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Thank you to all who contributed to the content and production of the latest magazine with its wide range of articles. I hope everyone finds something of interest in it.

Fr Kevin

Once again we have proof of the wide range of spirituality, and literary and artistic talent in our parish community and the varied interests and experiences of our parishioners. I was particularly impressed with the report on the ideas and initiatives of our Eco congregation. This appealed to me as my own daughter, Rachel, whom many you will know as she spent her childhood in this parish, has become extremely concerned about the future quality of life for her children. Rather than just bemoan this she has become a climate activist and took part in the Extinction Rebellion demonstrations in London. She is encouraged that our UK parliament has declared a climate emergency and has asked me to draw this to people's attention whenever I can. I share her concern but I worry that activists can become despondent and run out of enthusiasm unless they have a long term view, preferably based on an understanding of the world as God's creation. This made me think of Pope Francis's encyclical "Laudato Si" which I have been aware of but to my shame, had not go round to reading. I have now started to read it and find it full of so much wisdom and challenge! Below are just two very short quotations:

When we speak of the 'environment', what we really mean is a relationship existing between nature and the society which lives in it. Nature cannot be regarded as something separate from ourselves or as a mere setting in which we live. We are a part of nature, included in it and thus in constant interaction with it. (Paragraph 139)

Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us. (Paragraph 160)

I hope you will feel inspired to send in your own contribution, short or long, for the next issue. Perhaps you would like to comment on an experience you have had, either on holiday, watching a film, or dvd, or climate protest, or reading a book. If so please send your contribution to caroline.moffat@gmail.com or give a hard copy to one of the pass keepers at the back of the church and I will keep it for the next issue.



My wife and I were married on 28 December 1968 in Saint Peters Church (Glasgow!) and our 50th wedding anniversary was celebrated with our family in Abu Dhabi, where our son and his wife live. Our 'children' kindly offered us an anniversary present of a trip to anywhere in Europe we wished to go and our choice was Riga in Latvia. Two reasons determined our choice – 1) we had not been there before and 2) there was a direct flight from Abu Dhabi to Riga. Thus we joined on 31st December a group of travellers carrying anoraks and gloves, ready to leave the sunshine of Abu Dhabi and head for the frozen north.

Riga was a beautiful city, which more than fulfilled our expectations – a city of parks and greenery, splendid architecture built on the banks of the River Daugava (Latvian name) or Dvina (Russian name) or even Duena (German name) and with a number of spectacular bridges spanning the river.

The Old City, some what like the Old Town of Edinburgh, was very compact and best visited on foot, something we were able to do in spite of the snow lying everywhere. We had a wonderful free walking tour of the city, led by our excellent guide, Toms. (A peculiarity of men's names in Latvian is that they almost always ends in S such as Martins, Igors and Karlis.)

'Big Christopher' or Kristaps, whose statue stands on the banks of the river, is the legendary founder of the city. He is said to have carried a child on his shoulders over the river, a child whose weight became heavier and heavier as they crossed the river. Big Christopher became aware that the child was the Christ child carrying the weight of the sins of the world on his shoulders. Big Chris later found a bag of gold left by the Christ child and with it founded the city. There is no suggestion that he is the same as Saint Christopher, the patron saint of travellers, but the legendary story is much the same.

In actual fact the credit for founding the city belongs to a German Bishop Albert who arrived from Bremen and set up a trading post in the Gulf of Riga, converting the local inhabitants 'by hook or by crook' to Christianity. From 1200 until 1918 Riga was basically a German speaking city.

However the city was also for hundreds of years part of the Russian Empire. After a short period of independence it was, until the collapse of communism, an important city of the Soviet union and the Russian speakers still outnumber Latvian speakers in Riga with almost all signs being in the Roman and the Russian alphabet.

There is a splendid Russian cathedral in Riga, which was used as a planetarium and restaurant during Soviet times, but is now returned to the Russian Orthodox community. When we visited I learned there what to do with the thin orange votive candles of unbleached wax which are found typically in Orthodox churches. When you light the candle you turn it upside down and let some of the wax drip into the candle holder and this then holds the candle firm – not a good idea for St Peter's perhaps.

Right inside the cathedral there is a statue of Barclay de Tollervey. Now you might say, "Who is he?" He was a famous general who played a major part in the Russian campaigns

against the incursions of Napoleon Bonaparte – a Russian hero from the Baltic German community, but, as his name suggests, of Scottish origin.

The three Baltic states have different religious histories. Estonian has a Lutheran cultural background, Lithuania has a Catholic background, while Latvia has a mainly Lutheran cultural background with a significant Catholic minority of 25%. In the Old Town of Riga there are three Catholic churches, all three of them within about 100 metres of each other. It is difficult to know the extent of actual religious practice, but the church which I attended on the Feast of the Epiphany was full to overflowing, even more so than St Peter's on an Easter Sunday.

Riga is close to the Baltic Sea and great crowds flock to the beaches of Jurmala with an almost Mediterranean air. We were there in winter but it was impressive to see the huge waves rolling in.

Riga is a great cultural centre with its theatre being the best in the whole Baltic area. We were privileged to attend a performance of the Nutcracker, sitting in almost the best seats of the house at a price of 17 euros.

Perhaps the most popular festival of the year is Saint John the Baptist day on 24th June (Johnny's day) or Midsummer day. There is so much to see and do in Riga and at the moment the prices are lower than in many other parts of Europe.





What we are doing as an Eco Congregation

2019 has been a dynamic eco year so far in St Peter's both for its in-house efforts and its outreach activities in the wider community. Below are some examples.

The Eco group is formulating plans to involve the children of the parish, our local schools, neighbours and the wider community in laying the foundations for a Wildlife Infra City. This is a long term project and will comprise a series of annual initiatives. We have already had some input into planning for the future use of the Ashley Ainslie grounds after the relocation of the hospital and we hope to become involved in other such community ventures to merge with our own initiatives. There will be plenty of opportunities for you and your families to become involved.

Parishioners raised a whopping £1300 in our "Everyone's a Winner" prize draw for Mary's Meals. This amount, raised from recycling your unwanted gifts/unused purchases into prizes, was doubled to £2600 by the government. An additional £1000, also doubled by the government, was donated privately to the total. Congratulations and thanks are due to you all for your generosity and support for this multi-faceted scheme which makes so much difference to the quality of life and future life chances of more than a million of the world's poorest children.

Unfortunately, owing to necessary works much of the planting around the church building has had to be removed but this will be reinstated in stages with consideration for both enhancing our environment and the health of the building.

We have recently applied to the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme for approval of, and advice on, how to involve and mentor some of our young parishioners in both the Volunteering and Service elements of the Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards. Anyone interested should approach a member of the Eco Group. We are keen to tailor each candidate's experience as far as possible to his/her abilities, needs and interests and to provide opportunities for them to acquire a number of transferable skills. Above all we want to foster commitment towards all aspects of welfare for the planet.

Care and respect for God's creation has never been more important: our survival depends on it. The above is only a snapshot of the wide-ranging eco efforts which go on in our parish. The success of our mission depends, not only on your support for formal eco ventures, but also on your individual efforts and ideas. Please let us know what you are doing. It has never been more important to pass on your ideas and initiatives for wider uptake in the parish and beyond.

Ponder the words and phrases - what strikes me?
What is God saying to me?

OPEN HEART

Will your heart be an attic of memories
where dated fashions gather dust?

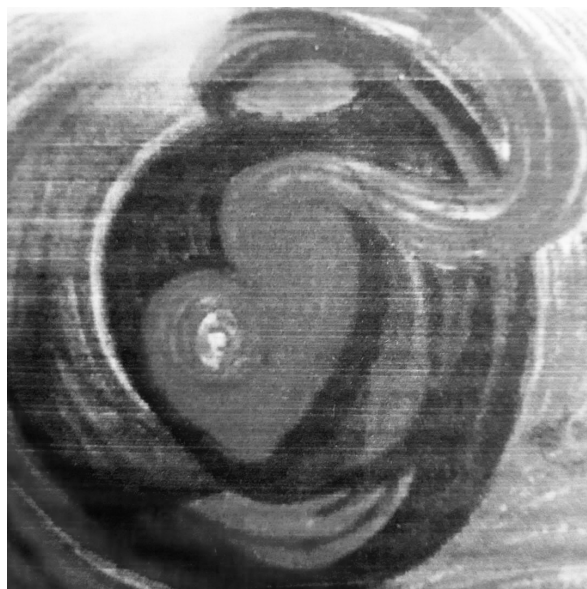
Will your heart be a metal filing cabinet of
names and dates to be pondered efficiently?

Will your heart be the flower-decked tomb of dazzling successes,
now dated and buried?

Will your heart be a museum display-case
to keep in the rapture that you created yesterday?

Or will your heart be welcome beat after beat,
a silence which sounds the embryo of tomorrow,
a detector of the absolute amidst passing lights,
a fire where the word, still crisp is born,
an ample lap to nourish the fledgling future?

*Psalms to accompany the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola
Fr Benjamin Gonzalez Buelta SJ*



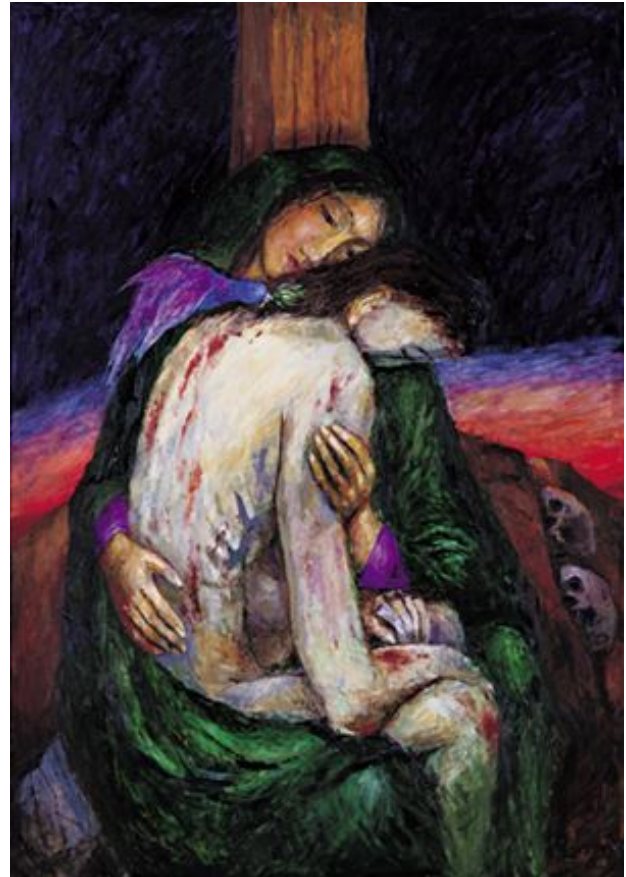
JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

His dead body fell back
Upon her breast
She knew every piece
Of His tortured body
There had been a birthing
Cradling and weaning
She knew him so well
The broken head
The crumpled feet
The pierced hands
The beaten body.

What theology will manage to decipher
these bruises
Of a God who loved too much?
How can I, the passer-by
Know where to stand
As life drains out of His driven flesh
Sanguis Christi inebria me?

(Blood of Christ, fill all my veins)

Patrick Purnell SJ

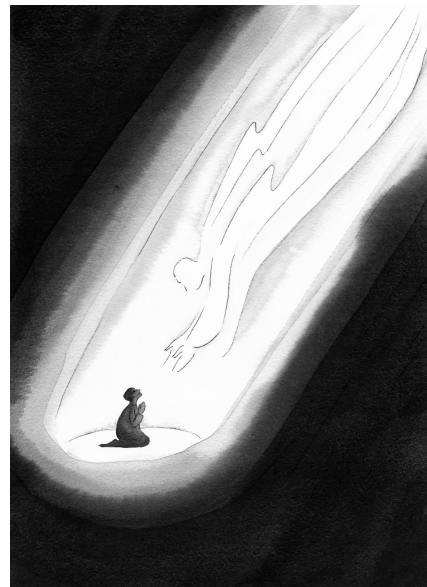


Siegar Coder

THE CHRIST I NEVER DREAMED OF

It was within; it was all around me;
Entering and leaving my soul,
Holding me, possessing me, owning me
As I lifted my face
To the melody and to the deep
Thunder of the drummer's notes
It was there in the crevices of my heart,
Enjoying me for enjoyment's sake.
There were chasms which left me breathless,
Precipices from which I leapt
Into the swirling strings
Upholding me with their song of love.
This was Christ, indeed,
A Christ I never dreamed of.

Patrick Purnell S.J.



Elizabeth Wang

Sourced from the writings of G.K.Chesterton

Many Irishmen were brought up as Catholics but it was a childish faith and because it was not nurtured and developed, when they became adults, it wilted and faded.

Like most abilities in this life, it had to be honed and practised in order to be vibrant. For example, such activities as playing a musical instrument, swimming, flying a plane or learning a new language, all deteriorate and fade if not practised regularly. Even in medicine nowadays as in other disciplines, one has continuous education.

A well known Englishman, who happened to be an Atheist and therefore didn't believe in God, started to think about life and decided that there must be some logical explanation for things based on common sense. He decided he would rationalise everything and come up with some new religion. When he decided that he had found such a philosophy based on common sense, he looked around and found that his discovery wasn't new; that it was there all the time and it was called Catholicism. The reason he converted to Catholicism, eight years later, was because, after considering several other religions, philosophies and political theories, he realised that they all, at some point and in some way, attack the idea of free will. And when they attack the idea of free will, they attack human dignity. One should always defend freedom and dignity. Without freedom, there is no such thing as obedience and responsibility. We choose, that is what gives us our dignity. We make a vow (promise) by choice. Freedom means keeping the vow, no matter how difficult, not breaking it, no matter how compelling.

The average Catholic is regularly filled with doubts but he knows that his spirit(soul) is not material but spiritual, and whilst it exists and enables him to think and act, it is invisible. Only a supreme being could create something like that out of nothing. Therefore a supreme being must have existed before the world was created. So, reason itself is not sufficient for man; he also needs common sense and common sense admits of mystery. There are some things the human mind cannot understand. For these we are indebted to our Maker. A man is not a man without his body, just as a man is not a man without his soul. Because of free will Catholics are free to doubt their God but free also to believe in Him.

A parishioner's background to making the Stations of the Cross

Janet Moss

Jesus is condemned to death



The 14 mosaic Stations of the Cross at St Peter's date from 1960s and were designed by John Kingsley Cook, Head of the School of Design at Edinburgh College of Art. They cost £3,500 taking three years to complete.

I was an art pupil of his at the time and contributed to the construction of the Stations of the Cross along with George Garson, another Art College member of staff.

The history of mosaic crafting goes back to very ancient times. Examples are found under the Mediterranean Sea floors lost in cities buried there.

Usually glazed tiles would be specially crafted on the top surface and were chipped into varied small sizes as needed, generally around ½” square by using a diamond tipped knife. However this unique work in St Peter’s is unusually made of various coloured glazed and unglazed bricks cut in slices a little thicker than the regular glazed ones and in larger squares.

Jesus carries his Cross



The design in colour was then traced out on tracing paper and the pieces of mosaic pasted front-side down with an easily soluble glue instead of using concrete as it was too heavy. It was forced in and when set, turned round and neatly levelled off using sponges or cloths.

The final result of the combination of materials blends perfectly with the brick work of the church. They were hung slightly tilted to reduce reflection from the enamel tesserae and were formally erected on 26 February 1967.

Jesus meets His Mother



You can visit St Peter's website for more information on History and Art of St Peter's and to pray the Stations of the Cross, a present day version.

Editor. To see the full set of Stations in colour and be able to appreciate the skill and workmanship in these artistic treasures, take a walk around the church next time you are there.

Coffee Morning Gingerbread Cake

Annie Royan

This gingerbread cake is a Coffee Morning favourite. It has a dense, slightly sticky texture, and keeps well. In fact, it must be kept for a few days to be at its best.

Makes 1 cake.

Ingredients

4 cups (1 lb/450 g) flour
3 level teaspoons ground ginger
3 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)
1 teaspoon salt
1 ½ cups (8 oz/225 g) brown sugar
175g (6 oz) butter
½ cup (6 oz/175 g) treacle (or molasses)
½ cup (6 oz/175 g) golden syrup
2 ½ cups (20fl oz/500 ml) milk
1 large egg, beaten



Method

Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F/Gas 4). Grease a deep-sided cake tin 20 cm (8 in) square, and line it with greaseproof paper.

Sift the dry ingredients, except the sugar, into a large bowl.

Warm the sugar, butter, treacle and syrup in a saucepan over low heat until the butter has just melted. Stir this into the dry mixture, together with the milk and beaten egg. Beat thoroughly and pour into the cake tin.

Bake in the centre of the oven for 1 ½ hours. Remove from the oven and allow to cool in the tin for 15 minutes. Then turn out onto a wire rack. When cold, wrap in foil without removing the paper. Store for 4 or 5 days before cutting into squares.

Serve with a hot mug of cocoa. It tastes even better with a thin lemon icing.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Ian McCafferty

Source: C.T.S. booklet: Devotions to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour by W. Raemers CSsR

The icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help hangs on the wall of the Lady Chapel next to the Sacristy door in our parish church.

There is a full colour copy on the back cover of the magazine.

A Description of the Icon

Our Lady holds Jesus in her left hand and gestures towards him with her right hand, indicating that the Way is through Jesus Christ, Son of God, Son of Mary.

The child Jesus places his hands on those of his mother. He is facing the Archangel Gabriel who displays the cross to him.

On the opposite side the Archangel Michael carries the instruments of the Passion: lance, sponge on hyssop stick, pot of vinegar and gall and the nails for the crucifixion.

The Child's sandal is falling off. One interpretation is Christ sacrificing his divinity to become one of us. As Saint Paul put it: "His state was divine yet he did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave." Philipians 2:6,7.

Our Lady looks steadily at us, drawing us into a dialogue; offering us her son, Jesus. His whole body is turned towards his mother but his face is set to the cross.

History of the icon

According to the records, the original icon was first venerated in 1499 as the Madonna of Saint Matthew in the church of Saint Matthew in Rome. It became a place of pilgrimage and the site of miracles and cures.

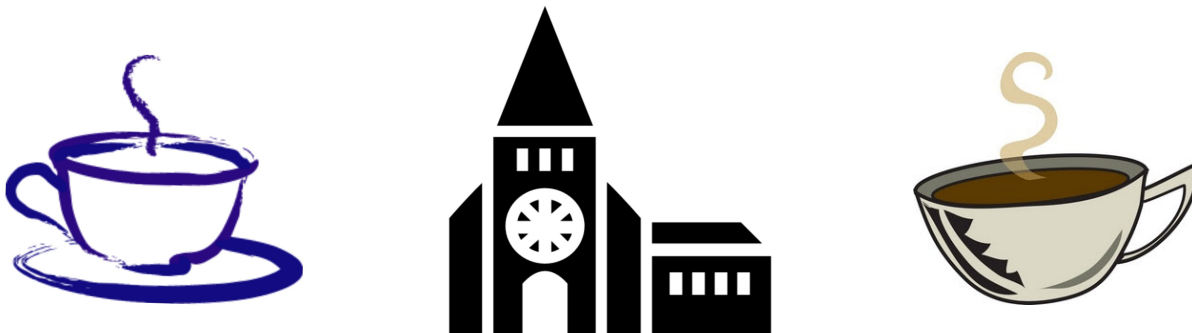
When the church was destroyed in 1798, the icon was saved and hung in Saint Mary's in the Postern Gate.

In 1866 Pope Pius the IX arranged its transfer to the Redemptorists because of their long-standing devotion to our Lady of Perpetual Help. He asked them to make it known to the whole world. It hangs in the church of Saint Alphonsus Ligouri, the founder of the Redemptorist. (Since 2014 it is the titular church of Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster.)

The Redemptorists took a copy of the icon to Roxbury near Boston in 1901. There is a National Shrine in the Philippines. Our Lady of Perpetual Help is the national patron of Haiti. The icon is venerated in many parts of the world.

Our Lady experienced great suffering and stood at the foot of the cross, sharing in the suffering of her son, filled with faith. She is our mother and we can rely on her perpetual help in all our sufferings. It is a blessing to have this icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in our church.

Tea for Two.....hundred
After Mass tea and coffee and an opportunity to socialise



Every Sunday without fail our parish congregation is treated to servings of fresh tea and coffee and a selection of Annie's latest fine home baking; sweet and savoury. There is usually a tasty after mass treat for the children and on special occasions wine and fizz is available for the adults too. It's always a wonderful spread and the cakes do not last long. The provision of the weekly refreshments would not be possible without the dedicated support of the Hospitality team and the official volunteers on the hospitality rota, diligently managed by Annie Royan with the support of Bruce and a handful of informal helpers. Each week Annie ensures that there are at least three volunteers lined up to prepare refreshments, serve the teas and coffees and clear up once everyone has left the Church. It's all good fun and a lovely way to get to know other members of the congregation. If you are interested in volunteering, and it would be lovely to see a few more male members of the congregation represented on the rota to ensure a good equal gender balance and to present the welcoming face of St Peter's to all, then let Annie Royan know.



The Son of God

by Jeffrey Archer

Submitted by Anne-Marie Douglas

He was born in a barn – his father a carpenter and his mother a decent woman, but they were of no significance. They certainly couldn't have afforded to give the boy a private education. And yet, as a teenager he was arguing the toss with his elders and betters in the council chambers. He never got a proper job – just roamed around the countryside, unshaven, and living off bread and water and the occasional fish, while offering his opinions to those who cared to listen.

He became the manager of a football team called The Disciples, not one of them a star; in fact the 12th man rather let the side down by accepting a transfer fee of 30 pieces of silver to play for the opposition.

The authorities eventually arrested him as a rabble-rouser, but couldn't decide what to charge him with other than the fact that he claimed to be the Son of God.

They strung him up with a couple of criminals and when he finally gave up the ghost, rather assumed that would be the last they'd hear of him.

The Disciples were relegated at the end of the season and in fact the captain denied that he'd ever been a member of His team. When he died, aged 33, there were no obituaries in the local press reporting his achievements, no glossy supplements highlighting his colourful career, no radio programs to discuss his legacy and no boxed set recording any of his miracles.

But then, he'd never relied on focus groups to advise him on current trends, or advertising gurus to spend millions promoting his brand, or spin doctors to sharpen his image, and he didn't require social media to keep his followers up-to-date – so you could be forgiven for assuming he'd be forgotten in a few days.

SO HOW CAN ONE EXPLAIN THAT OVER 2000 YEARS LATER, JESUS CHRIST IS STILL THE BEST-KNOWN CELEBRITY ON EARTH? COULD IT JUST BE THAT HE WAS THE SON OF GOD?

Holy Humour

Rosemary Rogerson

A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five and six year olds.

After explaining the commandment to 'Honour thy father and thy mother,' she asked, 'Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?'

Without missing a beat, one little boy answered, 'Thou shall not kill.'

World Scout Jamboree

Alex Boardman

This summer I am lucky enough to be going to the World Scout Jamboree in West Virginia as part of the unit from South East Scotland. The Jamboree is an incredibly unique experience that unites more countries for one camp than any other global event on the planet.

My journey to the jamboree began back in November 2017 – when I first discovered that I had been selected to represent Scotland after the interview and application process. Since then I have attended numerous training weekends all over Scotland and one unit weekend in Belfast where we met the two Northern Irish Units. As well as fun at camps, I have also fundraised in many different ways – from bag packing, to badge selling.

The Jamboree itself lasts for ten days at the end of July, however, my unit will be in North America for three weeks. We start by flying into Toronto and getting a whistle-stop tour of the city before flying down to New York City. We have a couple of days of sightseeing in New York before we make the long drive from America's largest city to the mountains of West Virginia.

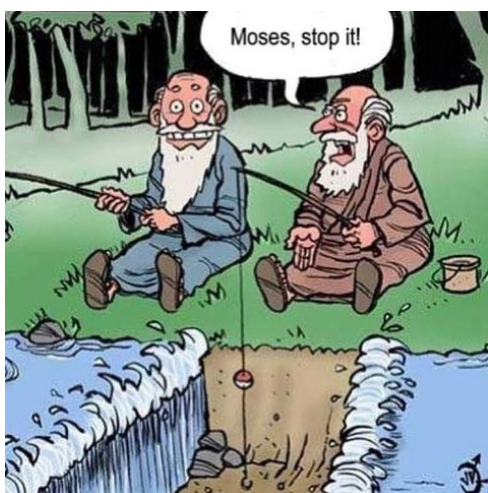
The Jamboree is being held at a purpose built campsite – the Summit Betchel Reserve. The campsite is a dream location with activities of all descriptions. Whilst at the Jamboree, I will be immersed in hundreds of languages and cultures whilst enjoying mountain biking, high ropes courses, water sports, and much more.

After the Jamboree, we travel to Washington, DC, where we spend a few days exploring the capital and its history, before we attend our hosted hospitality.

Hosted Hospitality (or HoHo) is a scheme run for all of the UK units. It is a few days spent living with another Scout's family in small groups of two or three. I recently found out that I am getting to fly all the way to Vancouver, where I will be able to discover British Columbia and live like a Canadian Scout before returning home just in time to get my exam results!

More Holy Humour

Rosemary Rogerson



More Holy Humour

Rosemary Rogerson

The children were lined up in the cafeteria of a Catholic elementary school for lunch.

At the head of the table was a large pile of apples. The nun made a note, and posted on the apple tray:

'Take only ONE. God is watching.'

Moving further along the lunch line, at the other end of the table was a large pile of chocolate chip cookies.

A child had written a note, 'Take all you want. God is watching the apples....'

Phoebe Anna Traquair

Mary Lugton

Phoebe Anna Traquair was born in Dublin in 1852 and died in Edinburgh in 1936. She is buried in Colinton Parish graveyard.

Recently I attended a lecture and slide show on Phoebe Anna Traquair, artist, given by Dr Elizabeth Cumming, art historian, and a trustee of the Mansfield Traquair Trust.

The murals start on the west wall and continue round the chancel to the north aisle. The murals are stunning and tell a Biblical story. Phoebe Anna painted all of the murals herself except a small section, when an artist, John Fraser Matthew (1875–1955) an apprentice in the office of Robert Lorimer, was allowed to paint some of the faces on the arch, where it was said, “they would not be seen”.

She decorated an old coal house at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, then in Lauriston Lane, which had been converted into a chapel of rest for bereaved parents. She also created a mural for the Song School of Saint Mary’s Episcopal Cathedral. There are other places where her work can be seen including our own Sick Children’s Hospital; though this has been sold the murals are to be saved.

Something to note: all the angels have red hair, just like Phoebe Anna herself! Visit the Mansfield Traquair Centre in Mansfield Place to see more wonderful examples of her work.

This is just a short version of our talk, thoroughly enjoyed by all. I am looking forward to Elizabeth’s next talk.

Elders and Angels (Chancel arch)



Above The Prophetic and the Pastoral Cherubim with a rainbow centring on the tabernacle (Chancel arch). The Prophetic Cherubim was described by the Church as 'holding a golden harp and setting forth the imaginative and poetic singing of songs in the spirit'.

Below Two tiny angels swinging on a leaf (North aisle).





S. MARIAE DE PERPETUO SUCCURSU

VETUS IMAGO MIRACULIS
CLARA VENERATA



ROMÆ IN ECCLESIA
S. ALPHONSI

