



John of Gaunt



THE MILITARY & HOSPITALLER ORDER OF ST. LAZARUS OF JERUSALEM
COMMANDERY NEWSLETTER **Issue No 39 –Jan 2012**

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From the Chancellor’s Desk...

Dear sisters and brothers,

As I write the shipwrecked Costa Concordia is still in the headlines. The terrible and shocking news that a modern, ultra-safe ship in relatively safe cruising has run aground causing major trauma and loss of life is almost impossible to believe. Human error is stated as the cause and the blame is being placed firmly on the shoulders of the captain. He is accused of being among the first to abandon ship thereby causing chaos and unnecessary loss of life in the evacuation procedure and charged with man-slaughter. This tragic incident reminded me of another maritime disaster, the sinking of the Titanic.

Aboard the Titanic on that fateful day in April 1912 was a Christian man called John Harper. John was raised in a Christian home, confessed Jesus as his

Lord when he was fourteen and began preaching at the age of 17 and at the age of 24 he started his own church (now known as the Harper Memorial Church). In 1911 John was invited to be the Pastor of The Moody Church in Chicago hence his passage on the Titanic. John was a widow by this time but accompanying him on the trip was his daughter and niece.

The story goes that on the sounding of the evacuation alarm John took his daughter and niece to the lifeboats, kissed them, promised that one day they would see each other again and then strode off to help the evacuation shouting “women, children and the unsaved to the lifeboats”. John was one of more than 1500 who ended up in the freezing cold water of the Atlantic. John could be seen swimming from person to person asking if they were “saved” (if not in this life then for next). One young man said that he was not so John took off his life jacket and gave to him saying “here, you need this more than I do”. Of the half dozen or so that were rescued from the water the young man who received Harpers life jacket was one of them, John Harper was not. Four years later at a survivors meeting the young man recounted how John Harper had swum from person to person asking them to trust Jesus as their saviour, and how his bravery and the selfless act of surrendering his life jacket had encouraged the young man to confess Jesus as Lord of his life and live a Christian life.

Our hearts surely go out to all those who suffer the vagaries of human error and unexpected tragedy. As we pray for them let us pray too that, like John Harper, we might live lives of joyful, courageous, selfless service, witnessing to our faith in Jesus and the confident hope of new heaven and new earth and eternal life with God.

Grace and Peace

Chris

Events Corner

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

COMMANDERY EVENTS

21st Feb	Lenten Service
19th May	John of Gaunt Investiture
24th February	Chinese night at Elaine's
9th March	Indian night at Elaine's

EVENTS ELSEWHERE

10 March	Guard's Chapel (Earl Shrewsbury Invested by Grand Master)
23-27 May	Grand Master's Pilgrimage to Netteral
21 Jul	National Investiture (North) Southwell Minster
4 Aug	Avalon Commandery Investiture
13 Oct	National Investiture (South) Llandaff Cathedral, Cardiff

News

The Lenten Service will be held at our Chaplain's Church in Warrington on Tuesday 21st February – please notify David Haywood of your attendance..

The Commandery Lotto has now increased to 36 members and is raising £1065p.a. Surely we couldn't get it up to the maximum 49 could we?

We are intending to hold our Commandery Investiture Service on Saturday 19th May. However, unless we are able to find a postulant to be invested this will simply be a Service of Thanksgiving.

The amount raised by Easyfundraising is now over the £500 barrier, but there are still a lot of members who make purchases online who are not taking part. Please remember to refer other Charities as we receive 20% of what they raise and have now produced £30 by referrals, without any effort from us.

Friends of the RV Mission

Chevalier David Green has received an invitation from the Trustees of the FoRVM to join them as a trustee. David regards this as a great honour for both himself and the Commandery and has accepted the invitation.

St Lazarus Lotto Summary

Wednesday Lotto

The Pool 17 Jackpot of £86 was won on 24th August.

Pool 18 started on 31st August with a new player with 2 numbers.

This makes 36 numbers in play, now only 13 numbers available.

A Pilgrimage to Bethany

In 2011, two members of John of Gaunt – our chaplain, Canon Christopher Cunningham, and Confrere Tony Hilton – and two Friends of John of Gaunt – Canon Cunningham's sisters, Helen and Angela – joined the Liverpool Catholic Archdiocesan Pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The pilgrimage included a visit to Bethany, the home of St Lazarus and his sisters, Saints Martha and Mary. They attended Mass in the church of St Lazarus, and then visited the tomb of St Lazarus.



Fundraising 2011

Aims:

Raise £5000

Event	Organiser	Actual raised
Picture Quiz	David Haywood	278
Murder Mystery Night	Elaine	127
Quiz Night	Bernard/Elaine/Ted	149
Cheese and Wine	Elaine	127
Race Night	Elaine	93
Fish and Chip Night	Elaine	50
AGM and Loose Change boxes	Malcolm/Chris Fallone	378
Potato Pie Supper	Elaine	107
Stoller Charitable Trust	Contact : David Haywood	1,000
Hawaiian Night	Elaine	136
Fish and Chip Night	Elaine	26
Garden Party	Elaine, Gareth and Martin	190
Sponsored Walk	Tony Hilton/Elaine and Gareth	180
Barbecue	Malcolm Bell	170
Treasure Hunt	David Haywood	130
Donation	Philip Gillespie	110
River and Boat Cruise	Elaine	99
Handbag Party	Elaine	70
Quiz Night	Tony Hilton	631
Car Boot Sale	Elaine	20
Jewellery Night	Elaine	83
Monthly donations by s/o		752
Anonymous donation		600
D Green various sales		397
Gift Aid relief previous year		1,480
		7,383

In addition, the Picture Quiz raised £328 towards the 2012 total.

A remarkable total once more; congratulations to the organisers of these events/fundraising ideas, and well done to all those who gave their support

Count Them

"Count your blessings instead of your crosses;
Count your gains instead of your losses.
Count your joys instead of your woes;
Count your friends instead of your foes.
Count your smiles instead of your tears;
Count your courage instead of your fears.
Count your full years instead of your lean;
Count your kind deeds instead of your mean.
Count your health instead of your wealth;
Count on God instead of yourself." ~ Author Unknown

✠ Gerard's Jottings.



Sitting here cogitating (that's not a bad word with which to start a new year!) what to say to you in this issue the thought came into my head that it is customary in the Liberal Catholic Church to state an 'Intent' for most of the Sundays throughout the Church's year. Next Sunday the Intent is; Discrimination.

From a very young age I have been concerned about this concept. When I went to the Star Cinema in Little Harwood, Blackburn, I was the child who would stamp and shout whenever they showed on the screen a montage of photographs of cowboys and Indians; but, unlike all the other kids, I was cheering the Red Indians (as they were then called). I had this strange feeling that they were unjustly treated in real life, and many years later, when I joined *'The Onaway Trust'* — I discovered that I was right. The true history of the native American Indian is a catalogue of promises broken, and treaties reneged upon by the white Settlers, the Texans, the Military, the Politicians, etc. Generally the tribes were spiritual people who followed the buffalo herds so that their wives could eat, have clothing to wear, and a cover for their tepee; the white hunters took only the skins, leaving the bloody carcasses to rot on the Plains. Of the 3,700,000 buffalo destroyed between 1872 through 1874, only 150,000 were killed by Indians! The buffalo came close to extinction. The Indians were driven from the plains and put into barren reservations where the land could no longer support them, and their way of life was destroyed. When gold was discovered 'in them thar hills' the tribes were forcibly moved on again, despite the existence of formal treaties, and the fact that much of the area in question was Sacred to the North American Indians.

They were given 'fire-water' (whisky) in lieu of payment which resulted in a life-long addiction for many of them, so with no money coming in many burned the timber doors in their houses in an attempt to survive the bitterly cold winters. I have visited their encampments in Canada, and I have spoken to many proud Indians there, and also in Oklahoma and Kansas, so I speak from some authority.

I am reminded of a story told by Desmond Tutu when he was speaking at an Ecumenical service in New York. He said; "When the Missionaries first came to Africa they had the Bible and we had the land. They said 'Let us pray'. We closed our eyes; when we opened them the tables had been turned, we had the Bible and they had the land." Priests in Australia assure me that the Aborigines endured similar victimisation and discrimination; and still do so – as reported on the radio today (Advent 2, 2011 !!!). Within my own lifetime:- I remember wonderful black artists such as Ella Fitzgerald, Fats Waller, Sammy Davis Jr., Louis Armstrong (Satchel-Mouth abbreviated to Satchmo) suffering greatly from discrimination because of the colour of their skin. They often had to travel and eat separately from the whites, and even enter the theatres etc. by a different entrance from the white members of the band with which they were performing. As a Lancashire lad I am very familiar with the way some women were treated because they happened to have an unusual physical appearance, so they were labelled as witches. By the way, many times I have personally experienced the very strange atmosphere which embraces Pendle Hill to this day! When I left school in Blackburn during 1947 many jobs were unavailable to me because I was a Roman Catholic, others were available only to Roman Catholics. Some Jews can still speak from personal knowledge and experience about Nazi discrimination. As recently as the 60's/70's the attitude towards, and treatment of, women here in Britain left a lot to be desired. The recent behaviour of the Chinese Communists towards the Buddhist Monks in Tibet is beyond belief. I haven't even mentioned the unspeakable atrocities during the Spanish Inquisition, undertaken in the name of religion. Please don't get me going on the P. F. I. Investment fiasco! Intolerance and discrimination abounds even today — and again I speak from personal experience! So, the burning question is ... asked repeatedly in a 60's old folk song ... 'When will they [we] ever learn? ... When will they [we] ever learn?'

Jesus, in the Temple didn't just say "Tut! Tut! Tut!", He overturned tables! — But, take note, he didn't lose His temper. Later, at another time and in another place He was heard to say; "Father forgive them *for they know not what they do.*" (my italics) That can be said about some ignorant perpetrators, however, my personal opinion is that today's 'card-carrying Christians' are in a different league from them, we do know, and some of us can have no possible defence whatsoever for such

behaviour. Perhaps you might be thinking that I am being too hard — or even just getting cynical in my old age. You may well be right, but, to quote the words of another song; “I can dream, can’t I?”

As ‘believers’, we can’t ignore the teachings of our Lord and Master, Jesus; or pick and choose whatever suites our mood at any particular moment. Through our Baptism we have signed up for the whole package! I am well aware that some might subscribe to slightly different translations or interpretations, and might be sojourning along different paths as we struggle through this vale of tears, but often our fundamental beliefs are the same and surely we can agree to differ about the rest, remembering that Jesus also said; “In my Father’s house are many mansions, and I go to prepare a place for you.” Mary, our heavenly mother, said during one of her apparitions; “... In the eyes of my Son you are all the same ...” I am happy with that statement because I get sick in my heart with the pain and suffering engendered because of religious and racial intolerance and discrimination. Oh, how I wish that everybody could miraculously make the same New Year Resolution; “To try to remember that we are all made in the image and likeness of Almighty God, and to meditate on the teachings of Jesus, our Lord and Saviour, the Prince of Peace.”

Once again I remind you that these are my personal observations, and I am well aware that some of you might totally disagree with me. However, I beg of you to keep an open mind ... whilst remembering the old adage — “I don’t necessarily agree with what you say ... but I defend to the death your right to say it!”

Re-reading my rambling words and thoughts expressed above, a thought crosses my mind; I wonder whether this apparently inbuilt propensity towards evil, which exists within the psyche of each and every one of us, is actually what is meant by *Original Sin*? Now, **there is a thought** to cogitate upon. (It’s that word again!) ... Have a nice day!

Let us pray:- Almighty God, who didst wonderfully create man in thine own image, we pray for strength to cast away the works of darkness and put upon us the armour of light; that we, being ever mindful of our spiritual heritage, may hasten the coming of Thy kingdom upon earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord.....AMEN

Bishop † Gerard J. Crane

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

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