



Don't miss our bumper **CATHOLIC EDUCATION** issue next week! **OUT ON JUNE 8**

Allies wanted Pius XII's silence **Page 5**



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Moerdyk on Friday fasts: Why punish butchers? **Page 12**

New national youth chaplain for SA



Dancers welcome Bishop Abel Gabuza of Kimberley to St Gertrude parish in Coe-Heuningvlei, the most remote Catholic community in the diocese. It was Bishop Gabuza's first pastoral visit outside Kimberley. The Northern Cape parish is located 420km from Kimberley. (See report on page 2)

BY MATHIBELA SEBOTHOMA

THE bishops of Southern Africa have appointed Fr Sammy Mabusela (pictured) as the new chaplain of youth and students in the region. He replaces Schoenstatt Father Michael Hagan who has been recalled by his religious congregation.

Welcoming Fr Mabusela's appointment, Bishop Xolelo Kumalo of Eshowe, the liaison bishop for youth and laity, said: "We must engage with young people as we prepare them for future leadership."

Bishop Kumalo paid tribute to Fr Hagan, saying he "did a very good job" in building the Association of Catholic Tertiary Students (ACTS) and the National Youth Office.

The bishop stressed that Fr Mabusela, who is "very experienced in working with youth", must work with other diocesan and university chaplains. He says his new work must coordinate and complement what already is being done already by chaplains in universities and dioceses.

He encouraged Fr Mabusela to create a platform where chaplains and other youth leaders will "share their experiences and ideas on youth ministry."

"I am convinced that Fr Mabusela will do a good job with other chaplains and youth structures for our missionary area," Bishop

Kumalo said.

Fr Mabusela belongs to the Stigmatine congregation which has a special charisma of youth ministry. According to Fr Patrick Rakeketisi, local superior, Fr Mabusela did a sterling job when he was diocesan chaplain in Pretoria and when he ran a school in Tanzania.

Fr Mabusela, a priest for ten years, wants to see the youth of the Southern African pastoral region "united in their diversity of nationality, race, class and language".

He said many young people desire to belong to the Church, but are alienated by adults.

The Internet-savvy priest will ensure that during his three-year contract the whole person is cared for "at four levels of spirit, emotion, intellect and body".

His office will be based at the SACBC's headquarters, Khanya House, in Pretoria

Fr Mabusela appealed to all youth to support him in his new challenge. "Young people you are capable you are gifted and you are very special," he said.



The Southern Cross again a top-performing newspaper

STAFF REPORTER

SOUTH AFRICA'S authoritative marketing magazine has named *The Southern Cross* one of its top performers among weekly newspapers for 2010.

It is the second year running that *The Southern Cross* has been featured in the annual review of top performing South African publications of *Marketing Mix* magazine.

The magazine identified its top performers according to circulation figures from the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC).

Marketing Mix listed seven weekly newspapers as their top performers. Apart from *The Southern Cross*, they were *Ilanga*, *Isolezwe ngeSonto*, *Sondag Son*, *Sondag*, *Sunday Independent*, and *Sunday Sun*.

The Southern Cross was the only religious newspaper to be named.

Marketing Mix noted that *The Southern Cross*' circulation figures had remained consistent, which in the present climate is an achievement in itself.

"Keeping this consistency is demanding, but *The Southern Cross* has managed it extremely well without resorting to retaining figures through other means such as sales below 50% or third-party bulk sales, for example," *Marketing Mix* wrote.

It noted that in March 2010, *The Southern Cross* launched its subscription-only digital edition.

"The feedback has been excellent, and we are now looking at ways to promote the Digital *Southern Cross* more aggressively, especially among expatriates," *Southern Cross* editor Günther Simmermacher told *Marketing Mix*.

"While in terms of content, we believe we have appeal across age groups, we realise that within our target market there will increasingly be different reading preferences. The Digital *Southern Cross* is one way of diversifying to meet different needs," Mr Simmermacher said in *Marketing Mix*. "As e-readers become more ubiquitous—

and after lagging behind for a while, South Africa seems to be catching up—we will have to investigate the potential for engaging with that technology, as well as with cell-phone technology."

Reacting to *The Southern Cross* being named one of *Marketing Mix*'s top performing newspapers, Mr Simmermacher said that "the credit must go above all to the people who distribute, promote and sell the newspaper every week in the parishes, and the priests who promote it at the end of Mass".

Their efforts are "absolutely crucial in keeping *The Southern Cross*' circulation going".

"The more people get involved in promoting *The Southern Cross* at the parish level, the more Catholic families will have a Catholic newspaper in their home. So it's an important apostolic ministry they are performing."

Mr Simmermacher pointed out that the circulation figures show that *Southern Cross* readers generally "are very loyal indeed", and noted that "the readership seems to be getting a lot younger".

Mr Simmermacher praised the administrative staff under business manager Pamela Davids for ensuring that the newspaper is produced and distributed every week.

He noted that the editorial team had lost key members in Michail Rassool and Gene Donnelly in 2010, but the staff members who succeeded them—Claire Allen and Claire Mathieson—had "brilliantly filled the gaps left by these two stalwarts", who between them had 50 years of service at the newspaper.

"Behind circulation figures," said Mr Simmermacher, "there are many people who work hard: the people who write articles or place photos, the person who takes the weekly orders for the newspaper and those who distribute it, the parishioner who sells *The Southern Cross* before and after Mass. And, of course, there's the reader—the person being counted by the circulation bureau."

Bishop for Queenstown named

BY CLAIRE MATHIESON

FOR the second time this year, a vicar-general of the Pretoria archdiocese has been appointed a bishop.

Earlier this year, Mgr Abel Gabuza was named bishop of Kimberley; now Pope Benedict has appointed his successor as vicar-general, Fr Dabula Mpako, as the new bishop of Queenstown—the first bishop of the Eastern Cape diocese who is not a Pallottine.

Eastern Cape-born Bishop-elect Mpako, 51, said he sees his appointment as "a new challenge and an opportunity for me to carry out my priestly ministry on a larger scale than has been the case hitherto".

Fr Mpako has served the Church in many capacities since his 1986 ordination. He was the rector at St Paul's Orientation Seminary Hammanskraal and of St Peter's Seminary in Garsfontein, chairman of the Priests' Council (2000-06), and director of Pretoria's first archdiocesan synod.

Fr Mpako served as pastor of Christ the King and St Mark's parishes, Mabopane, and at St Columba's parish in Capital Park. Most recently he was parish priest of St Thomas More parish in Monavoni.

He said he considers his episcopal appointment an "encouraging affirmation and validation by the universal Church of the gifts and talents that God has given me, as well as a clear acknowledgement of the love for and commitment to the Church that I have shown over the almost 25 years that I have been a priest—sometimes through very trying and discouraging circumstances".

While not yet familiar with the diocese of Queenstown, which has been without a bishop since the retirement of Bishop Herbert Lenhof, Fr Mpako said that the beginning of his ministry would be dedicated to familiarising himself with the diocese.

"In particular, I will have to listen openly and actively to the clergy and the religious who have worked in the diocese and who are more familiar with the strengths, the problems and the challenges that face the diocese at this time," he said.

Fr Mpako said his dream for the diocese is

that through his leadership Catholics in that part of the world would be "inspired and motivated to a deepening of their faith as they open themselves fully to the working of the Spirit of God in their hearts, in their lives and in their participation in the life of the local Church".

He hoped his leadership would give all in the diocese an experience "of being 'at home', where all feel free to express their Catholic faith in a meaningful and life-giving way". He said he hoped for a local Church where all experience a real sense of ownership of, responsibility for and accountability to the diocese.

Although excited about his new challenge, Fr Mpako said he would be sad to leave Pretoria and would miss the brotherhood of the local priests and the history with the archdiocese's people.

"I have lived and ministered in the archdiocese of Pretoria for all the years that I have been a priest. Pretoria has therefore become for me a home and a familiar territory for my daily experiences. Obviously, leaving Pretoria will for a moment feel like being uprooted."

He is looking forward to creating the same kind of bond in Queenstown.

"What I have learned from my experience in the archdiocese of Pretoria is the vital importance for the bishop to have a close relationship with the clergy and the religious who are his immediate collaborators in his ministry of being chief pastor of the diocese. I hope to be able to foster and promote a real sense of fraternity among all the priests and religious in the diocese."

There are 61 000 Catholics in the diocese of Queenstown, served by 30 parishes and their outstations.



Bishop-elect Dabula Mpako

The Catholic Church plays a 'critical role' in local elections

BY MATHIBELA SEBOTHOMA

PRAYER and Christian participation made the May 18 local elections successful, said Sy Mamabolo (pictured), provincial electoral officer for Gauteng.

Mr Mamabolo was responsible for leading the IEC team in the province with more registered voters than any other in the country.

A staunch Catholic, he serves as extraordinary minister of Communion at the parish of Our Lady of the Wayside in Maryvale, Johannesburg, under Fr Peter Holiday, bishop-elect of Kroonstad.

He is in the final year of completing a three-year theology programme at the Jesuit Institute of Theology in Johannesburg.

Born and bred a Catholic at St Vincent Catholic church in Tembisa, he temporarily left the community during the struggle against apartheid.

"Two special moments re-evangelised my faith commitment and active participation in my home parish," said Mr Mamabolo. "Firstly, it was my marriage to my wife Butsi in 1998. The parish was warm and spiritually uplifting when I was preparing for the sacra-



ment of matrimony. In addition the community supported me in a lively celebration of the nuptial Mass."

He said the deciding moment

was when he experienced the ordination of a fellow parishioner Fr Vincent Sello MSC. "The ordination rite moved me to tears; the liturgy preached to me...I decided I am following Jesus all the way."

The provincial IEC "has a cordial relationship" with the Gauteng Council of Churches, he said. "I am glad that Catholic leaders like Gauteng Premier Nomvula Mokonyane and Fr Smangalis Mkhathwa were part of the prayer services for successful elections in Johannesburg and Tshwane."

The IEC had organised six assemblies in the province. "We

needed the Holy Spirit to guide the electoral process."

He was pleased when he saw the defence force's Catholic chaplain, Fr Mike Phillips, and Soweto priest Fr Victor Ngwenya as part of the conflict management panel created by the IEC. Their role was to intervene if election related conflicts arose.

He is grateful the Catholic Church played a critical role in mobilising communities to participate in the polls through the issuing of the pastoral letter by the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference.

Bishop heads to rural parish outside Kimberley

STAFF REPORTER

MAKING his first pastoral visit outside Kimberley since his episcopal ordination in March, Bishop Abel Gabuza surprised parishioners by arriving in a big procession, carried by a donkey.

Bishop Gabuza visited St Gertrude's parish in the Northern Cape district of Coe-Heuningvei, the most remote community in the diocese.

"This parish is in a rural area, and it is poverty-stricken, with many unemployed people," said Fr Reginald Tarimo, an Apostles of Jesus priest.

"On the way to our parish, the bishop got lost, and saw only bushes, donkeys, cows and the dust from the rough road on which he was driving," Fr Tarimo said.

Bishop Gabuza celebrated Mass on both Saturday evening and



Sunday morning.

At the Saturday Mass, he paid tribute to his retired predecessor, Bishop Erwin Hecht, for putting up houses of prayer in the area, and for training lay people as ministers of the word to keep the faith alive.

For Sunday Mass, Catholics and non-Catholics came to St Gertrude's church to see the new bishop. Arriving for Mass, Bishop Gabuza was welcomed by Fr Tarimo and the community's elders at the door.

During Mass, the bishop preached in seTswana. His homily was met with loud applause.

Fr Tarimo said he saw things at the Mass he hadn't seen before. "All the out-stations presented gifts. Elders brought up live goats and sheep, and children brought up live chickens. And all people came forward to shake hands with the bishop," he said.

"They gave all what they had out of excitement and joy, just like that woman in the gospel," Fr Tarimo said, referring to Luke 21:1-4.

"This parish is in a poverty-stricken area," he said, "but that Sunday I saw no poverty. I saw only the joy of people and their excitement," the priest said.

"I can confirm what *The Southern Cross* wrote recently; that with Bishop Gabuza, Kimberley diocese has received a diamond," Fr Tarimo said.

(See also front-page picture)



St Dominic's Priory Junior School in Port Elizabeth will raise the curtain on June 13 for the staging of the well-loved musical *The Pirates of Penzance Jr.* Tickets go on sale at R25 from May 30 and can be bought by calling Mrs Raubenheimer on 041 396 2819. There will be five shows of Rogers and Hammerstein's tale of misunderstanding and misfortune running from June 13-15.

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Municipal elections: free, fair and mature

BY CLAIRE MATHIESON

THE 2011 Municipal elections have been described as "robust and mature" by Fr Peter-John Pearson, director of the Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office (CPLO), an associated body of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference.

"There is no doubt that the elections were indeed free and fair," said Fr Pearson, who added that a total of 63 complaints were received, investigated and resolved.

Fr Pearson was not only representing the Church in his observations, but was also a member of the Electoral Code of Conduct Commission, a civil society component working with Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) to assist with any contentious issues on a provincial level as well as representing the Electoral Monitoring Network—a similar group of eminent people working on a national level.

As an official observer, Fr Pearson said complaints were handled expeditiously. Some, he said, resulted "in the suspension of officials who displayed party biases [for example in Limpopo]; recounting took place in locales where disputes were registered [in

one case the presiding officer did not return his paper work]; and technical hitches such as defective scanners at some voting stations in the Western Cape were quickly remedied".

Fr Pearson said the organisation of the elections had improved as 90% of the 20000 polling stations opened on time as fully functional operations. The average travelling time between a voter's home and the polling station was 15 minutes, and the average wait from joining the queue to casting the vote was 23 minutes.

While this was an average calculation there were some townships where voters were forced to queue for hours and this was something the IEC would have to improve on, the priest said.

But the highlight of the recent elections, according to Fr Pearson, was that they were "mercifully free of pre-poll violence and there were this time round no 'no-go areas'". This meant that all parties were free to campaign without hindrance in all areas and voters were able to make decisions without intimidation.

"The environment before and during the elections also ensured compliance with the fundamental human right of freedom of association," Fr Pearson said.

He noted that the Mozambican observer delegation acknowledged the high levels of "trust and respect" between the IEC and the various political parties.

Fr Pearson said that local elections do not tend to receive the same attention as national elections, despite the fact that local government is where delivery happens at a most basic level.

"But the actual turnout, and the reduction in spoilt ballots, from 2,2% to 1,8%, points instead to a high level of engagement by voters and a general trust that formal politics still has value and should be engaged in, at least alongside more vigorous forms of activism."

"The results show a certain fluidity or openness in voting patterns with voters beginning to vote outside of traditional categories whether these be party, culture, race or religion. This could indicate a sense of votes having to be earned on the basis of a particular set of values and experiences. If so, this bodes well for a more robust political culture and for greater accountability for good governance and delivery," he said.

"Catholic Social Teaching lays great emphasis on three values as the benchmark for assessing good political practice. These are freedom, participation and equality,



Electoral observer, Fr Peter-John Pearson, at a recent ecumenical service at Corpus Christi, Wynberg, Cape Town. (Photo: Keith Stober)

which translate for our purposes into the freedom to form political organisations and expound an ideological position; to canvass; to

vote according to conscience; and to pursue and implement practices that enhance the common good," Fr Pearson said.

Farewell to Southern Cross director who died at 81

STAFF REPORTER

BERNARD Pothier, a long-time member of the board of the Catholic Newspaper & Publishing Company, which publishes *The Southern Cross*, died on May 24 after a long illness. He was 81.

Mr Pothier served as a director for 16 years until his retirement from the board in 2006.

In that capacity, he spearheaded the Associates' Campaign, which has helped keep *The Southern Cross* running. He continued to run the Associates Campaign after his retirement and even well into his illness.

His father, Jean Pothier, was the chairman of the company for 24 years, until his death in 1979.

Born on April 12, 1930 in Cape

Town, Bernard Pothier was among the first intake at Christian Brothers' College in Bloemfontein, when the Pothier family lived in that city. After matriculation at Christian Brothers' College in Green Point, Cape Town, he worked as a medical rep and at SBH Cotton Mills.

"But his work was a mere distraction," his younger brother, Len Pothier, recalled. "Bernard's real priority was every possible Church activity."

A recipient of the papal medal Pro Ecclesia in 1989, Mr Pothier was involved in many Catholic activities, including youth groups in Durban and Cape Town, the Society of St Vincent de Paul, Justice & Peace and the Schoenstatt Movement. He was also a long-



serving member of the parish pastoral council of St Patrick's church in Mowbray, Cape Town.

An opponent of apartheid, he was a founding member of the Progressive Party in 1959.

Mr Pothier was married to Margaret for 51 years. They had three children—two of them serving Catholic institutions—and six grandchildren. His daughter Rosanne Shields is development director at the Rural Development Support Program, a Catholic institution. His son, Advocate Mike Pothier, is research director of the Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office.

Chris Moerdyk, chairman of the board of directors of the Catholic Newspaper & Publishing Company, said: "In the many years Bernard served on the board and the executive committee of *The Southern Cross* he was an inspira-

tion to all, particularly in his common-sense, no-nonsense approach to getting things done.

"He spent many hours phoning parishes and parish priests to promote sales, and there is no doubt that the success of this newspaper over the past few decades can be attributed in no small way to the dedication of Bernard Pothier," Mr Moerdyk said.

"Even, a few months ago when he discovered that he had terminal cancer, Bernard set about finding others to be able to take over his *Southern Cross* duties. We shall miss him, his friendship, sense of humour and wisdom."

Mr Pothier's funeral Mass at St Patrick's church in Mowbray was celebrated by his nephew, Fr Mark Pothier.

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Cape Town

St. Kizito Children's Programme (SKCP) is a parish-based movement responding to the needs of orphans and vulnerable children in the Archdiocese of Cape Town. SKCP is currently working in sixteen parishes serving largely disadvantaged communities, where local Parish Groups of volunteers work directly with the children, caregivers and families who are in need of their services. The Parish Groups are led and guided by Parish Group Mentor responsible for a cluster of participating Parishes.



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Catholic charities 'called to express God's love'

BY CINDY WOODEN

WHETHER they are tiny, all-volunteer organisations or agencies with hundreds of professional employees working around the globe, Catholic charities are called to be expressions of God's love and the Catholic Church's concern for the poor, Honduran Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga of Tegucigalpa, president of the confederation of 165 national Catholic charities, opened the week-long Caritas general assembly in Rome.

While a central focus of the meeting was on new statutes that would strengthen Vatican oversight of Caritas Internationalis, the gathering also marked the 60th anniversary of the confederation, which was celebrated with a day-long trip on a vintage steam train that boarded at the Vatican train station.

The festive atmosphere of the train trip was a contrast to the businesslike atmosphere of the general assembly, especially as it



A vintage steam train, dubbed the Caritas Express, makes a short run for the media as it prepares to leave the rarely used Vatican train station for a journey to Orvieto, Italy. The train ride was part of the 60th anniversary celebrations of Caritas Internationalis. (Photo: Paul Haring, CNS)

prepared to elect new officers, including a new secretary-general after the Vatican secretariat of state decided not to give the current sec-

retary-general, Lesley-Anne Knight, its blessing to run for a second four-year term.

"We all would have loved to

continue our journey with the current secretary-general," Cardinal Rodriguez said in his opening address. "The way she was not allowed to stand as a candidate... has caused grievance in our confederation", especially among the women working for Caritas.

Cardinal Robert Sarah, president of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, told the delegates that because the Catholic Church has a hierarchical structure in which the bishops are ultimately responsible for all activity, bishops must be involved in promoting and overseeing any agency that claims to work in the Church's name.

"Our charitable organisations are located within the Church and not alongside her," the cardinal said.

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, Vatican secretary of state, presided at a Mass for the delegates and thanked Caritas Internationalis for giving concrete, practical demonstrations of the Church's love for all people and its belief that the world is one family.

The cardinal said the new statutes for the organisation are meant to reflect "a theological reality: in full communion with Christ and the Church, manifested in the life of its members and in their personal adherence to Jesus Christ, Caritas Internationalis will be truly capable of helping make the world one family, since it is only in Jesus Christ that our true human identity and dignity is revealed to us".

Cardinal Peter Turkson, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, told delegates that Catholic charity workers face two dangers when it comes to sharing the good news of God's love: one is to place conditions on people receiving charity and the other is to be excessively cautious about sharing the faith.

"In performing the work of Caritas, we need not, and should not, restrict our aid to those who share our faith," he said, but Catholics should make sure that the services they provide "reflect the values and the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ".—CNS

Milan gears up for 2012 family meeting

BY CINDY WOODEN

CATHOLICS, like everyone, often are challenged to balance the demands of family, work and free time, but they also have an obligation to show others there is a Christian approach to all three, said Cardinal Dionigi Tettamanzi of Milan.

"Our being Catholic should become a unique and original way of living the challenges that face every family," the cardinal said at a Vatican news conference to discuss plans for the World Meeting of Families 2012.

The international gathering, co-sponsored by the Pontifical Council for the Family, will be held in Milan from May 30 to June 3, 2012. Pope Benedict is expected to attend.

At the Vatican news conference, Cardinal Tettamanzi and Cardinal Ennio Antonelli, president of the family council, presented catechetical material their staffs developed to help Catholic couples around the world prepare

for the gathering.

"The Family: Work and Celebration" is the theme Pope Benedict chose for the 2012 gathering, and while Cardinal Antonelli said specific challenges vary widely around the world, "globalisation means that many problems are becoming common everywhere in the world".

The Pontifical Council for the Family has translated the catechetical material into English, Spanish, French, German, Portuguese and Polish and will send the texts to bishops' conferences to print, distribute and adapt, he said.

The booklet, which is designed to be used at ten periodic meetings of small groups of families, offers reflections from the Bible and from papal documents on the themes of marriage and family life, human dignity and labour, and rest, celebration and keeping Sunday as the Lord's day.

Each chapter includes discussion questions for a husband and

wife to talk about and for groups of couples to discuss together.

Fr Davide Milani, director of communications for the archdiocese of Milan, said the group discussions as well as more global sharing through Facebook and other media would ensure that the preparation period is not focused exclusively on the experiences of families in Europe.

The archdiocese has launched a website for the 2012 meeting (www.family2012.com) and the Pontifical Council for the Family also has opened a new website (www.family.va).

Auxiliary Bishop Franco Brambilla of Milan, who coordinated the drafting of the catechesis, said Catholic couples should be aware of just how much work and free time influence their family life, but they also must recognise that they can "transform the world through work and humanise time with a Christian sense of celebration, especially regarding Sundays".—CNS

Jesuits asked to save dying native language

BY MICHAEL SWAN

AS Canada's Jesuits remembered their first steps on North American soil and the welcome they received from Mi'kmaq people 400 years ago, the Mi'kmaq asked for a favour.

"Maybe it's time for the Mi'kmaq to ask for your help in preserving our language," Grand Keptin Antle Denny told three dozen Canadian Jesuits and about 100 guests who had gathered to mark the 1611 landing of two Jesuits at Port Royal in what is now Nova Scotia.


Mr Denny said about 70% of Mi'kmaq speak English and very few young people are comfortable in their own language. Linguists have predicted the language will be extinct in 20 years. "We need your help," Mr Denny told the Jesuits.

"We want to be with them in spirit," said the Jesuits' English Canadian provincial superior, Fr Jim Webb. "We would be happy to cooperate."

Fr Webb told *The Catholic Register* it's difficult to say what practical steps today's Jesuits could take to help preserve the language, but he noted that work on languages has been part of Jesuit history in Canada. Canadian Jesuits translated Ojibwa stories into English and the Bible into Ojibwa in central Canada.

"If we could find a way of helping, we would try," said Fr Webb.

"Any influence they could have to help us [would be accepted]. Whatever is necessary," said Mr Denny. "If there was only one thing that would cure it, we would all be doing it."—CNS



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Brazil's 'Mother Teresa' beatified

DESPITE intermittent rain, 70,000 people gathered in a park for the beatification of the nun sometimes called Brazil's Mother Teresa in Salvador, Brazil.

Born as Maria Rita de Souza Brito Lopes Pontes in 1914, she was known to Brazilian Catholics as simply Sr Dulce, the mother of the poor.

Cardinal Geraldo Majella Agnelo of Salvador celebrated the beatification Mass with more than 500 archbishops, bishops and priests in attendance.

Claudia Cristiane Santos Araujo, the woman whose miracle cure was attributed to Sr Dulce's intercession, also attended. She had prayed to Sr Dulce while suffering from a massive haemorrhage minutes after giving birth.



A Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God, Sr Dulce found-

ed the first Catholic workers' organisation in the state of Bahia in 1936 and started a health clinic for poor workers. She opened a school for workers and their children in 1939.

That same year, Sr Dulce, with nowhere to turn, invaded five abandoned houses on Rat's Island in Salvador Bay to house the sick and homeless. After getting evicted, she searched for a haven for the poor until 1949, when she settled in an old chicken coop structure beside the convent. That old chicken coop, said her followers, became the largest hospital in the area.

Sr Dulce met Pope John Paul II twice. The first time was in 1980 during his first trip to Brazil. In October 1991, the pope visited her in the hospital due to her weak and frail state.

Five months later, on March 13, 1992, Sr Dulce died.—CNS

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A statue representing Pope John Paul II is unveiled at a ceremony outside the main train station in Rome. The statue has drawn criticism from Romans and the Vatican newspaper, which said the abstract work is unrecognisable as John Paul II. (Photo: Tony Gentile, Reuters/CNS)

Hi-tech priests develop Holy Land app with 'virtual candles' for iPads

A NEW iPad application developed by two priests will send users news, videos and photos from the Holy Land and let people send prayers via "virtual candles".

The new app, called "Terra Sancta" (Latin for Holy Land) was launched in English, Spanish, French and Italian at the Apple Store, according to a press release by the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land. Hebrew and Arabic are to be made available at a later date.

App users receive news from the custodia.org website as well as videos and high definition photographs produced by the Franciscan Media Centre. The application

lets users have "information on what is happening in the holy places, news and videos on the life of the custody, and photos of celebrations, events and people", the press release said.

The content can be shared on Facebook and Twitter.

Users can also "light a candle for the Holy Land" by sending prayers and messages to the custody, the Franciscan Custody said.

The idea for the new application was conceived by Fr Paolo Padriani, a diocesan priest from Italy who also helped develop the iBreviary application for the iPhone, and Franciscan Father Silvio de la Fuente, secretary of the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land.—CNS

Pro-paedophilia priests fired

BY CAROL GLATZ

THE Salesians of St John Bosco removed two Dutch members from their duties after it was discovered one belonged to a pro-paedophilia organisation and another made remarks defending paedophilia.

The Salesian headquarters in Rome said a Dutch priest identified only as Fr "B" and the superior of the Salesians in the Netherlands, Fr Herman Spronck, had both been suspended.

The Salesian provincial of Belgium-Holland, Fr Jos Claes, said that to the Salesians' "great surprise", Fr B was a member of a Dutch-based association that advocates legalising sexual relations between an adult and child.

Fr Claes said the association is "not compatible with our Salesian identity" and "we therefore condemn the membership and the opinions of Fr van B".

The province set up a committee to collect information about Fr B's actions and statements, Fr Claes said, and a committee report "will be sent to the superiors of the Salesian congregation in Rome".

Fr Spronck was dismissed from his position as head of the Salesians in the Netherlands after RTL radio published a transcript of an interview with the priest in which he reportedly said sexual relations between adults and children should be allowed.

The priest is quoted as saying: "We shouldn't consider age so rigidly. You should never break into the personal space of a child if the child does not want that, but that has to do with the child himself. There are also children who themselves indicate that it is okay. Sexual contact is then also possible."

The provincial of Belgium-Holland said: "We distance ourselves completely from the comments by Fr H Spronck" and the order suspended him "from all delegated authority" within the Salesian order.—CNS

Allies wanted Pius to be silent on Jews

BY SIMON CALDWELL

BRITISH and US diplomats discussed exerting pressure on Pope Pius XII to be silent about the Nazi deportations of Hungarian Jews, according to newly discovered documentation.

The British feared that the wartime pope might make a "radio appeal on behalf of the Jews in Hungary" and that in the course of his broadcast would "also criticise what the Russians are doing in occupied territory".

Sir Francis D'Arcy Osborne, the British ambassador to the Vatican, told an American diplomat that "something should be done to prevail upon the pope not to do this as it will have very serious political repercussions".

His comments were made to Franklin C Gowen, an assistant to Myron Taylor, the US special representative to the Vatican.

Mr Gowen recorded the conversation in a letter to Mr Taylor, saying he had promised Mr Osborne that he would bring his concerns to the "immediate attention" of the US ambassador.

"It was understood that, pending your reaction, he would not take any steps vis-a-vis the Holy See," Mr Gowen told Mr Taylor.

In the letter, Gowen also said that Mgr Domenico Tardini, the

Vatican assistant secretary of state, had told him ten days earlier that Pope Pius would not "make any radio appeal because if he did so he would, in fairness, to all have to criticise the Russians", a member of the Allies.

He said he withheld this information from Mr Osborne in the belief that it would be best for Taylor to impart it himself following a meeting with Pope Pius scheduled the day after the letter was written.

The letter was dated November 7, 1944, as the Nazis were organising mass deportations of Jews from Budapest, the Hungarian capital, to death camps in Poland, Austria and Germany.

Rome had been liberated by the US Fifth Army the previous June and, with the Vatican behind Allied lines, the pope had more freedom to speak out. But as the head of a neutral state, he understood that he could not condemn the war crimes of one side without condemning those of the other.

However, on November 19—less than two weeks after Mr Gowen wrote his letter—the Vatican joined the neutral states of Spain, Portugal, Switzerland and Sweden to appeal to the Hungarian government to end the deportations.

The British Jewish historian Sir Martin Gilbert, an internationally recognised expert on the Holocaust, said in his 2002 book, *The Righteous: The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust*, that at that time the Catholic Church in Budapest was hiding 25 000 Jews in homes and religious institutions.

Simultaneously, the Red Army of the Soviet Union was advancing westward across Europe and killing and raping many innocent people as it was driving German armies into retreat.

Mr Gowen's letter was made public for the first time by the New York-based Pave the Way Foundation, which is conducting research

into the actions of Pope Pius.

Gary Krupp, president of the foundation, said that the Allies feared any condemnation of Josef Stalin's armies "would work against the unified war effort of the Allies".

He said the letter is significant because it showed the pressures that confronted Pope Pius, who has been criticised for his alleged silence in the face of the Holocaust.

"The simple reality, which seems to be ignored by many critics, is that the Vatican was a neutral government that used its neutrality to save thousands of lives," said Mr Krupp, a Jew from New York.

Another letter made public by the foundation discusses help for Jewish fugitives, with Mr Osborne telling Harold Tittman, another of Mr Taylor's aides, that it must be destroyed because it might endanger the life of an Italian priest who was rescuing Jews if it fell into enemy hands.

It was dated May 20, 1944, barely three weeks before Rome fell to the Allies. According to the Pave the Way Foundation, it shows how the work of rescuing Jews was conducted in secrecy, with most documentary evidence of such activities destroyed almost instantly.—CNS





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The Southern Cross

Editor: Günther Simmermacher

The bishop's big job

MANY South African Catholics will have had cause over the past few years to rejoice in the appointment of a new bishop in their diocese.

When *The Southern Cross* in a September 2006 editorial welcomed the present apostolic nuncio, Archbishop James P Green, to our region, we noted that "it is conceivable that among the priorities our local Church leaders might wish to bring to the nuncio's attention is the high number of vacant or soon to be vacant dioceses in Southern Africa".

Archbishop Green clearly made the process of appointing new bishops a priority. In meeting this challenge—which is an immense responsibility, because a poorly chosen bishop can create big problems—the nuncio evidently has been creative in submitting the names of suitable candidates to the Holy See.

More than half of the dioceses in the Southern African region are now headed by bishops appointed during Archbishop Green's tenure.

Some of these appointments have proved to be particularly wise. The question of naming a successor to Archbishop Lawrence Henry in Cape Town was exceptionally tricky. The transfer of Archbishop Stephen Brislin from Kroonstad to Cape Town has proved to be a masterpiece; the faithful and clergy of the archdiocese have taken the man from the Free State to their heart.

Likewise, the transfer of Archbishop William Slattery from Kokstad to Pretoria, another complex archdiocese, has been warmly received by both the clergy and faithful there.

The snag in these transfers, of course, resides in the dioceses from which the new archbishops were transferred having lost outstanding bishops. We trust that Fr Peter Holiday will be an excellent successor to Archbishop Brislin after his installation in Kroonstad later this month.

By all accounts, bishops who have moved to a diocese they previously were unfamiliar with have generally assimilated and connected with their new flock quickly.

This week we report on Bishop Abel Gabuza's pastoral visit to a remote parish in his large diocese of Kimberley. It is encouraging to read about the

community's enthusiasm for their bishop, who until recently was a priest in Pretoria, and a stranger to the diocese he now heads.

Bishops need that support. Being named a bishop is a great honour, but it is also a lonely and colossal task, performed by a relatively small number of men who must find ways of meeting the trust that has been invested in them.

The late Archbishop Denis Hurley of Durban used to talk about the loneliness of the episcopal position. The price of the mitre is indeed steep: a bishop must take decisions that will not please everybody. A good bishop will make difficult and hopefully wise judgments, even at risk of upsetting friends. Expectations of him differ so much that invariably he will disappoint somebody at some point. And a bishop knows that some people will find it difficult to pardon a mistake or lapse in judgment.

A bishop, as Pope Benedict once put it, is expected to be a father, brother and friend to his clergy and shepherd to the laity. But that is the abbreviated job description. He must also be a spiritual leader, pastor, administrator, human resource executive, social advocate, promoter of vocations, psychologist, arbitrator, moderator, reconciler, teacher and student, and guarantor of unity within his diocese—preferably exercising all these roles with a measure of collegiality.

The Body of Christ must be thankful to those who assume these great responsibilities. We must pray for our bishops that they may satisfy the enormous expectations invested in them, that they exercise their authority with wisdom, that they won't be disheartened when things go wrong and remain humble when things go well; and that they will not be too lonely.

We must commend our bishops when they perform their obligations well. And when they do not, we must feel able to communicate our concerns as well, with charity and respect.

Above all, we must give thanks to our bishops for their selfless service to the People of God, and offer our prayers for them in their demanding ministry.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor reserves the right to shorten or edit published letters. Letters below 300 words receive preference. Pseudonyms are acceptable only under special circumstances and at the Editor's discretion. Name and address of the writer must be supplied. No anonymous letter will be considered.

The last journey

AS a devout Catholic there are times when I come across facts (and sometimes fiction) which cause me to pause and ponder on the teachings of our faith. The following was, and perhaps still is, a profound occurrence in the lives of good, hard working people living in a challenging, hostile environment.

The aged and ill of the Inuit people of the frozen north, Alaska, Canada and beyond would, without fuss, make the decision to lighten the burden on their loved ones and take one last journey into their pristine but frozen arctic homeland.

When the time of their departure arrived, they would wrap themselves in furs, take a small parcel of food and step out into the tranquillity of the snow and icy air. They would go as far as they could away

from all they knew and loved. When tiredness overtook them, they'd find a snow drift for shelter, settle down and eat the little food they had brought with them.

I feel sure that in those last hours they would dwell on the happy memories of their lives, make their peace with their Great Creator God before closing their eyes and allowing the spirit of rest to wrap them in its arms and then welcome the wings of sleep to carry them into the welcoming arms of eternity.

Neither family nor friends would have attempted to follow them for they knew and understood the way of their own people. Any trace of the footsteps of their loved ones would not be visible having been blotted out by the falling, shifting snow. They would with sadness, but acceptance, appreciate the loving sacrifice made.

There is something deeply spiri-

tual about such a selfless act of love.

It is not a violent death, but an act of the greatest kind of love performed with gentleness and in peace. Such an act of love spares loved ones the anguish of caring for a frail senior member of the family and community who in the harsh and hostile environment of bitter long winters and short cold summers would be an added burden.

In the eyes of the Church would this act be accepted as an act of selfless love or revoked as an act of suicide and therefore rejected as sinful?

June Jansen

■ *Such a person would not be committing suicide but surrendering to a natural end. So even if suicide was invariably a sinful act (which according to the catechism of the Catholic Church it is not), that point wouldn't apply.—Editor*

We are not alone

HENRY Makori's "The loneliness of priests" (May 11), brings me to some of our older folk. They too, both men and women, suffer loneliness. Maybe a lifelong partner is gone, the children flown the coop, and too busy or too far away to visit. In most cases when visitors depart, there is a feeling of loss, a sense of separation.

I'm in my 29th year of widowhood, and using my faith, I cope by placing all things on the cross with Jesus in his pre-death agony, hanging there beside him.

He too knows loneliness. In the garden his disciples were asleep. Yet we are not alone. God lives in us. He keeps us company always. Trust in him.

HM De Kock, Cape Town

All who are on the side of truth

DOCTOR John Straughan, ("Which Church?" April 20) seems to be confused about the work and whereabouts of the Holy Spirit in the Church (both capital and small c). Thus I cannot find his "advice" credible.

At this so very holy time of year and having absorbed again all that the Christ actually did and said during this time, I would offer Dr Straughan some of the words Jesus spoke to Pilate when agreeing that he is a king: "I was born for this...to bear witness to the truth and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice."

Please note that Jesus had by then established his "church" (small c) and he said: "Listen to my voice."

The church was to be the servant of the servants of God. Clearly the Holy Spirit is not confined to church with a capital C!

Dr Straughan correctly states that the Church guides us with the Holy Spirit, but according to Jesus the primary guidance is "the voice of Christ" in the minds and hearts of all the faithful. Is this not why we have the doctrine of primacy of conscience?

It is a waste of time trying to put down a fellow professional Catholic by inferring with the statement: "liberation of the conscience from Godly guidance"!

No one with Jesus in mind and heart is going to listen to such a foolish statement!

Rosemary Gravenor, Durban

Did Our Lady really need to be redeemed?

IN his column Open Door, (May 14), Michael Shackleton asserts in explaining the mediatorship of Mary, it is necessary to stress that Mary needed to be redeemed by Christ as we all do.

If this is true, from which sin did Our Lady need to be set free? Catholicism teaches that it was the sin of disobedience by our first parents that barred us from entering heaven and thus caused the need for our redemption.

By his grievous suffering and death on the Cross, Christ redeemed his human creatures from their sins. All alone among humankind, Our Lady, by obeying God in all things, remained entirely free from sin. After being conceived immaculate—and this

is dogma—she continued to live a sin-free life.

At what the Greek Orthodox so touchingly call her dormition (falling asleep) she was taken up body and soul into heaven—also dogma.

Unlike sinners, therefore, she was not subjected to the indignity of the grave. This proves that she was not in need of redemption but only of acceptance from God.

While on this topic of the mediatorship of Mary, I would like to express my bafflement at the on-going controversy about proclaiming Mary to be the mediatrix of all graces. Why should the bestowal of this title offend Almighty God?

Mr Shackleton records that Vatican II reaffirmed Mary as mediatrix but did not clarify the title, probably because there was not enough agreement about how to express it. If this was in fact the case, why should semantics be allowed to get in the way of truth?

In the Hail Mary we ask Our Lady: "Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death." Does this not make her our mediator?

Since God first used Mary as a bridge to come to us, what harm could there be in our solemnly declaring the validity of using Mary as a bridge to go to God?

Luky Whittle, Kroonstad

■ *From the moment of her conception, Mary was immune from original sin. But this privilege, the immaculate conception, was hers through the redeeming grace of Jesus Christ who is the redeemer of the whole human race. See Catechism of the Catholic Church, 491.—Michael Shackleton*



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How fictional TV priests are portrayed

LAST month the Vatican hosted something quite new: the International Catholic Film Festival, which was held Rome from May 12-21. The festival placed a particular spotlight on the priesthood.

Liana Marabini, an Italian film director and president of the festival, said she wanted to focus on the priesthood because priests are often "overlooked" or portrayed in a negative light in films. "They need to be valued, loved and welcomed" by the laity and the wider community, she told reporters.

It's an instinctive reaction to deplore the way the Catholic Church and her priests are presented in film. No doubt the Church and the priesthood, and Christian values in general, tend to get short shrift in the movies and on television. And sometimes scripts appoint Catholic clerics as the bad guys (though we see priests mostly presiding over graveside funerals).

A movie called *Priest*, released in the United States in May, takes the unfavourable view of the Catholic Church to a ludicrous extreme. It's a futuristic action flick in which the Catholic Church has taken over the world after winning an apocalyptic war against vampires, as you do, with its priests as warriors. Now the victors have become totalitarian oppressors and to rebel against the Church's authority is regarded an ethical necessity.

Perhaps the makers of the movie are trying to juggle metaphor, fantasy, analogy, vampires, propaganda and lots of gore to make a point about challenging the Catholic Church's global power (surely an imprudent move if you believe the Vatican has the muscle to defeat vampires).

More likely, the futuristic Catholic Church of the movie is a proxy for any random institution of global reach. It could

have been the United Nations or Microsoft, if they had anything as cool as priests.

But if watching a sci-fi bloodfest or the albino monk of *The Da Vinci Code* has the power to shake an individual's confidence in the Catholic Church, then that individual must have had a dim view of the Church in the first place.

I don't know if the Vatican festival president was thinking of such movies when she said priests are portrayed in a negative light on film. Perhaps there is an anti-clerical trend in European film I have missed, but I have not picked up on a systematic prejudice against priests in US productions.

To be sure, there have been films that are not friendly, or even hostile, towards the Church, her priests and teachings, just as there are films that are not friendly towards, say, the US presidency. The incessant jokes about "paedophile priests" are tiresome. Portrayals of the Catholic Church are often poorly researched. And in some films priests are made to look foolish or unkind (but it just reflects the reality that some priests sometimes act foolishly or unkindly).

That doesn't mean that Hollywood, to use a shorthand, is systematically anti-Catholic, even if it is not as pro-clerical as it used to be when Bing Crosby was going his way, Pat O'Brien or Spencer Tracy were donning the Roman collar, and Montgomery Clift would rather die than violate the seal of the confessional.

Perhaps a better method of judging the entertainment industry's attitudes towards priest is by studying television serials, with their scope for recurring roles and characterisations. In my experience, Catholicism and the priesthood tend to be portrayed respectfully, and in the best shows even positively.

Two superb, critically acclaimed TV

Günther Simmermacher

Point of Debate



shows treated Catholicism accurately and as a source for good.

In *The West Wing*, Martin Sheen played a Catholic US president, educated at Notre Dame university, whose ethics were very much informed by his faith, even if sometimes he had to act against them. In one episode, a priest played the great Karl Malden (who also played an admirable priest in *On The Waterfront*) gives the president spiritual counsel on the question of capital punishment. It is a memorable scene with a memorable priest.

In the mafia series *The Sopranos*, the Catholic Church is central in the Italian-American community. Gangsters are buried with rosaries around their hands, mafia wives go to confession or do nappy drives for the parish, and priests offer spiritual guidance and friendship.

Remarkably, not once are priests depicted as objectionable, even when there was opportunity to do so. The priest-principal of the Catholic high school is strict but understanding; the priest tempted to commit adultery remains firm in his fidelity to his promise of celibacy and the Church's teaching; the new, young parish priest is wise to the hood's manipulation of a Catholic feast.

When the priests dispense advice, it is doctrinally and pastorally sound. They are very much human (one priest likes to be invited to a good meal) and sometimes supercilious, but in a depraved world, they provide a moral centre.

And then there have been the affirming detective priest (in the early '90s series *Father Dowling Mysteries*) and action hero cleric (in the current sci-fi series *V*)

I struggle to come up with a TV show that portrays priests in a negative light—even the British sitcom *Father Ted*, which pokes fun at the priesthood, has many fans even among the clergy, who probably recognise more about absurdities in the lives of priests in that programmes than the average viewer would.

One TV show about priests that was cancelled because of unaccountable Catholic lobbying was the short-lived *Nothing Sacred*—which presented the priesthood as a positive institution and desirable vocation.

There seems little evidence for some sustained agenda against the priesthood. But when there are representations of fictional priests we don't approve of, we hold the power: the off-switch.



Dermot Morgan as Fr Ted Crilly in *Father Ted*, Karl Malden as Fr Cavanaugh in *The West Wing*, and Paul Schulze as Fr Phil Intintola in *The Sopranos*.

The African Rivermoss

THE time just after the First World War was a spring time not only for Xhosa politics but literature too. Just before the war, there was the foundation of the South African Native National Congress, which became known as the African National Congress in 1923. And there was a proliferation of native newspapers.

Umteteli was prominent among the newspapers then. It went on to become a seed for others, like *Imvo Zabantu Abantsundu*. The editor of *Umteteli* was none other than "uNzululwazi" (which means deep knowledge), the most renowned poet of the nation since then, SKE Mqhayi. Mqhayi is fondly known as the Shakespeare of Xhosa literature.

Prominent among *Umteteli's* contributors was Nontsizi Mqgqwetho, who contributed more than 90 poems to the paper between 1920 to 1929. Before then no black woman had published poetry so voluminous.

In the Xhosa tradition there is a saying: *umtana uyalilandela igama lakhe*—a child follows the meaning of their name. There was something tragic about Nontsizi's life whose name means "the one affiliated with sorrow". The sorrow was more of a torture of a soul who lived under the eye of God and the enlightening demands of literature.

Often, in her writings, she is caught up in a moral dichotomy, the curse of not really belonging, having to castigate both white oppression and a black self-seeking callous attitude that often makes

the oppressed prey on each other, especially the weak.

Like most educated black people of the time, her convictions, political and otherwise, were almost inseparable from her religious beliefs and commitments. And her impeccable honesty can be seen in her narration of the anti-pass demonstration she was part of in 1929:

"On 3 April 1929, we the leaders of the nation marched with a mass of people to the Fort [Johannesburg], where we were going to wait for 'the dawn of Africa', the lifting of the burden of the pass from our shoulders. We had high hopes, truly believing that this burden would fall once we'd scale the hill Difficulty.

"We got there and stood around, wondering what to do next. What did we see? Another hill Difficulty suddenly confronted us, sowing confusion. Cops on horseback charged us down, at full tilt, like bats out of hell. Our leaders took to the hills before those horses reached the Fort. They made no bones about their fear, saying they had been pounded by the cops at Fordsburg the day before. They just left us there in the mess they'd invited us to. I tell you truly my people, it's only through the power of God we survived that mess."

I guess the confrontation with the police was not always the stuff of heroic tales the history books would have us believe. Only poets can bring us these honest admissions, and thank God for their saintly souls.

Mqgqwetho was clearly a tortured soul,

Mphuthumi Ntabeni

Pushing Boundaries



frustrated by the male dominance over women in her time. It meant that she could never really live by her pen, no matter how attracted she was to the idea. And she was also compelled to use masculine language to express herself, since she wrote more in the genre of a traditional Xhosa *imbhongi*.

Though a committed Christian, sometimes she was unable to reconcile her religious beliefs with her political anger: *Heed its word and heaven's lost, / It's spear that wheels and stab us: / The land of Phalo's on its head / From the hypocritical cant of white man's gospel.*

She decried the loss of values that came with urbanisation and thought the solution came with returning to more traditional ways, without necessarily disposing of the Bible, which was more in line with Ntsikana's teachings: *You see my people, we're growing old, / The truth has left us long time ago, / The Truth is bound in Bible covers / Also swathed in custom blankets.*

Oh peace, Nontsizi, African rivermoss, / Woman, the winsome song of your voice / Sets Africa's walls thrumming, / Utterly shamming all the lads. / We'll hear of the day of your death, Nontsizi. / The commando's horse has lost its way. / Oh, peace! And to you, Ntsikana, / Who prophesied in thorn brakes.

(With gratitude to Jeff Opland for the painstaking work he did in researching Xhosa poetry and putting it on the map again.)

Michael Shackleton

Open Door



Truth about lice

With the recent outbreak of head lice in the Western Cape, do we really have to continue with the unhealthy practice of the priest and Eucharistic minister blessing a child who has accompanied a parent to the altar at Communion time, by placing a hand on the head of the child? Would it not suffice to place the hand on the forehead rather than on the hair?

Bill McIntosh

HEAD lice are parasitic wingless insects that live in the hair and feed off blood from the scalp. Their eggs are known as nits. They are most commonly found in primary school children. Because the children play and sit with heads close together and often share items such as hats, headphones, towels and combs, the parasite spreads rapidly by contagion, and it is a major task to be rid of it once infestation has taken place.

Medical treatment is available for this unpleasant condition which is characterised by persistent scratching and sometimes bleeding and infection. Preventive measures include cleanliness of body, hair, clothing, bedclothes, towels and other personal items—and certainly not sharing these with others.

It appears unclear whether touching the hair or foreheads of affected children will necessarily pass on the condition to those not affected, but in the case of a widespread outbreak of head lice in a parish and its contagious nature, medical opinion should be requested. Also, local schools and clinics should be asked whether there has been a recent significant incidence of head lice among their pupils.

The parish priest can then, if necessary, make the decision to discontinue blessing children with the hand on their heads. He could instead bless by making the sign of the cross over them. Eucharistic ministers could perhaps lay a hand on the child's shoulder. These are possibilities but the bishop or parish priest may want to make a ruling appropriate to the circumstances.

In my experience, blessing the child with a touch to the head is appreciated with satisfaction by parents. Also, those adults who, for certain reasons, present themselves at Communion time with arms crossed over their chests, do so because they value receiving a blessing during Christian community worship.

Therefore, a priest should not be over-hasty in stopping this kind of blessing, unless there is reasonable certainty and sound medical opinion that head lice are being spread in this way.

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Pilgrims of St Bernadette's Lenten Journey to the Holy Land, led by Fr Gregory Mitchell CO outside the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. with their Christian tour guide Usama Salman.



Saydoon Nisa Sayed (coordinator of the World Conference on Religion for Peace), Cardinal Wilfrid Napier of Durban and Paddy Meskin, (a patron of the Denis Hurley Centre and president of the World Conference on Religions for Peace in South Africa), place flowers on the tomb of Archbishop Denis Hurley. (Submitted by Illa Thompson)



The youth of Kroonstad diocese enjoyed a five-day youth retreat and rally that took place around the Vaal River between Carltonville and Parys. (Submitted by Fr Emmanuel Mbeh MHM)

IN FOCUS



Send photographs, with sender's name and address on the back, and a SASE to: *The Southern Cross, Community Pics, Box 2372, Cape Town, 8000* or email them to: pics@scross.co.za
Edited by: Lara Moses

†
J.M.J

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The Catholic Chinese Welfare Association held its 46th Annual Debutantes and Squires Ball in Gauteng. Nicole Fung was crowned Miss Debutante 2011. She is photographed with Fr Daniel Madanza from Cosmos City parish, Catholic Chinese Welfare Association members and her fellow debutantes and squires. (Submitted by Lilly Loo)



A surprise 80th birthday party was held for Ellen Ray (purple dress), the oldest member of the Catholic Women's League at St Michael's parish in Redhill, Durban. She is with her friend, Lorraine Smith, daughter-in-law and grandchildren. (Submitted by Marlene Abrahams)

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Does an abusive marriage call for divorce?

The Catholic Church holds that the bonds of Christian marriage cannot be broken. But what if such a marriage is abusive, asks COLLEEN CONSTABLE.

IN Catholicism marriage is a sacrament: it does not come with an option of divorce—there is no exit ticket. From a legislative perspective a legally married person can file for divorce in accordance with the laws of the country.

For Catholics, a divorce decree is not a ticket to freedom. Unless the marriage is annulled by the Church, you remain married even if you are divorced within the context of the law.

Some divorced Catholics hope to get an annulment, but only a few succeed in having their failed marriages erased in the eyes of the Church. There are technicalities linked to an annulment, and one is that domestic violence does not provide grounds for an annulment of a marriage.

There are some women who have divorced their husbands (for legitimate reasons), but could not get an annulment, and are therefore considered by the Church to be married.

These include women who may have left their ex-husbands because of gender-based violence. She is now in a state of limbo, because she cannot remarry in the Church, and if she enters into a relationship with another man, she loses the right to receive the sacrament of the Eucharist.

Domestic violence is defined as the emotional, verbal physical or financial abuse of another. Sur-

vivors can be female or male. Domestic violence is considered the cause of most major injuries of women in the United States, and a high contributor to female death worldwide. In South Africa one out of every four women is a survivor of domestic violence.

According to the Medical Research Council, a woman is killed by her partner every six hours. If this is placed within context of family, it surely suggests a breakdown of the cohesiveness in the family unit.

Research from World Health Organisation suggests that domestic violence survivors do not receive support from family or friends and even local leaders. It implies that the survivor fights a lonely battle. Sometimes the justice system also lets the survivor down.

In such a harsh reality, can the domestic violence survivor turn to her parish priest for support? I know a woman who sought the support and trust of her parish priest—the one who operates *in persona Christi*.

After Mass, she anxiously waited for him at the church gate. When he closed the gate, she approached him. "Father," she said, "I am going to leave my husband. He is too abusive. I cannot take it anymore."

The priest, without looking up to her, continued closing the gate of the church. And as he did so, he responded: "You are going to be second-hand. Nobody would want you."

On hearing this response, a chill went down her spine and she felt powerless. The priest's response equalled secondary victimisation.

The priest got into his car and drove away. She stood at the gate, shocked by the lack of support and absence of empathy. She went home. She stayed. She prayed. She kept her secret: nobody knew that she was being abused.



With one in every four South African women being a survivor of some form of domestic violence, should the Catholic Church adapt its teachings on divorce? In this article Colleen Constable discusses why she thinks they should.

A year later she unknowingly faced the master of all abusive techniques: strangulation. All she remembers of that day was that in her mind she called out to God for forgiveness; she felt death was upon her. She was losing breath. Only a chance visit from a relative saved her life. He stopped her ex-husband from killing her.

On that day she walked away from her marriage. She divorced him. But she could not get an annulment, because domestic violence is not recognised as a condition for an annulment.

It is an example of when a marriage is a valid marriage and yet not a marriage: when the patriarchal attitude some men carry towards women diminishes the priesthood of Christ within marriage; when equality in Christ is set aside and replaced by a sense of

entitlement, masculinity, dominant behaviour and power; when love as described in 1 Corinthians 13 becomes vague rhetoric. And when the representative of Christ forgets to play the role *in persona Christi*, when spiritual leadership associated with the "first person" in the marriage between two people who once proclaimed "for better or for worse" is required.

The representative of Christ forgets to be the human rights activist that our Lord was when he saved the woman from being stoned to death, correcting patriarchal attitudes.

If canonical annulment on grounds of domestic violence is not possible, should the domestic violence survivor stay "till death do us part" (perhaps at the hands of her husband), or end the marriage if the centre is held together by violence and fear? What is best

for her if she wants to remain in full communion with the Church?

If she cannot obtain an annulment, she has no right to remarry in the Church and would lose her right to certain sacraments if she engages in a relationship in future.

For many practising Catholic women this is the most tragic part: to be cut off from receiving the Eucharist.

Only the domestic violence survivor can face the moment of truth between her and a triune God. In the movie *Eat, Pray, Love*, the character Elizabeth Gilbert has a "bathroom moment": in desperation to save her marriage, Elizabeth sits on the floor of her bathroom in the early hours of the morning. She turns to God and prays: "I need your help, I am in serious trouble."

Only domestic violence survivors can decide whether to end an abusive marriage. If she leaves, she needs spiritual support from the Church and moral support from the parish family.

If she decides to leave an abusive marriage, she leaves with the Triune God in her heart. And when she leaves, she will need the Eucharist for spiritual healing: this is where her strength will come from each day, taking one step at a time.

And she will need a psychologist for emotional healing, a medical doctor for physical healing, and the friendship of a parish family to hold her hand while her own family and in-laws are caught up in the battle of choosing who to side with.

Her parish family is the one who should accept her without questions: she will be too vulnerable to share so much pain so soon. She has to learn to trust again, to relax, to laugh, and find inner and outer peace. For the domestic violence survivor, the journey begins when she walks out—and it is a long process of healing and reflection.

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Remembering Oxford's Catholic martyrs

The subject of the Reformation can still cause heated debate in some circles of England's Oxford University, but things may be changing, as
JONATHAN LUXMOORE and MALGORZATA GLABISZ-PNIEWSKA report.

AT 100 Holywell Street, not far from Oxford University's famed Bodleian Library, a melancholy black plaque maintains a solitary vigil against the elements.

When officials at the university's Merton College agreed in October 2008 to allow the house to be used to commemorate four Catholics executed under Queen Elizabeth I, the move was resisted by some city council members. After more than four centuries, the story of Oxford's martyrs still provokes unease.

"There's no doubting we're in a more ecumenical frame of mind now, and can acknowledge the heroism of those who, whether Protestant or Catholic, died for their beliefs," explained Benedictine Father Bernard Green, an expert on Christian persecution in England and director of studies at Oxford's St Benet's Hall.

"But there's still, even today, a reluctance here to accept that Catholics like these were genuine martyrs. Although many have been beatified for their witness, the vast majority are still completely unknown," Fr Green said.

Two of the martyrs, Frs Richard Yaxley and George Nichols, were arrested at midnight in May 1589 after secretly saying Mass at the city's Catherine Wheel Inn, during a wave of repression against the outlawed "Old Religion". After being tortured in London, they were brought back to Oxford to be hanged, drawn and quartered.

Their lay companions, Thomas

Belson, who had studied at the university's Oriel College, and Humphrey Prichard, the inn's Welsh barman, also were hanged for harbouring the priests. All four were beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1987.

Besides 40 canonised saints, hundreds of other English and Welsh Catholic martyrs also have been declared blessed by the Church. Many had close links with Oxford, which was seen as a hotbed of Catholic dissent during King Henry VIII's reformation.

Until recently, the story of Oxford's Catholic martyrs was overshadowed by that of Anglican Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, Bishop Hugh Latimer and Bishop Nicholas Ridely, who were burned at the stake in 1555/56 during the reimposition of Catholicism under Henry's daughter, Queen Mary I.

The ditch outside the city's North Gate where Archbishop Cranmer and his companions were killed as heretics still is marked with a brick cross. An ornate memorial, unveiled nearby in 1841, declares the three bore witness "to the sacred truths...against the errors of the Church of Rome". It serves as a permanent reminder to Oxford's inhabitants that the Anglican clergy were martyred by a Catholic ruler.

But Fr Green thinks the memorial reflects internal church politics of the 1840s, when Anglicans were resisting the pro-Catholic Oxford Movement led by, among others, the recently beatified Cardinal John Henry Newman.

"The Catholic martyrs were killed mostly for treason, rather than heresy, highlighting the close link between religion and politics," Fr Green said. "This explains why discussions about the Reformation are still highly charged here, even among academics, and why it's difficult, even today, to find a neutral historian."

On a wall of Oxford's St Aloysius church, a mural shows St Edmund Campion, worn out by

prison torture, being hanged at Tyburn in 1581 during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

St Edmund studied at an exiled English seminary in the Spanish Netherlands—now Belgium and Luxembourg—after giving up his Oxford post to become Catholic. He joined the newly founded Jesuits and was chosen to head a mission to his homeland because of debating skills gained at the university.

Betrayed by an informer, St Edmund was caught near Oxford and was killed at Tyburn with fellow Catholics Fr Alexander Bryant and Fr Ralph Sherwin, after refusing to embrace Anglicanism.

Although repression eased under Elizabeth's successor, King James I, who had a Catholic queen, anti-Catholic measures were never far away.

When civil war erupted in the 1640s, Catholic priests again were arrested and hanged by Puritan parliamentary forces. Catholic books and pictures were burned in the streets. The bones of Catholics are believed among remains recently unearthed under the North Gate site of Oxford's notorious Bocard Prison.

When a chapel was dedicated to St Ignatius in 1795, it was Oxford's first Catholic place of worship in 237 years. Even then, students were required to be Church of England members, a requirement until 1871. Only in 1895 were Catholics finally allowed to enroll openly at the university.

Fr Green thinks the long-held anti-Catholic phobia should be understood.

The Protestant regime of Elizabeth I was a fragile one. If the unmarried queen had been assassinated without an heir, a Catholic claimant might well have been installed at the behest of France or Spain. Although the defeat of the invading Spanish armada in 1588 defused immediate dangers, it was natural that underground priests



Archbishop Bernard Longley of Birmingham blesses a plaque in honour of Bl George Napier at Oxford Castle last October. Fr Napier was among the many Catholic priests martyred for their faith in the 16th and 17th centuries. (Photo: Joseph Shaw, CNS)

such as St Edmund would be seen as political conspirators.

"The most serious opposition Elizabeth faced was indeed Catholic, so we can appreciate why her governments suspected Catholics of treason," Fr Green explained. "But Catholics as a whole weren't politically involved, and researchers now concur the vast majority of Catholic victims were innocent."

Attitudes could be changing.

In November, a plaque was unveiled at Oxford Castle in memory of Bl George Napier, four centuries after he was executed there for his Catholic faith.

Born in Oxford, Fr Napier was expelled from Oxford's Corpus Christi College for being a Catholic recusant and trained abroad as a priest. Returning to England, he was arrested with consecrated hosts and holy oils after a captured highwayman he had visited in jail told authorities about him.

An annual pilgrimage in mem-

ory of Oxford's Catholic martyrs has been organised since 2004 by the Latin Mass Society of England and Wales. In 2009, an ecumenical memorial was unveiled in St Mary's Church, listing five Protestants executed under the Catholic Queen Mary, and 16 Catholics killed by Protestant rulers.

"When religious faith is critical of the state, people often suffer for it, and that was especially true when Catholicism and Protestantism were battling each other," explained Rev Brian Mountford, the university church's Anglican rector.

"But when it comes to honouring people who died martyrs' deaths, I don't think there need be any division between Catholics and Anglicans today," Rev Mountford said.

"We may differ in how we celebrate saints and martyrs. But in recognising those who died for their faith, whichever church they belonged to, we can and should reach a consensus."—CNS

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Sr Rita Scollan HC

SISTER Rita Scollan was born in Swanlinbar, County Cavan, Ireland on December 17, 1949, the second daughter in a close-knit Catholic family of six sons and two daughters. Her parents, Patrick and Ellen Scollan, owned a farm and Rita grew up in the countryside loving to accompany her father in the fields. She was a lively, talkative, intelligent child, absorbing the Catholic faith and a love for Ireland from her family and her surroundings. She was courageous and adventurous and remained so all her life.

At 19, Sr Rita experienced a call to be a missionary sister and found her way to the Holy Cross Sisters in Belfast, who were actively seeking young women who would devote themselves to missionary work in Africa. Sr Rita, entered the Holy Cross Sisters on October, 4 1969. In the circumstances in Belfast at that time—the early days of the “troubles”—it was a very courageous step for her parents and herself to take.

However, the sudden death of her beloved father some months after she entered was a cause of shock and deep sadness to her.

Nevertheless, she was not deterred from pursuing her calling and made her first profession of vows in Belfast on August 23, 1972. Thereafter she obtained an education degree at St Mary's Education College, Falls Road, Belfast. This was a period of a lot of violence and tension in the West Belfast area where both the convent and the college were situated.

In November 1977 Sr Rita left Northern Ireland for an even more troubled South Africa. She was assigned to Immaculata High School, Soweto. On January 5, 1979, she made her final vows in the Catholic church in Diepkloof, Soweto.

Sr Rita was a very enthusiastic and dedicated teacher, determined to give of her best to the students and so give them a better chance in life. In 1981 she was appointed principal of the school and gave all her energy and considerable skills to providing a good education for the pupils. These were very

Shrine to host pilgrimage

NGOME Marian shrine in collaboration with the Diocese of Eshowe, KwaZulu-Natal, will host a Youth Camp and Eucharistic Pilgrimage.

It will begin before 19:00 on June 17 and end on June 19 at Holy Angels parish in Vryheid.

Bishop Xolelo Kumalo of Eshowe and other priests will celebrate various Masses on these three days. Adoration, praise and worship and presentations are planned.

Contact Fr Nkululeko Meyiwa OMI on 076 640

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SOLUTIONS TO #447. ACROSS: 1 Repute, 4 Grapes, 9 Christian love, 10 Evident, 11 Ocean, 12 Mince, 14 Broth, 18 Plato, 19 Ugliest, 21 Trinity Sunday, 22 Sentry, 23 Terror. **DOWN:** 1 Rocket, 2 Participation, 3 Taste, 5 Protest leader, 7 Skeins, 8 Mists, 13 Crozier, 15 Spites, 16 Quays, 17 Stayer, 20 Louse.

Word of the Week

Scapular: a sacramental worn by monastic or lay persons consisting of two small pieces of cloth with bands attached worn around the shoulders. They often come with a set of blessings for the wearer, either rooted in tradition or formally approved by religious leaders.

tough years to be teaching or running a school in Soweto.

In 1986 Sr Rita was appointed principal of Holy Cross High School for girls in Maitland, Cape Town. In 1994 she was appointed to the staff of the newly established Catholic Teacher Training College in Mogwase near Rustenburg. Here she lectured in English until the college was closed in the year 2000.

Meanwhile, she had obtained a Masters degree in Language Acquisition Studies from Stellenbosch University and applied for and was appointed to a government post with special responsibility for English in the many secondary schools in the Mogwase district of the North West Province.

From June 2000 until her death Sr Rita devoted herself unstintingly to providing quality education for learners in these rural areas.

Sr Rita was idealistic and wholeheartedly devoted herself with passion to the cause of education for the disadvantaged in South Africa, which she saw as her mission in life. This mission was rooted in her strong Catholic faith. She was a vibrant person who loved to engage in conversation and debate and appreciated banter and a good laugh.

In the first months of 2011 she handed in her resignation to the education department. After a short illness, Sr Rita died at Holy Cross Home, Pretoria, on April 3. Bishop Dowling of Rustenburg presided at her funeral which was attended by members of her family from the United States and Ireland, her colleagues, former pupils, friends, a number of priests and the Holy Cross Sisters.

Sr Maureen Rooney



Family Reflections

June 2 Ascension Thursday. Christ's eternal glory. This feast both celebrates an event—Christ's ascension—as well as a look to the future—that we will one day follow him and live in God's Kingdom. Youth is a time for looking at the present and the way forward too. How can families help their youth to create a positive self-image in order that they will be peace-builders and not peace-destroyers? At this time pray too for an increase in Christian unity that peace will become a reality.

Liturgical Calendar

Year A

Sunday, June 5, 7th Sunday of Easter
Acts 1:1-11, Psalm 47:2-3, 6-9, Ephesians 1:17-23, Matthew 28:16-20

Monday, June 6, St Norbert
Acts 19:1-8, Psalm 68:2-7, John 16:29-33

Tuesday, June 7, feria
Acts 20:17-27, Psalm 68:10-11, 20-21, John 17:1-11

Wednesday, June 8, Bl James Berthieu
Acts 20:28-38, Psalm 68:29-30, 33-36, John 17:11-19

Thursday, June 9, St Ephrem
Acts 22:30; 23:6-11, Psalm 16:1-2, 5, 7-11, John 17:20-26

Friday, June 10, feria
Acts 25:13-21, Psalm 103:1-2, 11-12, 19-20, John 21:15-19

Saturday, June 11, St Barnabas
Acts 11:21-26; 13:1-3, Psalm 98:1-6, Matthew 10:7-13

Sunday, June 12, Pentecost Sunday
Acts 2:1-11, Psalm 104:1, 24, 29-31,34, 1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13, John 20:19-23

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DEATH

AHERN—John Patrick. Passed away in Grahamstown on April 29, 2011, after a short illness. Deeply mourned by his wife Marion, children Jenni, Sandra and Patrick and families, his sister Bridget and family, other family members and many friends. May his dear soul rest in peace.

ESTMENT—Mark Denton, aged 49, passed away in Cape Town on May 8, 2011. He suffered greatly but is now at peace. Always remembered and sorely missed by his mother Rose and by Adrian, Barbie, Paul, Nick and Kevin.

HORTOP—Fr Peter OP. Popularly known as Nkululeko, died on May 22 in hospital from heart failure. May he rest in peace. Fr Emil Blaser.

POTHIER—Bernard, our beloved husband, father and grandfather passed away at home on May 24 after a long illness borne with grace and dignity. Greatly missed and forever loved by Margaret, Mike, Siobhain, Nicholas, Heide, Rosanne, Tiernan and grandchildren Luke, Jamie, Sam, Jodie, Catherine & Julian. Many thanks to St Luke's Hospice for their help.

POTHIER—Bernard, our dearest Dad and “Gaga”, thank you for everything. We love you with all our hearts and miss you already. Please look down on us and guide us always. It was a great honour to be with you at the end. Rosanne, Tiernan & Catherine.

POTHIER—Bernard George. Beloved brother, brother-in-law and uncle, passed away May 24 aged 81. The patriarch of our family, he is deeply mourned and will always be missed by Leonard and Val, Adele and Alec, Val and Richard and his nieces and nephews. Rest in Peace.

POTHIER—Bernard. Former director of the Catholic Newspaper & Publishing Company passed away on May 24. His long service, contributions, friendship and wise counsel even after retirement from the board will be remembered by his fellow directors. Our sincere condolences to Margaret and family. The chairman and directors of the board of the Catholic Newspaper & Publishing Company.

POTHIER—Bernard. Our dear friend and favourite “troubleshooter” passed away on May 24 after a long illness. We will remember him for his unyielding passion for the social communications apostolate, his

wisdom and fine sense of humour, and his concrete example of Christian witness. He will be dearly missed. Our sincere and prayerful condolences to Margaret, Mike, Rosanne, Nicholas and their families. Günther Simmermacher, Pamela Davids and staff of *The Southern Cross*.

IN MEMORIAM

RAINS—Allan. Dearest Allan, it's been one year since you left us, but feels like a lifetime ago. We love and miss you more than words can say. There is hardly any moment of the day that you're not in our thoughts and prayers and shall live forever in our hearts. Living life without you is the hardest thing of all. Love you forever, Teresa, Bradley, Nicky, Chloé, Christopher, Hilton, Eon and Cindy.

PERSONAL

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PRAYERS

HOLY St Jude, apostle and martyr, great in virtue and rich in miracles, kinsman of Jesus Christ, faithful intercessor of all who invoke you, special patron in time of need. To you I have recourse from the depth of my heart and humbly beg you to come to my assistance. Help me now in my urgent need and grant my petitions. In return I promise to make your name known and publish this prayer. Amen. RCP

THANKS

GRATEFUL thanks to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Our Mother Mary and SS Joseph, Anthony, Jude and Martin de Porres for prayers answered. RCP.

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The Southern Cross

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Pentecost Sunday: June 12
Readings: Acts 2:1-11, Psalm 104: 1, 24, 29-31, 34, 1 Corinthians 12: 3-7, 12-13, John 20:19-23

Pentecost brings the gift of the spirit

NEXT Sunday, the Easter season comes to its end, with the celebration of the Holy Spirit, which (or who?) was such a powerful part of the experience of those first Christians. And what does this 'Holy Spirit' do for us?

It is more, it would seem, a matter of what it does in us, almost without our permission. Watch what happens in the *first reading* for the feast. About the only thing that the disciples do for themselves is to be "together, in the same place". All that happens after that is none of their choosing: "Suddenly there came from Heaven a sound, like that of a powerful wind blowing, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting." Then there are "tongues of fire", which "sat on each one of them", and, still with no apparent choice in the matter, "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in different languages, according as the Spirit gave them to utter".

After that, we are invited to look at the episode through the eyes of their audience: "Jews and pious men from every nation under Heaven," who come running together at the noise, "and each one heard them speaking in his or her own language". Now comes a report of their astonishment, "Look—aren't these fellows who are talking, Galileans?" [And we should remember at this point that people used to laugh at the Galileans for their funny dialect of Aramaic].

Nicholas King SJ
Sunday Reflections



Then we hear a list of the places they come from, which is almost a tour of the Mediterranean world, from East to West, North to South; and, when finally we come to the end of the list, with "Romans, Judeans and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs", we discover what all these disciples have been getting up to: "speaking in our languages the great things of God" Are you praying for this gift of the Spirit, this coming week?

The *psalm* also talks about the great things of God, "Lord my God, you are very great", it sings, "How many are your works, O Lord!" Then comes the mention of "Spirit", which is presumably why the psalm was chosen for the feast; but actually the word here could also mean "breath". Either way, however, it is the gift of God: "You take away their breath, and they perish, and they go back into the dust."

That is a reminder that the "breath" or "Spirit" is that without which we cannot exist; and he continues: "You send forth your Spirit, and they are created; and you make new the face of the earth."

This is a God who is very involved in his beloved creation: "Let the glory of the Lord endure forever, may the Lord rejoice in his works!", and finally an ecstatic response: "I shall rejoice in him." None of this, you see, is at all our own doing.

Paul is making a similar point in the *second reading* for next Sunday. The Corinthians, it seems, have been rather getting above themselves, because they had received the gift of the Spirit (unless you are careful, there is always a risk that you may complacently congratulate yourself on your charismatic qualities; and then there is inevitably going to be trouble).

Paul has to warn them how to find out whether they have the Spirit. First, if you have the Spirit, you will find that you are able to say "Jesus is Lord"; and, secondly, you will realise that there is more than one way of being Spirit-filled: "There are different kinds of charism, but the Spirit is the same, different kinds of service [and the Corinthians were not very service-oriented], and the same Lord."

Thirdly, the Spirit is given "to benefit the body". Then Paul goes on to tell his famous fable of the "body" of Christ, in which all the limbs and organs are of equal value. The point is that those Corinthians thought that some of them were better than others in the Church, which is catastrophic for unity.

Finally, if the Spirit is breathing in the body, then they will be united (unlike those

wretched Corinthians): "For in one Spirit, all of us were baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we have all been given one Spirit to drink." So the Spirit, next Sunday, should be bringing us unity.

Nor is that all. For the Spirit is also given to enable Christians to deal with sin.

In the *gospel* reading the scene is set on that first Easter evening, when the timorous male disciples had locked themselves in, "for fear of the Jews", which tells us that although some of them had had experience of the Risen Lord, they had not really been changed very much from those panic-stricken cowards who had abandoned Jesus and (in the case of Peter) energetically denied that they had ever heard of him.

To this craven band, Jesus offers "Peace", and evidence ("his hands and his side") that it was indeed him. Eventually they consent to "rejoice, having seen the Lord". Finally, these reluctant heroes are given a job: "He breathed on them, and said 'Receive the Holy Spirit: if you let go the sins of anybody, they are let go; if you hold onto the sins of any, they are held'."

We blink nervously and wonder what this means; but it clearly refers to the gift of the Spirit that Pentecost celebrates, and it includes the Resurrection and Jesus' conquest of sin. There is nothing here on which to congratulate ourselves; our task is to rejoice in the victory of God.

Why punish the butchers?

IHAVE noted with considerable interest, and more than just a modicum of dismay, that the Catholic hierarchy in the England and Wales has decided to re-introduce the practice of not eating meat on Fridays.

Now, I grew up in a post-war household where this practice was zealously observed. Two things worried me at the time.

One was that I actually preferred fish and chips to fried steak and therefore wondered what was so penitential about what I was doing.

Secondly, I could never quite fathom why the Church chose to punish butchers. Just what had butchers done way back in history to deserve being singled out for what was effectively a weekly boycott by Catholics?

Why not dairy farmers or greengrocers? I would have thoroughly enjoyed abstaining from vegetables on Fridays because when I was a kid things like broccoli and cabbage were instruments of the devil.

And what about puddings? Most of them were pure self-indulgence anyway with no real nutritional value. In fact, all a pudding seemed to do was give everyone in the family under the age of five a sugar rush of such intensity that it made parents have evil thoughts, mostly about inflicting bodily harm on their progeny with the sharp end of a slipper.

The bishops of England and Wales say they wish to re-establish the practice of Friday penance in the lives of the

Chris Moerdyk
The Last Word



faithful as a "clear and distinctive mark of their own Catholic identity".

This is to come into effect from Friday September 16 when Catholics in Britain will mark the first anniversary of Pope Benedict's visit to their country.

This really quite strange because I seem to remember that the pope's visit was an overwhelmingly joyous occasion in which papal nay-sayers were put firmly in their place as virtually the whole country, not just Catholics, went into welcoming raptures very rarely seen in the British Isles these days.

It really is quite odd that this momentous event is now to be celebrated by boycotting butchers and re-establishing a practice that, in my opinion, serves absolutely no purpose whatsoever.

Penance, in this modern day and age, is not nearly as important as it used to be in the Middle Ages when most people actually didn't have anything to give up and could really just manage to dress in sackcloth and wail pitifully.

And then came penance in the form of a post-confession recital of three Hail Marys or saying the rosary if you'd been a really naughty fellow.

This was something else I didn't

understand. Why use one of the most wonderful prayers in Catholicism as a form of punishment? The Hail Mary should be a prayer of joy, not of penance, surely. To youngsters, of course, penance and punishment are the same thing.

I believe that there are so many other things Catholics can do to express their Catholicism.

Maybe they can do so in the same way that was suggested by several local priests this past Easter when they called for parishioners to move away from observing Lent by giving up things like chocolates, sweets and other indulgences and rather try and show a daily act of kindness towards their fellow human beings and those less fortunate than themselves.

I would like to think that it would be far better to celebrate our Catholicism, celebrate the life and death of Christ, by individually or collectively performing acts of kindness to others. From small acts of kindness, such as a simple smile, to greater acts of kindness by feeding, clothing and helping to provide housing for the poor.

I cannot see how on earth a poor family, living in a freezing cold and leaky shack in a smog-engulfed township, is going to benefit by me deciding not to have a sausage for supper.

I cannot see how an aged, lonely and dying pensioner is going to find any sort of solace just because I decided to switch my pork chop for a fish finger on Fridays.

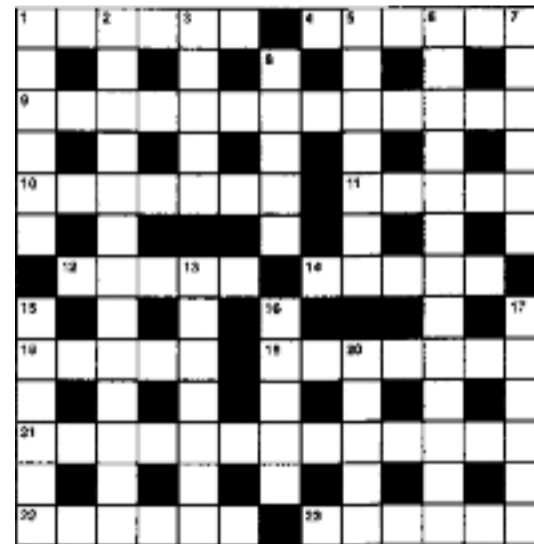
I am sure that this lonely person would gain enormous comfort from a visit by a kindly neighbour, or even of a complete stranger, never mind if that visitor was munching on a stick of bil-tong that Friday.

I know that I might well incur the wrath of Catholic traditionalists who think that giving up meat on a Friday is sacrosanct and that saying three Hail Marys after confession will make some sort of difference other than a personal feeling of inner peace and well-being.

But I firmly believe that there is so much suffering in the world today that we can no longer justify self-indulgent penance.

Quite apart from which, punishing butchers is just plain un-Christian.

Southern Crossword #447



ACROSS

- Up tree there's high esteem (6)
- Fruit of the vine (6)
- Charity among Jesus' followers (9,4)
- Obviously clear (7)
- Change canoe to sail on it (5)
- Do it to words of disapproval of meat? (5)
- Thin soup (5)
- Greek philosopher (5)
- Isle tug is the most repulsive (7)
- It follows feast of Pentecost (7,6)
- One who guarded Christ's tomb (6)
- Extreme fear (6)

DOWN

- Salad ingredient that's also a missile (6)
- It shows you're taking part (13)
- The bud on your tongue (5)
- Under cover I ran courtwards, showing resentment (7)
- He is the front man in the public demonstration (7,6)
- Lengths of yarn for knitting, perhaps (6)
- They're not as thick as fogs (5)
- The bishop's crooked staff (7)
- Pest is making deliberate offences (6)
- Loading places for ships sound like lockers (5)
- One who remains (6)
- One among the lice (5)

Answers on page 11

Conrad



CHURCH CHUCKLE

SOMEBODY has said there are only two kinds of people in the world. There are those who wake up in the morning and say: "Good morning, Lord", and there are those who wake up in the morning and say: "Good Lord, it's morning."

Send us your favourite Catholic joke, preferably clean and brief, to The Southern Cross, Church Chuckle, PO Box 2372, Cape Town, 8000.