

Augustine's New Times



"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer" Romans 12:12

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Things That Matter



Lent is more a time for reflection on life itself. Coming after the festivities and excesses of Christmas and the expectation of better things to come, and in the season of Epiphany when we have been thinking about the signs "revealing" who Jesus is, Lent is a time to slow down, take stock, start thinking about things that matter, and our relationship with God through Jesus can be central to that. We can use the season to go deeper into what life means, what it is for, what is important.

To me Lent is about thinking of our humanity with its ups and downs, its joy and sadness, its excitement, and its frustration, but most of all how we respond. Lent gives us that opportunity to make sense of life and re-assess our priorities, turning to God. But it doesn't just happen, there has to be a commitment from us. I have just returned from a 3-day Chapter Retreat in Wantage; there I took time to pray for all of you, especially for our Pastoral Ministry Team - who, I would add, are a very gifted group. We are going to work and put together a whole program of exciting, creative, and reflective events for Lent. Something for everyone - from crafts, to films, to Bible Study to Stations of the Cross and music.

Please do look at the Lenten Programme and make up your mind to go to something and then, why not pray this Lent for a deeper walk with God, and the courage to hear the inner murmurs of your soul as the still small voice talks to you.

When we come close to God and are quiet before the divine presence, God does speak and equips us for all that life has to throw at us - good and bad. And that equipping, that coming close to God, is deep peace and happiness indeed.

May we look forward and upward to things that matter, even greater things to come in our own walk with God in Christ and in our future life together at St Augustine's and let us do so as per Bishop Kevin's words to us on the day of my Institution here: "quietly, gently and confidently".

With Lenten blessings,

Heller

'Wait Till I Tell You.....'

Janette comments on the way things are and shares some nostalgia.

'NEIGHBOURS' UNDER THREAT.

My friends are familiar with the comment 'Don't ring me during 'Neighbours!' Now the Australian soap, followed since the mid-eighties, may be disappearing for ever. This impending national disaster definitely warrants a Sue Gray report or even a 'send for the polis' call. The loss of our twenty five minutes of escapism and gossip, usually accompanied by a pre - dinner refreshment will surely overwhelm the NHS with demands for withdrawal therapies. Our Ramsay Street neighbours, with a drama on every doorstep, will be replaced with our everyday Dumbarton neighbours - how good is that? So sign all the petitions, write to every MPs and save our soaps!

WHERE WERE YOU IN '52?

February 6th 1952, anniversary of the Queen's accession, is surely one of those dates that make people stop and recall what they were doing then. We were entering into the new Elizabethan age - surely an iconic moment in our nation's history?

It certainly was for me - we were escaping to the country - moving from a High Street tenement to a brand new house in Bellsmyre with rooms galore, a garden with cows for neighbours and a real bath. Life promised to be perfect! No..., there was no central heating, double glazing, washing machine, phone, computer or telly. There was one car in the street, sharing its parking with the playground of the multitudes of weans that were a feature of those new schemes. Weans of all ages with balls, bats, cans for kicking and skipping ropes. No wonder the owner anxiously watched from his window whenever school was out! Yes, Bellsmyre was in its infancy in 1952 with the distinction of having the highest rents in the area. Remember the song?

*'They cam' frae the Newtown, they cam' frae Brucehill
And they cam' frae the High Street tae gang up the hill.
But they don't feel sae gled when they sit roon the fire
And think o' the rents that they pay in Bellsmyre!'*

Each Sunday, just before 11am, everyone gathered in their best clothes to get aboard the packed Church bus that transported them to all the places of worship and busy Sunday schools in the town. I was waiting to sit 'the qually' - passing meant a place at Dumbarton Academy and a dog! Exciting times indeed!

BEWARE THE IDES OF MARCH.

It's a well-known fact that our exuberant, party loving Prime Minister, Boris, has been trying to write a book about Shakespeare. He, therefore, must be familiar with the drama of 'the Ides of March' when the great Roman leader, Julius Caesar, met his comeuppance at the hands of his fellow Senators who only did it for the common good. Julius was getting too powerful and doing whatever he liked. Since letters of no confidence were not in their constitution in 44BC, the knives had to come out and the republic was saved. Even his best pal, Brutus, had a go - remember the poignant last words given to Caesar by Shakespeare - 'Et tu, Brute'? The Ides of March, on the 15th - not long now!

Janette

Highs and Lows in The Lane* - Good News

It's all too common to be critical of our public utilities and our insurance companies. Yet since Christmas St Augustine's has to say thanks to both.

Following the collapse of the high gutters onto the lane, our insurance company (Ecclesiastical) has agreed to pay in full for their repair/replacement. There is still work to be done, covered by the insurance, to replace the lower gutters. Unfortunately, the contractor has been hit by covid so that has been delayed. Our next step is to check the gutters on the other side - not covered by the insurance.

Below ground level Scottish Water have been sorting the sewer problem that has also affected the lane. First time round a guy turned up 2 days earlier than expected to rod, clear up and disinfect. The second visit required 2 men and 'traffic management'!

Thanks to both organisations and at a time of financial stress we give thanks to God for seeing to what goes on above our heads and beneath our feet.

*The Lane = the right of way between the church and the Procurator Fiscal's office.

Fran

Be still and listen to the cry of the voiceless. Be still and listen to the groaning of the hungry. Be still and listen to the pain of the homeless, the sigh of the oppressed... Look at the addict with the eyes of Jesus, behind each one is a broken hearted mother. For these are the Kingdom of God on our streets, beside and within us. Lord, help us to see you even in the untouchable, the ones we deem unlovable. What does the Lord require of you?

Shislaine

The Last Taboo



I have been thinking about death a lot lately- from the little deaths we all face on a day by day basis- death of a hope or dream, a relationship, job or way of life to our

own time to put off this mortal coil.

"The young may and the old must" is a favourite saying of my step dad, an uncomfortable truth.

How do or should we respond to this inevitability? After all, it will always be when not if! As I have meditated on death, I have come to see it not as a terror to be gone through but more as a gentle journey towards a glorious, warm sunset as God's love and warmth increasingly draw us into the eternal being. May God grant all those we know and love who are nearing the end peace and the certainty of eternity.

*Do not let your heart be troubled
and do not be afraid*
John 14:27



A good and helpful book debunking some myths and fears surrounding death is "With the End in Mind- How to live and die well" written by palliative care Doctor Kathryn Mannix.

Kirsten Wiggins

Ach Winter!

Miserable, wet, windy days
If this should decide to stay,
I'll scream!!!
Who wants all this,
I'd be happy to miss,
I can dream!
Of sun and heat,
This you can't beat,
Join us spring,
Flowers which are nigh
Reach for the sky;
Hope to bring.
Give us longer days,
As branches sway!
Hurrah, hurrah!
Yes, let daffodils glow,
Primroses show.
This I say.....
Go away winter
Spring sway.....

Issy



Several members of the Anglican Cistercian Order recently attended their Chapter Retreat in Wantage, Oxford (6th - 9th Feb).

The photo above shows some of the brethren and the Episcopal Visitor, Bishop Tony Robinson (Bishop of Wakefield, Diocese of Leeds).

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Friends ‘Spring into Spring’

Friends’ events are currently being organised to get the members up and active for the remainder of 2022. ‘Spring Into Spring’ is the first of these on 20th February and will celebrate all those topical February things - this year with a Chinese theme. Why? Well, their New Year lasts for most of the month and the Beijing Winter Games are in full flow - you need a warm jumper to watch the telly these days! So, what better than to start with a ‘Pandalicious Buffet’ – no, not bamboo shoots – a variety of dishes to tempt everyone? Indeed, that could also describe the plan for the entertainment. A few rounds of ‘Daffodil Bingo’ will be followed by ‘Rabbie Burns meets St. Valentine’ – a nod to the romance that is February in verse, laughter and song. A light-hearted Chinese Quiz will stir up some competitiveness and the Great Sunflower Challenge will be launched to allow avid gardeners to plan for a summer of exciting new growth. If all these challenging activities are too exhausting – there will also be a Raffle! ‘Spring Into Spring’ will start at 6pm and cost £8 (£7 with Friends’ Discount.) Chinese costume? Why not? Friends are also looking forward to the future – onwards to March and a St. Patrick’s Night on the 17th at 7pm. April will take us to Easter and April 14th when we shall be assisting at the Passover Supper and welcoming our Friends from other Churches. A wee outing is being planned for Mayand of course a Fish Tea will be included! June will find the country awash with Jubilee Celebrations. What will Friends do? Well, St. Mary’s Way is not ideal for a street party but Cathy Hoatson has been seen polishing her crown. Whatever happens - nostalgia cake will dominate the menu!

Margaret and Janette Friends’ Executive

Calling all homemakers...

We have all heard it on news reel after news reel - prices for gas and electricity are set to soar. Food prices to follow. Queues at foodbanks the length and breadth of the country grow weekly. What can we do about it? I have in my cupboard a war-time cook book with recipes first published during the time of rationing; treats such as apricot jam made with carrots and eggless sponges along with advice on how much meat a young girl actually needs. Very practical. It got me thinking. One big issue for this generation is that, for the most part, they didn’t benefit from the type of home economics lessons which taught you how to use an oven frugally. Cake on the top, stew in the middle, rice pudding at the bottom. Our grannies would never put the oven on for one pizza- they (our grannies, not the pizza!) are valuable sources of advice and tips which we could well use in these challenging times! I remember babysitting for a single mum when I was a youngster myself and being told to make the kiddies toast, but only to toast one side of the bread. Save fuel. Back then we had a raft of fuel friendly cooking appliances- pressure cookers which could do your mince, potatoes and veg in one pan in jig time, steamer stack pots or at the other end of the spectrum slow cookers which used only as much power as a lightbulb to cook your meal and fill your home with delicious smells. Torture! I saw a snippet on TV of a chef visiting somewhere sharing how to cook a nutritional meal in one pot on a small gas burner and I thought- we can do this! Amongst us we surely have loads of fuel efficient, healthy meal ideas which we could put out there for others to try? We need to be burgling the brains of our elders- do they-or you- have a one pot hob cooked/fuel efficient favourite recipe they could pass on? Alert: Kirsten will be coming round in the next few weeks to take down suggestions so we can print them in the next edition of Ant!

Simple Sausage Casserole

- Pack of sausages
- Chopped onion, carrot, turnip or any left over veg.
- 3/4 pint beef stock and ½ tsp beef extract
- A little gravy granules to thicken
- 1. Gently fry sausages in pan.
- 2. Add chopped veg and soften.
- 3. Add stock and beef extract. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes until sausages cooked through and veg soft.
- 4. Thicken with granules as desired.

TIP: Add small potatoes cut in half or larger ones cubed to make this truly a one-pot wonder!

Rainbows



bible) 9:13 I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. I recently came across this calming exercise - painting rainbows in the sky. You might want to give it a try! Breathe in as you slowly raise both arms to form an arc above you, breathe out slowly as you lower them back down. Life has been stressful for us lately and one night I found myself half asleep, in bed, painting rainbows in the sky! It really did help to take the edge of my stress. I am currently using the exercise in my morning prayers, breathing in a promise from scripture as I raise my hands in an arc above my head and speaking the same out loud as I lower them back down.

You can find the exercise at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O29e4rRMv4> or google: Go noodle rainbow breathing.

Forgotten Saints. February 10th. Scholastica.



We don't have many details on St. Scholastica, but through the writings of Gregory the Great we are able to gain a few glimpses into her life. Scholastica and Benedict were born in Italy in the year 480 and were raised together until Benedict left to further his studies. At a young age, Scholastica joined a Benedictine order for women. It was only five miles from where Benedict’s monastery was! Every year, Scholastica and her brother were able to visit each other and discuss their spiritual challenges and joys. Women were not allowed in St. Benedict’s monastery, so every year, St. Benedict and a few other monks would journey to the convent’s guest houses. The monastery had strict rules that did not allow monks to spend the night—they were only allowed to spend one day there. According to Gregory the Great, Scholastica became very ill, and her brother visited her. Sensing that her death was near, Scholastica asked her brother to spend the night with her. Benedict, however, was adamant that he could not stay. Scholastica prayed fervently and a severe thunderstorm suddenly started, preventing Benedict and his companions from returning to the abbey. Understanding what she had prayed for, Benedict cried out, “God forgive you, Sister. What have you done?” Scholastica simply replied, “I asked a favour of you and you refused. I asked it of God, and he granted it.” So, the brother and sister were able to spend their last evening together. The next morning, Benedict journeyed back to the monastery. Three days later, Scholastica died from her illness. Praying in his monastery, Benedict saw a white dove circling the convent, rising, and eventually disappearing. He took this to mean that his sister had breathed her last and announced her death to his monks. There are numerous lessons of faith we can learn from Scholastica and her commitment to Christian values. She lived her life based on the hallmarks of prayer, work, study, community, reverence, and respect. Gregory the Great wrote that "she could do more because she loved more."

Zoomin’ Christmas

No, not a trip with Santa, hurriedly trying to make all his deliveries, but a new experience, joining St Augustine’s Christmas midnight service whilst 4,000 miles away. I was in The Gambia, the Christmas tree had been decorated (with Montse’s beautiful star), the chickens (no turkey, it was stuck in a refrigerated container in the port) were defrosting, and miracle of miracles there was both electricity and internet. I had decided not to go to my local church (St Andrew’s) as the service would be long and the car was iffy. So, thanks to John Wiggins’ IT and camera skills it was possible to join my Scottish congregation. It was strange though. I couldn’t look around to see who was there in person – only Heller, the readers and the back of Ghislaine’s head appeared on the screen! Neither could I see the words. But that didn’t matter. The message was the same had I been there or had I gone to St Andrew’s: joy and thanks that God had given Jesus to the world. This is Hamish, now aged 5, who many of you will remember as a small baby. His mum, Filly, still asks after everyone at St Augustine’s – your support was so much appreciated.



Fran

The ‘Fairy of Christmas Past’ Lily (Margaret Curry’s great niece) helping us to add a little sparkle to our Tombola Tree in the hall.



Decluttering



It’s the in thing thanks to Stacey Solomon’s recent TV show. Here our very own Theresa shares some gathered insights into the old adage “tidy home, tidy mind” which apparently dates back to 1947! Your home is a living space not a storage space. Clutter is not the stuff on your floor, it’s anything that stands between you and the life you want to lead. Clutter is just not physical stuff- it’s old ideas, toxic relationships and bad habits. More importantly anything you keep that doesn’t add to your life or happiness eventually becomes a burden. Outer order contributes to inner peace. When we throw out the physical and mental clutter we clear our souls! Reminds me of a book “Soul Keeping” by John Ortberg which Rev Liz led us through... Well done to Theresa who has been quietly putting this into practice in her own home!

Word wheel

G
N A I
E U T
S

How many words of four letters or more can you make using these letters, with letter A used in each one? No plurals. No words with capital first letter. 25 or more. What’s the big word using all letters?

