

Number 17
April 2018

ALCUIN NEWS

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM SAINT ALCUIN OF YORK
THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CHURCH IN TOURAINE

GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD



DO WE?

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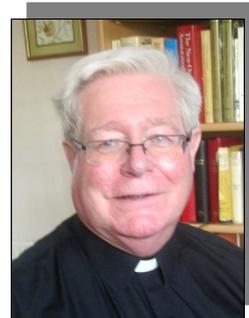
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HEROES OF THE FAITH

Joan of Arc *Visionary*

Joan of Arc was born at Domrémy in 1412, the daughter of a peasant farmer. She first heard voices of particular saints when she was fourteen years old, telling her to save France, which was caught up in the Hundred Years War with England. Though at first she was dismissed, her credibility increased when some of her predictions began to come true. She managed to identify the disguised dauphin -- later to become Charles VII -- whose approval she gained. She persuaded troops to be set to relieve Orléans and rode at their head, wearing white armour. They were successful in battle, which increased the morale of the army and enhanced the reputation of Joan. When the dauphin was crowned king at Rheims, she stood at his side. Her voices had warned her that her life would be short yet she was dangerously naïve in not seeing the jealousies she provoked. After some failures in battle, she lost favour and was eventually sold by the Duke of Burgundy to the English, tried in a court for heresy by the Bishop of Beauvais and eventually burned at the stake on 30th May 1431. Twenty-five years later, the pope formally declared her innocent. She was made second patron of France after her canonisation in 1920.

FR JOHN WRITES



IN A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION SUCH AS *ALCUINEWS* (THE NEXT ISSUE WON'T APPEAR UNTIL JULY) IT CAN BE DANGEROUS TO COMMENT ON CURRENT AFFAIRS. And to top it all, I shall write about wintry weather in a time when we hope to enjoy a beautiful spring. But fools do rush in, so here goes.

Scientists tell us the severity of the Siberian weather at the end of February was sparked off by a sudden warming in the Arctic. An effect which seems quite at odds with the cause.

It is certainly an example of the fragility and interdependence of the planet. Our planet, God's planet.

The bible puts God and his love for his creation as its very first theme: "In the beginning, God" is followed by "and God saw that it was good".

We who are ordinary Christians, who see this world as God's, are called to reflect on what care for God's planet means for our daily life and our choices. But it is a divine imperative, not just an option: we are only its stewards.

The choices can be difficult and science can change. For example, we who bought diesel cars thinking they were less environmentally harmful, must face up to our mistake. Nor will concern for God's planet leave as much money in our pocket.

Probably we won't get everything right all the time, but that doesn't prevent us from trying, perhaps by thinking about how does this product affect the sustainability of the planet? Is it produced ethically in terms of animal welfare and equitable trading? What about pollution and waste?

Father John

AT THE HEART OF OUR LIFE

THE EUCHARIST



7.00 pm
on the 1st Sunday of the Month
in the Protestant Temple
32 rue de la Préfecture, Tours
(tram: Nationale; bus: Gare Vinci)

11.00 am
with Junior Church
on the 4th Sunday of the Month
in the Parish Church of St Michel
Le Bourg, Savigny-en-Véron

All Welcome



THE ST ALCUIN CALENDAR

Our worship in the coming months

April	1st	<i>Easter Day</i>	11.00 am	Sung Eucharist with Holy Baptism	La Riche
	22nd	<i>Easter 4</i>	11.00 am	Sung Eucharist	Savigny
May	6th	<i>Easter 6</i>	7.00 pm	Sung Eucharist	Tours
	27th	<i>Trinity Sunday</i>	11.00 am	Sung Eucharist	Savigny
June	3rd	<i>Trinity 1</i>	7.00 pm	Sung Eucharist	Tours
	24th	<i>S. John the Baptist</i>	11.00 am	Sung Eucharist	Savigny
July	1st	<i>Trinity 5</i>	7.00 pm	Sung Eucharist	Tours
	22nd	<i>Trinity 8</i>	11.00 am	Sung Eucharist	Savigny

A HAPPY VISIT

THE VISIT OF THE ARCHDEACON OF FRANCE AND MONACO TO US AT THE END OF JANUARY WAS DECLARED A SUCCESS BY ALL INVOLVED. His main “appearance” was at the Eucharist at Savigny, where we celebrated Candlemas, that pivotal Festival when we turn “from the crib to the cross” (pictures: back page).

But away from the ‘centre-piece’ of our worship together, much happened behind the scenes.

The visit, timed to be from lunchtime on Saturday until after breakfast on Monday had to be slightly curtailed because Fr Meurig’s train was delayed due to a suspect case at Gare Montparnasse in Paris.

In spite of this, the meetings planned for the Saturday afternoon were both able to take place as scheduled, the first being with the Revd Andrew Hubbard, pastor of the English-speaking independent Church at Arçay, not far from Savigny. Next to arrive on the scene (the Brasserie de l’Univers in Tours) was Madame Martine Bouchery, présidente of the conseil presbyteral of the Eglise réformée in Touraine.

After these ecumenical encounters, it was time for the evening meal, which was at ‘Le Mastroquet’ restaurant in Tours, where we hold some of our Church Council meetings.

Following a joyful Eucharist at Savignyen-Véron on Sunday morning with a

Candlemas Final Responory
(said at the font)

We stand near the place of new birth.
Let us shine with the light of your love.

We turn from the crib to the cross.
Let us shine with the light of your love.

We go to carry his light.
Let us shine with the light of your love.

turn-out of nearly 40 people, made up of members of both our congregations – including no fewer than twelve children – it was time for the archdeacon to meet the Church Council. Over lunch, of course. After all, this is France.

The meal was in the best leisurely French tradition, which gave archdeacon and Church Council good time to get to know each other. After ending with the ‘Omelette norvegienne’ for which the restaurant – le Délice at Fontevraud-l’Abbaye – is justly renowned it was

time to return to Tours and Fr Meurig’s final ecumenical encounter of the visit.

This took the form of a convivial evening at the Neals’ home with père Christophe Raimbault, vicaire general of the Diocese of Tours. Amongst other things, they discovered that they were both due to speak at the same conference in Paris, but on different days.

Before he left, Fr Meurig complimented St Alcuin’s for what he had experienced during his visit, particularly remarking that he had found a real worshipping Church and not just a gathering of English speakers.

Praise indeed for a new community like ours.

CROSSWORD SOLUTION

Across: 1 Still. 4 Esther 8 Inn. 9 Dreamers. 11 Gardener. 12 Gold. 14 Wide. 17 Rejoiced. 20 Doctrine. 22 Awe. 23 Master. 24 Hades.

Down: 1 Sting. 2 Ignored. 3 Ladder. 5 Sea. 6 Heel. 7 Rested. 10 Eden. 13 Orchard. 14 Wisdom. 15 Levi. 16 Joseph. 18 Deeds. 19 Acts. 21 Rue.

ARCHDEACON TO THE RESCUE

Oh dear, what could the matter be?

Poor Father John was stuck in the lavatory!

IT WAS 9.30 ON SUNDAY MORNING AND TIME TO LEAVE TOURS FOR THE SAVIGNY EUCHARIST. A big day, as our archdeacon, Fr Meurig Williams, was paying his first visit to us.

Before setting off, Fr John decided to answer a last quick call of nature, but then disaster

struck. The door wouldn’t open and he couldn’t get out! When the handle was turned, the



struck. The door wouldn’t open and he couldn’t get out! When the handle was turned, the

catch refused to draw completely back. No amount of jiggling the handle would solve things. Would we need to call the pompiers out?

Fortunately the tool bag was at hand and it wasn’t many minutes before Fr John was able to emerge and see Fr Meurig looking very purposeful with a hammer.

A new role for archdeacons?

ALEXANDER MACDONALD



BORN IN BROUGHTY FERRY JUST EAST OF DUNDEE, Alexander Macdonald was a true Scot, but his lifelong interest was to lie many thousands of kilometres away – Tibet.

It was military service in the Second World War which put Sandy, as he was known, in contact with the Gurkhas and Asian culture.

After Oxford University he came to France with, as one account puts it, “no nostalgia for the mists of Scotland”, where he had a career as a university lecturer in ethnology.

He and his wife Anne, who worships with us, finally settled in Tours, where he died on 4th February, aged 94. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

We offer our sympathy to Anne and their daughter Alexandra.

NOLI ME TANGERE

- an Easter meditation, given at Salisbury Cathedral in 2013
by Sarah Coakley

"Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord.'" (John 20:18)

IN THE LIGHT OF THE EASTER STORY, I WANT TO ASK: DO YOU EXPECT, DO YOU LONG, WITH MARY MAGDALENE, TO "SEE THE LORD" IN THIS LIFE? And if so, what can this mean? What is it so to "see" the resurrected Jesus, to commit yourself to a belief in him, and his life beyond death? What is it to assert, with this, that there is a divine, transcendent force in our universe which rises beyond death, tragedy and failure, which captivates our hearts and minds and turns our lives out of darkness into light?

Everything hangs on this question for Christians. If there is no resurrection, if "one did not rise from the dead," then our faith is indeed "in vain," as St Paul puts it. The problem only comes - let us be honest - in clarifying *what*, exactly, we are being asked to do in believing this.

For if we set off in the spirit of a good detective to find out what exactly happened to Jesus's dead body all those centuries ago (and there is nothing wrong with that - it's a vital part of our questing), we shall nonetheless discover that such a purely historical approach only ends with an alluring, suggestive question mark. No, something else has to happen first: something has to happen so *us*, the investigators. Only then will the fragments of the detective story look different.

Let me start from two passages read at Easter, Romans 6: 3-11 and John 20: 1-18, and put it to you that, far from them asking you to believe "three impossible things before breakfast," taken together, they only ask you to believe three *possible* - though, admittedly, extraordinarily demanding - things; and not only to believe them, but to practise them, with soul and mind and body, on and on up to your life's end, until you too come to "see the Lord" face to face.

First, you must learn to *practise death*, as St Paul puts it in the Epistle to the Romans when he asks us to "die with Christ" and "to be baptised into his death." This seems to be a very strange idea, one powerfully symbolised by being plunged into the dark waters of baptism before being rescued again. But what it means is that only by handing ourselves over, as Christ was "handed over" by his betrayers in the Passion, into a seeming *loss* of selfhood, as we give ourselves to God in prayer and sac-



raments and service, will we find our true selves - the living Christ-like selves that God longs us to be in his Son.

This is a particularly difficult idea for us moderns, because it challenges everything that our education teaches us: that we should aspire to be accomplished *individuals*, and autonomous ones at that. But when, in all the difficulties and agonies that authentic prayer brings, we realise that persevering in it means "handing over" the reins of control to God and just letting Christ's Spirit pray within us, then we begin to see that our false, conscious, striving self has to go. And as that self is worn away in a process that feels like death, something unimaginably mysterious starts to emerge - the new life of selfhood that is Christ's own and which transcends all individualism. To be a Christian is to "practise death" in this way, until we are no longer afraid of death; and when we are no longer afraid of death, we are no longer afraid of life - the ecstatic, abundant Life that Jesus holds out to us.

Second, we must learn, not only how to die, but how to *turn* and turn again, as Mary Magdalene did twice before she saw that it was Jesus right in front of her in the garden. Have you ever wondered about the fact that the first witnesses to the resurrection, supremely here Mary, did not recognise Jesus at all in the first instance, and some - according to the gospel of Matthew - even continued to "doubt" when they were in his risen presence? This is another very strange thought: that the risen Christ, being God's Son, is here all the time but that we have to "turn" and keep

ROMANS 6: 3-11

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

“turning” towards his gaze, until our senses and mind and soul and heart are so attuned and magnetized to his presence that we too can say *Rabbouni* - not to grasp and hold him, not to constrain him within our restricted human categories, but to worship and adore him.

St. Thomas Aquinas, writing in the thirteenth century, rather ruefully acknowledges that the women in the gospels understood this better and first because, as he puts it, of their “greater capacity for love,” their resoluteness in not abandoning Christ on the cross and in following him even to his place of burial. To “turn” is to keep longing for and loving him, even in despair, as these women did - to keep discerning the wind of

Christ's Spirit and leaning into it, until love and knowledge and sensuality all align and we can know as we are known in him.

Thirdly, and finally, only thus shall we learn to “see the Lord,” as Mary saw him,

through tears to be sure, but with absolute conviction and certainty. Many think that this doesn't happen anymore, but let me tell you (as one who was once a hospital chaplain, ministering to the

spurn; in bread and wine and water and oil and all the glories of the earth; and finally waiting for you as your life ends. This isn't, to be sure, as Mary Magdalene found, a Christ who can be constrained

within our grasp. But this is the Christ who has put suffering in its place, who has gone through it and beyond it and made us his own.

So here is the great truth at the heart of Christian faith - resurrection. Stake your life on it, struggle with it, and everything will change. Die, turn, see ... and then live in this mystical body, which is the blessed company of all faithful people walk with you on this great adventure of the Christian life of redemption, joy and fulfilment, and which will hold you in all your frailty

and glory, unto your life's end. For Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia. Amen.

Sarah Coakley is Norris-Hulse Professor of Divinity at Cambridge University and Canon of Ely Cathedral.



dying) it does. Only “die,” only “turn,” and you will also in due course “see” the beloved Christ, as your senses and mind and desire are attuned to his presence: there He is, in a thousand faces of the poor; in those whom you love beyond measure and those whom you hate and

ST JOHN 20: 1-18

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth

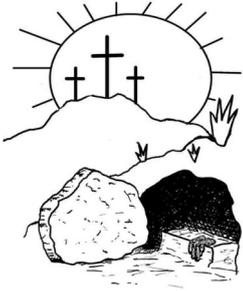
that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus

standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' ' Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

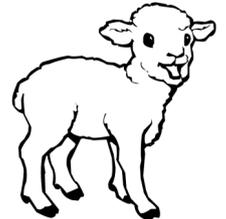
FOR OUR YOUNGER READERS

SOME EASTER CELEBRATIONS



Easter is the Festival that celebrates the Resurrection of Jesus. On the third day after Good Friday, the day of his crucifixion, he rose from the dead. Some of his friends went to his tomb to cover his body with fragrant spices. However, he was not there and they were greeted by an angel who said "He is Risen".

The **lamb** is another symbol associated with Jesus. He is often referred to in scriptures as the 'Lamb of God', who sacrificed his life for all humankind's eternal life.



Many churches light a big **Paschal Candle**, or Easter Candle, on Easter Day. Then everybody has a candle lit from the it. This is very dramatic when the service is early in the morning, at sunrise.

Eggs are a symbol of the new life that returns to nature at Easter Time. The custom of exchanging eggs began long before Easter was celebrated. Egyptians and Persians exchanged eggs decorated in Spring colours. They believed Earth hatched from an egg which contributed to this custom. Early Christians used red coloured eggs to symbolise the Resurrection. In England they began writing messages and dates on their eggs and exchanging them with friends and loved ones. In the 1800's, candied eggs were made. They were open at one end and a scene was put inside. They were used as table centrepieces.



Rabbits symbolised new life and rebirth in ancient Egypt. They considered it a symbol of the moon as the moon determines the date of Easter. The Easter Bunny's visit is based upon a German Legend. The legend goes that a poor woman decorated eggs for her children to find during a famine. At the moment they found them, they looked up to see a big bunny hopping away.



LIFE AFTER BIRTH

Two babies were discussing.

Baby 1: Do you believe in life after birth?

Baby 2: Course I do. It's obvious that life after birth exists. We're here to grow strong and to get ourselves ready for what is waiting for us afterwards.

Baby 1: Bah... all that, it's rubbish There's nothing after birth! What would life beyond the womb be like?

Baby 2: Well, there are a lot of stories about "the other side"... It's said that over there there's lots of light, lots of happiness and emotions, thousands of things to live for... For example, it seems that over there we'll eat with our mouths.

Baby 1: That's nothing at all! We have our umbilical cord and that feeds us. Everyone knows that. You can't be fed through your mouth! And certainly no-one's ever come back from that other life... so, all those are the stories of stupid people. Quite simply, life ends at birth. That's how it is and you'd better just accept it.

Baby 2: Well, allow me to think otherwise. Certainly I don't know exactly what life after birth will be like, and I can't prove to you anything about it. But I like to believe that, in the life to come, will see our mummy and she'll take care of us.

Baby 1: "Mummy"? You're telling me you believe in "mummy"? Ah! And where is she?

Baby 2: Everywhere as you can well see! She's everywhere, all around us! We are made from her and it's thanks to her we're alive. Without her we wouldn't be here.

Baby 1: That's absurd! I've never seen any mummy so it's plain she doesn't exist.

Baby 2: I don't agree: it's just your point of view. For sometimes, when everything's calm you can hear her singing... You can feel her when she caresses our world... I'm certain that our real life will begin after birth...



Jacques Salomé



UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT



ZELDA SAVORNIN

ZELDA WAS BORN IN KENYA, EAST AFRICA, WHERE HER GERMAN/AUSTRIAN FATHER SETTLED AFTER FLEEING NAZI BERLIN IN 1938. Her mother, who was of Scottish descent, was born and brought up in Estonia, from where she and her parents escaped during the 1917 Russian Revolution, also went out to East Africa in 1938, though they weren't to meet up until later.

Zelda's father, who built up a car dealership in Nairobi from scratch, was a brilliant 'cellist, giving concerts all his life in East Africa. Between Zelda's home and the very British Anglican boarding school that she attended from 11 to 18 years old, she listened to unending string quartet chamber music evenings, played all kinds of sport especially grass hockey, passed the Royal Schools of Music Grade VIII piano exam and participated in the first Outward Bound mountain school girls' course on Kilimanjaro.



After her studies, Zelda worked in Geneva, Switzerland for seven years where she continued to enjoy singing in a choir, playing adult league grass hockey, and English amateur theatricals. It was in Geneva that she met her future husband, Bernard.

He was then sent to Abidjan in the Ivory Coast, where Zelda went too, working for the United Nations, learning the clarinet and, of course, Zelda and Bernard were married.

Zelda and Bernard settled in Tours, following periods living in Bordeaux and Paris. 40 years ago she took French nationality.

At the age of 18, she was sent to Lausanne, Switzerland, to study for a degree in French in the University, followed by German studies in the University of Salzburg in Austria as well as further piano lessons, and then a year in London.

In Tours, she continues to sing in a choir and also plays in a Recorder Ensemble.

Zelda and Bernard have two daughters, Annick and Nathalie and a granddaughter, Clarisse..

ALCUINEWS CROSSWORD PUZZLE No. 12

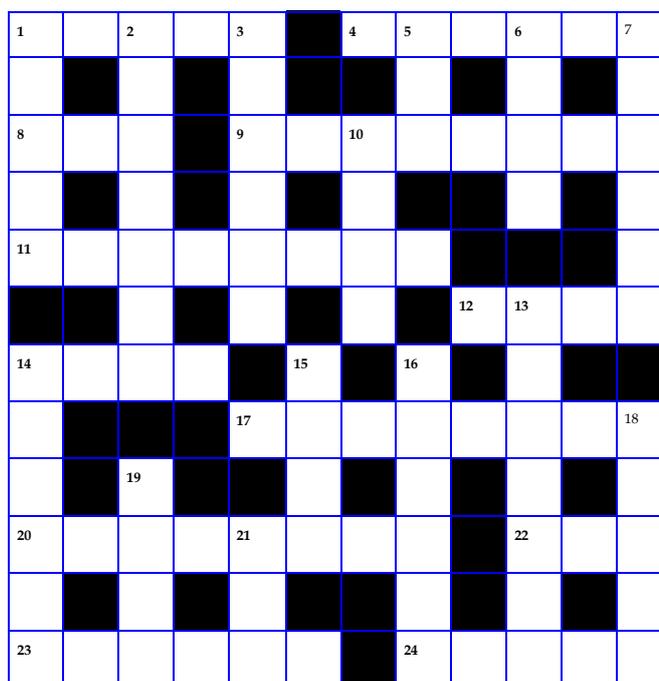
by Philologos

Across

1. Calm (5)
4. Purim heroine (6)
8. Where there was no room (3)
9. Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar for example (8)
11. Mistaken identity of Jesus after resurrection (8)
12. Material used to make Solomon's cups (4)
14. Not narrow (4)
17. Jubilated (8)
20. Teaching (8)
22. Reverence (3)
23. Rabbi (6)
24. Place of the dead (5)

Down

1. Scorpion attack (5)
2. Didn't heed (7)
3. Object of Jacob's dream (6)
5. Red, for example (3)
6. To be bruised by the serpent (4)
7. Observed the Sabbath (6)
10. Where Adam spared a rib? (4)
13. Fruit farm (7)
14. Solomon's strength (6)
15. Son of Leah (4)
16. Brother of 15 down (6)
18. Works (5)
19. Follower of the Gospels (4)



ANSWERS ON PAGE 3

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CANDLEMAS



FIRST COMMUNION



AT OUR SAVIGNY EUCHARIST IN FEBRUARY it was our delight to add Emily Taylor-Scott to those who receive Holy Communion. Our photographs show mum putting the final touches to Emily's appearance as part of our Lenten theme of "getting ready", Emily giving a confident "Yes" when she was asked if she wanted to receive Communion and the great moment itself.

