translation I have ever heard in the US], “It is fulfilled,” or “It is accomplished.”
- The veil of the Sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom according to all three synoptic Gospels. [I clearly remember sitting in Religious Education in sixth grade and being told by Sr. Cecilian that this symbolized the way God the Father was joined to those on earth through the death of Jesus. It made me shiver then as now.]

- The body of Jesus is pierced in John’s Gospel, and I love the insistent way he records his eyewitness account: “I was there, I saw it, believe me.”
- But it is Matthew alone who records the earthquake and the fact that the tombs of holy people were opened, with the dead appearing to the living. He also records the fact that the guards were terrified.
- All but John record the centurion proclaiming Jesus as Son of God, with Luke adding that he was “...an upright man.”



- Luke also has the crowds going home beating their breasts with regret.
- As for who witnessed the Crucifixion, there is some variety here. Other than the scene at the foot of the Cross mentioned above, John is silent. The others mention many women (Luke adds “and friends”), including Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James. Matthew mentions Mary the mother of Joseph (Mark says “Joset,” possibly the same person). Matthew

mentions the mother of Zebedee’s sons; Mark mentions Salome and Luke mentions Joanna. But interestingly, he doesn’t specify names until they announce the Resurrection.

- Mark is the evangelist who records Pilate’s surprise at the fact that Jesus died so soon and has him ask the centurion for confirmation. I remember this being the first bit of Scripture that forced me to think about just how long it generally took crucified people to die ~ horrific.
- John has a lot to say here. It’s he who records Joseph of Arimathea asking permission of Pilate to take the body of Jesus. He mentions that Nicodemus was also there. The two of them wrap the body of Jesus with a hundred pounds of spices and lay it in a new tomb near Golgotha.
- The Marys (according to Luke, “...the women who had come from Galilee with Jesus”) witness the burial, according to the synoptic Gospels.
- It’s Matthew who tells us that the chief priests and Pharisees ask for a guard to be posted at the tomb, suspecting that some of the disciples could steal the body of Jesus and then claim that he had risen. The guard is accordingly posted.

The best, of course, is yet to come! The Easter narratives will be included in our next issue. One thing I love about writing for the magazine is the way it encourages reflection. The quote, “I never know what I think until I read what I have written on it” has been attributed to many people over the years. For a glimpse of just how many, see [Quote Origin: I Do Not Know What I Think Until I Read What I’m Writing – Quote Investigator®](#)! But I have said it many times! It can be hard to dive deeply into the Gospels. I hope these

little bite-sized offerings are of interest. I just can't help thinking about the evangelists as writers, making choices about what to keep and what to leave out....

“Lord, please use me today” has got to be the most disruptive prayer ever answered. Moments after my pious petition, inspired by this morning’s devotional reading, I heard my phone ring ~ from the last person on earth I wanted to talk to. Recently, this person had made me mad enough to spit nails. I grabbed the phone, but before I could say something I would have regretted, I heard: “I need help. My dog is hurt. He needs a vet and I can’t take him now.” My anger vanished. I interrupted with, “I’ll be there in twenty minutes.”



Time spent awaiting the vet’s diagnosis flew by as I meditated on the lesson of Jesus asking his disciples to serve “the least of these” and the “undeserving.” I was convicted: it wasn’t that the dog’s owner was undeserving because of our argument; instead, it was that God had called me when I was at my least deserving ~ clinging to bitterness ~ and he transformed my sin of anger into compassion.

That evening, I returned the dog, who had miraculously suffered only a sprain and not a broken bone. Leave it to God to ask an undeserving heart like mine to show his love where it’s needed most.

Sweet Jesus, thank you for forgiving me, even when I’m not quick to forgive. Thank you for using me, “the least of these,” to serve others with the best of you. Lord, I honestly ask you again: please use me today.

Erika Bentsen in Walking in Grace 2023: Daily Devotions to Draw You Closer to God

Seen on a Wall

God is dead.

Nietzsche

Nietzsche is dead.

God

BIBLE OCCUPATIONS WORD SEARCH

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

APOSTLE	FARMER	METALWORKER	SHEPHERD
ARCHITECT	FISHERMAN	MIDWIFE	SHOEMAKER
BAKER	GARDENER	MINSTREL	SLAVE
BEGGAR	GOATHERD	MUSICIAN	SOLDIER
BLACKSMITH	HARVESTER	POTTER	TAILOR
CAMEL-DRIVER	HEALER	PRIEST	TAX-COLLECTOR
CARPENTER	JUDGE	PROPHET	TENTMAKER
COOK	KING	SAILOR	WASHWOMAN
CUPBEARER	LEATHERWORKER	SCRIBE	WEAVER
DYEWORKER	MERCHANT	SHEEPSHEARER	WINEMAKER

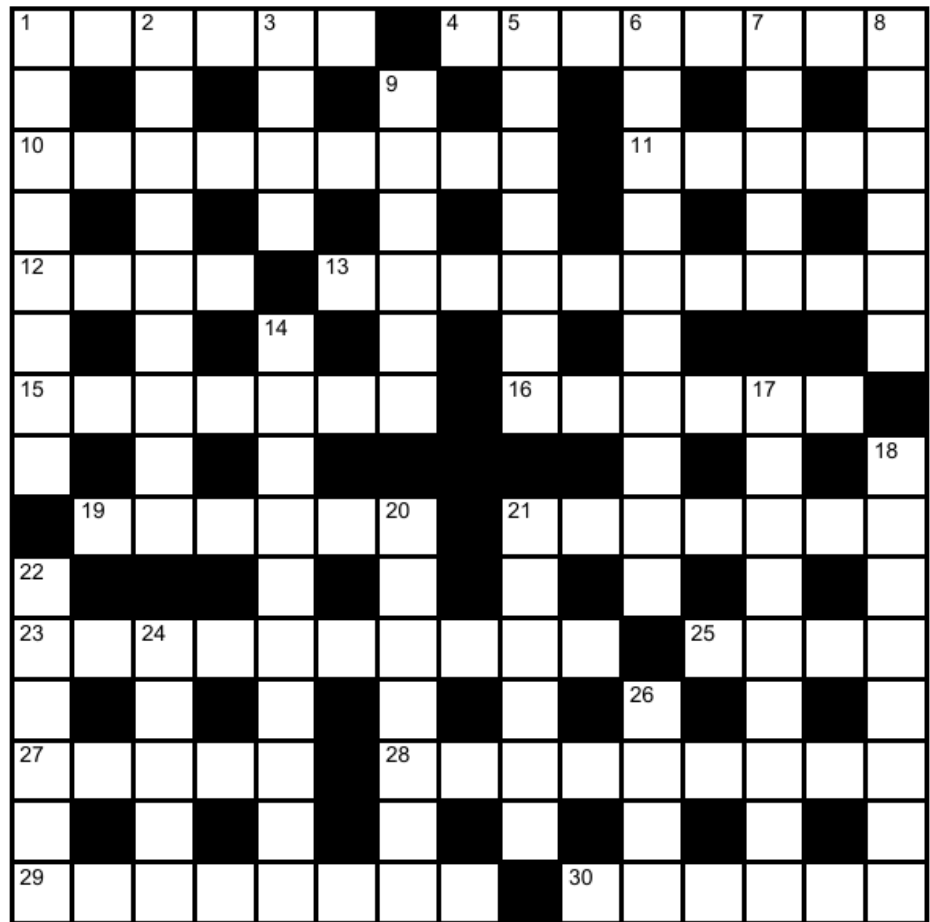
BIBLE CROSSWORD I

Across

- 1 An ancient weight (6)
 4 Seemed (8)
 10 New Testament book (9)
 11 Unit of length (5)
 12 '...it is a ____ thing the king requireth' (Dan 2:11) (4)
 13 Contemplation (10)
 15 Abigail supplied David with one hundred clusters of these (7)
 16 A son of King David (6)
 19 Concurred (6)
 21 Light sources (7)
 23 Propitiations (10)
 25 A false god (4)
 27 Gather (5)
 28 Abimelech was hit by this (9)
 29 Instructors (8)
 30 Hastily (6)

Down

- 1 Skilled animal workers (8)
 2 Inspiring (9)
 3 Compass point (4)
 5 Intense emotion (7)



by *Philologus*

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- 6 The words of Jeremiah said not to listen to these (10)
 7 Jewish leader (5)
 8 'He is proud, knowing nothing, but _____ about questions and strifes of words...' (1 Tim 6:4) (6)
 9 Bread makers (6)
 14 In this year of King Nebuchadrezzar's reign, Nebuzaradan arrived in Jerusalem (10)
 17 Ancient city of Og, King of Bashan (9)
 18 Stringed instrument (8)
 20 Joseph, perhaps? (7)
 21 Tiny amount (6)
 22 Jesus did this with authority (6)
 24 Last letter of the Greek alphabet (5)
 26 Province of the Roman Empire (4)

