



John of Gaunt



THE MILITARY & HOSPITALLER ORDER OF ST. LAZARUS OF JERUSALEM
COMMANDERY NEWSLETTER

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From the Commander’s Desk...

As I write this article, Easter has not yet arrived and yet it’s like a summer’s day, making everybody happy and cheerful. Of course, at Easter, we should not need good weather to make us cheerful, as we celebrate Christ’s Resurrection, and I hope that you all found some time for some peaceful reflection during the Bank Holiday weekends. The second long holiday weekend is also one of celebration, as we witness the marriage of Prince William and Kate Middleton. It seems hard to imagine anybody other than Queen Elizabeth as monarch, and for many of us she will be the only one that we remember, but with God’s blessing many of us will one day see William as our King. I

am sure that you join me in wishing William and Kate all the very best for their future life together.

There is also great cause for good cheer for the members of John of Gaunt. We had a very interesting Annual General Meeting, with a fascinating talk by Dr Michael Waters. Michael is a world expert on Leprosy, and it was a great honour for our Commandery that he and his wife (both in their eighties) were able to drive up from their home on the South Coast just to attend our meeting. After his talk, we were able to discuss the distribution of our charitable funds, and it gave me great delight to announce that we had over £12,000 to distribute. This is far and above our target, and the highest amount that our Commandery has ever raised. That we were able to raise such a figure is down to the dedication and hard work of a great number of our members, and I thank each and every one of you for the great efforts that you make for our organisation. You will read elsewhere about the breakdown of our donations, but please keep up the good work and let's see if we can have another good year in 2011.

Finally, a significant number of members from our Commandery will be making their way to Oxford next month for the Services of Reunification. With over 200 members and guests attending not only from this country but also from many European countries, it promises to be an exciting weekend and certainly one to remember for those attending such an event for the first time. It's not too late if you still wish to book!

David

AGM

As David says we were privileged to have as our guest at the AGM, Dr Michael Waters. Having read Medicine at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, Dr Waters received his clinical training at University College Hospital. Shortly afterwards he was conscripted into the army and sent to Malaya where, in 1956, he was mentioned in despatches for looking after a 100-bedded unit of Gurkhas suffering from tuberculosis. Michael worked for the British Medical Research Council in Malaysia on the treatment of leprosy for 13 years and became a member of the World Health Organisation's panel of leprosy experts. In 1976 he was awarded an OBE for his research into that disease. He is proud to have been a member of the World Health Organisation Study Group in Geneva which, in 1981, produced the modern treatment for leprosy. For many years he was consultant to The Leprosy Mission and, in November 2004, received the prestigious Damien Dutton Award from the Damien Dutton Society in recognition of his contribution to the cure of leprosy throughout the world.

Dr Waters was invested in the Order of St Lazarus in 1982 at a service in Westminster Abbey. Almost immediately, he was invited to become Joint Hospitaller with the late Dame Ruth Bowden, in which capacity he continues to serve the Grand Bailiwick and Priory of England & Wales. His contribution was recognized in 2006 with the award of the Grand Cross of Merit.



'There is sweet music here':

Jean-Philippe Rameau and the harpsichord

The fifth day of creation must have been a special moment in the book of Genesis, for we are told that birds were created on that day. For the first time bird song would have resounded in the air of the new world.

Up to then the only sound was probably the lapping of water on the shores. With the fifth day the music of the birds singing rang out from trees and hills. Each morning I look out on my garden where the birds are feeding, as I imagine many of us do. We hear their dawn song, we see the rich variety of plumage, and we can identify their characteristics: joyous and shy, angry and timid, brilliant and drab.

What is it that the birds are singing? In that wonderfully evocative book, 'Pilgrim at Tinker Creek,' Annie Dillard asks that question. Is it a territorial claim the birds are making? How can we unlock the key to this beautiful sound? 'It could be,' she writes, 'that a bird sings I am a sparrow, sparrow, sparrow, as Gerard Manley Hopkins suggests: 'Myself it speaks and spells, crying what I do is me: for that I came.'"

Birds – their songs and their characters – are captured by the harpsichord. One critic called the music of this instrument 'a performance on a bird cage with a toasting fork.' But in the early part of the 18th century Jean-Philippe Rameau composed three volumes of pieces for the harpsichord that gave the lie to that mocking. Rameau composed fine operas, and he was also a gifted keyboard player. In these volumes there are dances in abundance, but there are also more tender, reflective pieces – all expressing the range of the harpsichord's capabilities. No more so than in two pieces inspired by bird song. 'The call of the birds' imitates a variety of birds, and then in 'La poule' Rameau focusses on one bird, the hen.

We hear the hen clucking, we sense it pecking for food, and we can imagine the chicks rushing to their mother for safety and comfort; and all in just four pages of music. In Matthew 23 Jesus says how he imagined himself to be a mother hen gathering her brood under her wings, and knowing how impossible that was because Jerusalem did not honour its prophets. Imagining could not become reality there, but here in this imaginative and virtuoso piece by Rameau, we see the mother hen doing exactly that: calling her offspring to stay close and rest secure in the warmth of her protective heart. We hear the mother hen speaking to us in the music that 'What I do is me: for that I came'.

Events Corner

COMMANDERY EVENTS

Friday 6th May 2011 - Race Night at 7.30pm.

Friday 17th June 2011 - Hawaiian night at 7.30pm.

Saturday 25th June - Sponsored Walk

Saturday 16th July – Garden Party at Prescot

Sunday 21st August from 3pm - Barbeque

Saturday 3rd September – Treasure Hunt

Friday 28th October – Quiz Night

Saturday 14th December – St Lazarus Day Carol Service

EVENTS ELSEWHERE

13/14 May	Service of Thanksgiving for the Reunified Jurisdiction – Oxford
4 Jun	Avalon Investiture
25 June	Rose D’Or Investiture
16 Jul	Mercia Investiture
6 Aug	King Offa Investiture
17 Sept	Edward the Confessor Investiture
3 Sept	Marches Investiture
8 Oct	St Wilfrid Investiture
23 Oct	Aragon Investiture
5 Nov	National Vigil and Investiture (North) under the banner of John of Gaunt

Further details at www.st-lazarus.org.uk calendar of events

Donations agreed at the AGM

DebRA	£1000
R V Mission	£1750
Promise Nepal	£1500
Leprosy Mission	£1750
LEPRA	£1500
Medical elective	£500
Local Hospices	£468
+ already paid to LEPRA	£3630 (from David’s bike ride)

The Bible in our Community

I saw a Bible in a charity shop the other day. It was a thick-as-a-brick Family Bible, a bargain at only £4.50. It was in immaculate condition with each page corner still as chiselled and gold-edged as the day it was printed. No sticky fingers had sullied these pages. No disrespectful hand had broken its spine.

But oh dear, it was a tragic sight.

That book had never had verses highlighted, Post-it notes stuck in its margins or dates pencilled alongside passages in it. It hadn't been opened. It hadn't been read! It was a parable in miniature: was that Bible better kept safe as a collector's item, or brought into the hurly-burly of life to risk being creased or battered?

Is God's word supposed to be kept untouched by the grubbiness of daily life or, like the Word himself, should it be part of our everyday existence, working in our communities like yeast in dough? Jesus wasn't afraid to risk mixing with people with infectious diseases and infectious lifestyles; he knew he could bring only healing and wholeness. His word, surely, is also meant to bring healing and wholeness, not kept on a shelf?

What might it mean, to bring the Bible out into the communities we live and work in? For some it might mean finding ways to open up the Bible as a family and allow its challenge and comfort to get to work in family life. The new website www.faithinhomes.co.uk has some friendly easy ideas to help families enjoy the Bible together.

For others, it might mean thinking about what the Bible says in a different way: not just 'How can the passage I'm reading help me through today?' but 'What might God need me to bring to my office, school, factory floor or hospital through this passage? Who might I need to bring this message to today?' and having our eyes and ears open to recognise opportunities to share some appropriate and timely story, thought or opinion that has been shaped by God's story.

The main way the Bible will be shared is not through writing its words on billboards but by 'gossiping' it as good news and living it out. This is how our communities can be healed.

Regimental Reminiscences

The Fire Piquet

Being a member of the fire piquet in the army is not a particularly onerous task. The piquet is usually nominated for a period of 12 hours and is mounted behind the guard at 18.00 hours in the evening. Generally the piquet must be dressed in uniform (normally fatigues plus steel helmet) and must be available for the period of the duty. The piquet, at larger establishments, is commanded by a Lance Corporal who is responsible to the senior regimental policeman, usually the Provost Sergeant or when the guard is mounted, the guard commander. The Lance Corporal would normally have a team of four to six men which would form the piquet although at smaller establishments the piquet may consist of only three men directly responsible to the guard commander or a regimental policeman.

Obviously, fire in the forces is a very serious matter particularly as there were, during my service, a large number of wooden huts in use as accommodation, stores and offices. Consequently, a considerable amount of time was devoted to training with equipment and appliances and to dealing with mock fires. Whilst it is a serious affair it is not without its lighter side (excuse the pun). I was a member of several fire piquets and as a Lance Corporal in charge of some of them. Most of them were 'interesting' to say the least and some quite humorous.

My first involvement was at the King's Own Depot at Lancaster. The bugle sounded one mid-morning and we had been briefed to recognise the fire call. On this occasion we were not on duty and formed up on the square with the rest of the Depot personnel all buildings having been cleared and the nominal roll called. As this was a practice we noted the process with interest. As the Regimental Police were on duty they were responsible for dealing with the fire. The fire 'horse,' which was a big hand cart painted bright red with large iron rimmed wheels and containing all the appropriate equipment came hurtling up to the imaginary fire with two regimental policemen between the shafts and the rest galloping behind with stirrup pumps and fire buckets. The Adjutant, standing close by with a large stop watch in his hand, was urging the team on as this looked like being a record time. Our Platoon Serjeant, the tough and very cynical Serjeant 'W' standing in front of us turned round and with a knowing smirk on his face said, 'pay close attention and note this performance for future reference.' The hoses were laid out and coupled up in

no time at all. The Adjutant was beside himself with excitement. The cry went out from the senior regimental policeman, 'water on.' Everyone waited with baited breath. Not even a trickle of water. 'WATER ON' went the almost hysterical cry. Deathly silence as nothing happened. 'What the blankety blank are you blankety blank idiots up to,' the senior regimental policeman screamed. 'We forgot the hydrant key Corporal.' Serjeant 'W' turned round still with the smirk on his face and said 'kindly note that it is very difficult to put a fire out without the aid of water!!'

I managed to avoid fire piquet duty until my very last weekend at the Depot. 'Hey 'Party' have you read Part 1 Orders,' Joe Redford shouted across the barrack room. 'No not yet,' I replied. 'You're on fire piquet on Sunday.' This was our last weekend in the UK before going to Germany the following week and we had been granted a 48 hour pass, Friday night until Sunday night. I thought this was a 'wind up' but no, there it was in black and white. Great, I had to report for duty at 0730 hours Sunday morning. This meant catching the first bus from Walkden to Bolton which left me about 5 minutes to catch the train if the bus was on time. I could not risk this so set off early on my bike. Fortunately the weather was good for once. I left my bike at the station and my father picked it up later. These were days when not many people owned a car.

I was not looking forward to this duty as I noted that the Orderly Officer was Lieutenant 'C' who was a stickler for correct procedures and was mostly in a bad temper. He had snow white hair and very pale blue eyes almost albino like which he fixed on you unblinkingly. He was a very disconcerting person and I thought he will be out of sorts being on duty on a weekend. The piquet consisted of three persons responsible to the Guard Commander it being a weekend. The other disconcerting factor was one of the other members of the piquet, Private 'B.' He was a 'brickie' from Bolton and was like a dafter version of Peter Kay, the comedian. Private 'B' was always in trouble, nothing serious, but the type of silly behaviour that got you extra duties or fatigues so it was a good idea to keep well away from him. What luck, Lieutenant 'C' and Private 'B' a lethal combination. I wondered if we would be on the boat to Germany or the subject of a court martial!!

We reported for duty at the guard room and were told to change into working dress and report back as quickly as possible. 'Lieutenant 'C' will be here shortly to test you on the fire duties and for you to demonstrate all the

gear,' said the guard commander. 'Can I have the hydrant key,' I said immediately remembering the fiasco of a few weeks ago. The guard commander found it and handed it over. 'For the purposes of the demo you are in charge,' he said pointing at Private 'B.' This gets worse I thought. The only redeeming feature was that the peripatetic Regimental Policeman Corporal 'W' was nowhere to be seen.

Private 'B' was chatting to the off duty guard and telling jokes. I thought it more appropriate to read and study yet again the fire regulations with the other member of the piquet. There was a disturbance at the guard room door and Lieutenant 'C' burst in. 'Right, where's the fire piquet?' 'Outside now, over on the square DOUBLE.' We stood smartly at attention on the square waiting with some trepidation for the start of the demo. 'Right, fire over there what would you do?' We went through the procedure quickly. 'OK, get on with it then.' We hurtled off, with Private 'B' in charge, to collect the 'fire horse' and equipment returning at a fair lick. We had alerted the Guard and they carried out their procedures to the letter. Corporal 'B' took charge, surprisingly, with quiet efficiency and we had hoses laid out coupled up to the hydrant and the water turned on very quickly. After a short while Lieutenant 'C' said, 'well done you may assume the fire is out.' 'Water off' rang out the cry followed by the stowing away of all the gear. 'Before you are dismissed I have a number of questions on the equipment and different types of fires.' Lieutenant 'C' said. He then proceeded to ask a considerable number of probing questions. Private 'B' answered all these questions correctly before anyone could get a word in. I was amazed. 'Excellent' said Lieutenant 'C' 'that is the best demonstration I have seen in a long time, you can fall out.' We were all suitably stunned and returned to the guard room. The guard commander grinned and said 'looks like you won first prize there. It takes a lot to impress Lieutenant 'C' particularly on a Sunday.' 'The first prize is cookhouse fatigues report to the duty cook.'

It would appear that Private 'B' being in the building trade had learned quite a bit about fire precautions and additionally was older and in some ways more mature than us 18 year olds. This episode taught me a salutary lesson and that you should not jump to conclusions about people particularly in the army as we all came from different backgrounds and all had some skills and knowledge to offer.

James Partington

31st May: Mary, the Blessed Virgin, visits Elizabeth

Mary – the virgin mother of Jesus. For centuries the eastern and western churches have considered her pre-eminent among all the saints.

In the gospels, Mary makes her first appearance as a teenager. Nothing is known of her childhood, and what we do know of her is found mostly in Matthew 1:2 and in Luke 1:2. If you read both accounts, you'll notice that Luke's account seems to give the story from Mary's standpoint, whereas Matthew concentrates more on Joseph's side of things. In both accounts the virginal conception of Christ is clearly stated. Mary's quiet devotion to God and her total acceptance of his will shine forth.

Her visit to Elizabeth, when both were pregnant, is a moving and poignant account of two humble, ordinary women, suddenly caught up in a great event which would shape world history. Their trusting faith in God and acceptance of his will, shine through.

After Jesus is born, Mary fades into the background, and makes few appearances: when the family visits Jerusalem and she loses her son on the way home; when she urges him to help the wedding party in Cana with its wine problem; and when Jesus gives her into the keeping of the beloved disciple when he is dying on the cross. Mary's last appearance is in Acts chapter one, just before Pentecost.

Mary obviously joined the early Church, but her role was never one of teaching and preaching, and indeed she remained so much in the background that nothing more about her is known for certain. Both Ephesus and Jerusalem have claimed to be the place of her death.

Mary, chosen to be the mother of Jesus Christ, one who is both God and Man, holds a unique place in the history of mankind. Down the centuries that have followed, the Church has paid special honour to Mary – and well deserved it is. "All generations shall call me blessed..."

✘ Gerard's Jottings.



Today is St. Valentine's Day and I was thrilled to receive a card from my ever loving Pamela; we celebrate 30 years of wedded bliss this year so we must be getting something right. Yesterday, together, we took, for the fourth consecutive year, the Cytun Service for 'The Renewal of Marriage Vows'; which we have changed to include Ministerial Vows.

By a strange quirk of timing (???) the hot topic in the news was the controversy over the demand to allow same sex weddings in churches and other places of worship, together with hymns, blessings ... the full panoply currently enjoyed by others! It is not my intention in this 'Jottings' to stir-up a hornets' nest, albeit I am unafraid to state my total personal opposition to such a demand, but I must say that I will never forgive whoever it was who first applied the word 'Gay' to such people and their activities. For many years my singing repertoire always included the lovely song; '*A bachelor gay am I, ...*', and they have completely kyboshed it -- and several others of a like nature. **Shame on you!**

However, I want to talk about '*Love*', because that is what Jesus often talked about, so here are a few quotes from various sources (I'm not sure where!) for your delectation :-

Psychologist Eric Fromm maintained that " ... love is a commitment to, and adherence to, loving actions towards another, ones self, or many others, over a sustained duration". Fromm also described Love as "a conscious choice that in it's early stages might originate as an involuntary feeling, but which then later no longer depends on those feelings, but rather depends only on conscious commitment."

Care and responsibility are constituent elements of love, but without respect for and knowledge of the beloved person, love deteriorates into domination and possessiveness.

If a person loves only one other person and is indifferent to the rest of his fellow men, his love is not love but a symbiotic attachment, or an enlarged egotism.

I want the loved person to grow and unfold for his own sake, and in his own ways, and not for the purpose of serving me.

In Christianity the practical definition of love is best summarised by St. Thomas Aquinas, who defined love as "to will the good of another," or to desire for another to succeed. This is the explanation of the Christian

need to love others, including their enemies. As Thomas Aquinas explains, Christian love is motivated by the need to see others succeed in life, to be good people.

Agape ... becomes the typical expression for the biblical notion of love. By contrast with an indeterminate, “searching” love, this word expresses the experience of a love which involves a real discovery of the other, moving beyond the selfish character that prevailed earlier. Love now becomes concern and care for the other. No longer is it self-seeking, a sinking in the intoxication of happiness; instead it seeks the good of the beloved: it becomes renunciation and it is ready, and even willing, for sacrifice.

Love is the substance of all life. Everything is connected in love, absolutely everything.

May God Bless us, hold and keep us; may God’s mercy shine on us, guide our work, and guard our resting, keep our love forever new. May God satisfy our longing, be refreshment at our table, and provide our daily bread, guard our going and our coming, be the solace in our silence: life within the lives we lead.

May God join our hopeful spirits, fill our hearts with truth and courage, trust to share both joy and tears, teach love to our children’s children, and may our household learn to witness living faith through all our years.

May God find our home a refuge where we warmly welcome strangers and the lowly find a place; make us caring, kind companions; help us meet the needs of neighbours, finding Christ in every face.

Finally, in the words of an old Irish Wedding Blessing, from the land of my ancestors; “May your mornings bring joy and your evenings bring peace. May your troubles be few and your Blessings increase. May your hands be forever clasped in friendship, and your hearts joined forever in love.”

God loves you — and so do I.

Bishop † Gerard J. Crane

The John of Gaunt Commandery newsletter is produced on a quarterly basis by Conf. David Green, to whom all articles and comments should be sent.

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