

The Canadian Templar



December 2013
Newsletter



The Grand Priory of Canada and the Grand Prior

Extend to you and your loved ones
our wishes for a Very Merry
Christmas and a Happy New Year

H. E. Commander (Ret'd) Sir Peter L. Kelly, CD, GCTJ
Grand Prior of Canada



News and Report from our Grand Prior

This newsletter celebrates our first anniversary for the publication and I hope you are enjoying them. A lot of hard work goes into a professional newsletter like this and I congratulate and thank Alastair McIntyre for a great job. Over the past year I have passed on to Alastair many compliments I've received from our Grand Master, Grand Priors, and others who have read the Canadian Templar newsletters. Any articles and pictures submitted to him are helpful and tell the story of our Order in Canada, not only to our own members but to Templars around the world.

I would like to thank Andrew Williams (Windsor) for all his hard work and dedication as the Grand Webmaster. After several years, he is passing the reins on to Stuart Ross (Toronto). Andy did a great job getting the Grand Priory website set up and maintaining it. It took a lot of time consuming work. You will notice some changes to the website as it is being updated and more material added. Again, thank you Andy, and good luck to Stuart.

You will see a report below from Anne Matthewman in Halifax. The three members in the Halifax area are now officially a Preceptory, led by their Preceptor, Anne. They are actively planning their community involvement and future growth as you can see from her report below.

Last Sunday the Priory of the Ascension of Our Lord had a well-attended Christmas Social at the Windsor Yacht Club. It was a very enjoyable event and we livened the place up signing Christmas Carols. It is certainly the time of year to be thankful and joyful. I know many Philippines will be thankful with the donation of almost \$3000 from the Knights and Dames of Canada which will be used to rebuild the hurricane ravaged islands. Well done. These funds will be doubled by the Canadian government.

The contingency from Canada going to the Bethany on the Jordan Church dedication is now 15. The group will be led by our Vicar General, Archdeacon Ronald Matthewman, and will be leaving on January 3 for the dedication and tour of Jerusalem and the Holy Lands. It will truly be a trip of a lifetime.

Please keep Canon Andrew White in your prayers, see his desperate appeal below. The religious violence is real and severe, particularly in the Middle East. Templars have traditionally been bridge builders between the faiths. Kudos to Graham Parker, Norman King, and Joe Ouellette for their continued interfaith efforts in Windsor. Hopefully this can be replicated across Canada. That is what the Jordan River Project is all about, and why OSMTH is so actively involved.

The next international Grand Magistral Meeting will take place in Zagreb, Croatia from April 9-13, 2014. There will be a training session for new leaders in the Order on the Thursday. If anyone is interested, please contact me directly.

So, as the Holiday Season fast approaches, Theresa and I wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and may it be a time of spiritual renewal and thanksgiving with your loved ones. And for 2014, we wish you all good health, happiness, and good fortune and may you be a blessing to others.

And a reminder to all to keep LCol. Morris Brause and his family in your prayers as he serves in Afghanistan.

Merry Christmas,

H.E. Commander (Rtr'd) Peter L. Kelly CD, GCTJ,
Grand Prior of Canada



Notable Upcoming Events

Canadian International

January 6th, 2014: Jordan River Project Dedication

January 2014 St James Priory AGM start time will be 6:30pm - date to be advised.

February 13, 2014. St James Priory Valentines Ball to be held at the exhibition grounds.

March 2014 St James Priory meeting (date to be determined) Invited Speaker.

April 9-13, 2014. International Grand Magistral Meeting will take place in Zagreb, Croatia

September 13, 2014 St James Priory 10th Anniversary and Investiture

Note: Some of the dates can be approximate so to get more specific information do email your Prior for up to date information. Their email addresses are at the foot of this newsletter.

News from the Priory of Ascension of Our Lord, Windsor

Our major event here at The Priory Of The Ascension Of Our Lord this quarter has been our Investiture on Saturday 02 November 2013.



Forming up for the processional.



The Postulants receive their Investiture instructions.



The Investing team.



The Investiture ceremony.



Members of the Priory.



The newest members of the Priory , plus the Investiture Party.



Sir Jack McConnell, Sir Steve Lamarche, Sir Rick Dinham and Sir Terry Hall, our newest Knight Commandeurs

Following a very successful Investiture we gathered at the Giovanni Caboto Club to celebrate with our Banquet!



Guests enjoying the Banquet.



Guests enjoying our delicious feast.



The Banquet was enjoyed by all present!



A presentation to the Vicar General by HE Colonel Sir Bill Megill, Prior of Simon Peter Priory (Ottawa), for his talents at removing the cork from a champagne bottle using a Cavalry Sabre.



The Grand Prior, not to be out done by the Vicar General, also removed the cork from a champagne bottle using simply a Cavalry Sabre, and receives his certificate of accomplishment!

All in all with the retreat, the Investiture and the Banquet, we had a very busy but also a very successful day and we thank all our guests from near and far for their attendance. We also congratulate our newest members and welcome them to the Priory of The Ascension of Our Lord and to the Order!

All photos courtesy of Cmdr. Sir Walt Pastorius KCTJ.

LEAVING HIS LEGACY TO CHILDREN

Carolyne Regan
Special To The Star

Saturday, October 26, 2013

If you don't have a lot of time or money, can you still make a difference? Ask Norm King and he will paraphrase Erich Fromm, author of *The Art of Loving*: "The rich person is not the one who has much, but who gives much."

King has given a lot, mostly through his involvement in community groups that help make a difference. A retired faculty member of the University of Windsor, his community involvement has been lengthy and diverse.

He is an active member of the University's Retiree Association and the Windsor Homes Coalition. The professor emeritus is also the director of theology at Iona College and occupies the Stephen Jarislowsky Chair in Religion and Conflict at Assumption University.

The organization that means the most to him, however, is the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society (WECAS). It was through the WECAS that King and his late wife Lorraine adopted their son, Bill, and daughter, Mary, when they were infants. But it was because of his younger brother Mike that King became so involved with the WECAS.

Mike King was born with Blue Baby Syndrome resulting in a chronic heart condition that claimed his life at 26. During Mike's life, Norm became extremely close to him. It was that attachment that gave him the drive to do more to improve the lives of children and families.

After seven summers in charge of the youth program and one full year as education director at Maryvale, King found his passion for giving back to his community. "A lot of the social involvements that I've had have to do with children and families. Both my children have been with me since infancy, so I have always been grateful to this organization, and when I was invited to join the board I responded immediately."

For more than 30 years, King has been a board member with the WECAS including three terms as president, and co-chair of the amalgamation of the Roman Catholic and public children's aid societies.

He speaks passionately of the organization, but the most important function he will stress is the wellbeing and protection of children.

Often, people do not realize just how important community involvement is in helping an organization serve the needs of the community. Donations, volunteering and many other types of contributions are what make organizations like the WECAS effective.

"There are all kinds of community initiatives that directly affect the children in our care."

With a tight economy and hectic lives, many people feel that they just don't have the time or money to become involved. There are other options, however, that are easily affordable to most people.

King may not be a wealthy man, but he has planned to make a large financial contribution to the organization with which he has been so closely involved over the years. Known as a legacy contribution, it allows a person to make a substantial monetary donation, without suffering any financial discomfort.

According to Ian Murphy, a tax accountant with Miles & Co, there are several ways to create a legacy contribution.

Did you know that an organization can take out a life insurance policy in your name? Most people aren't aware of this.

The premiums can be paid by the organization, or you can donate the premiums. Not only do you receive a tax receipt for the donated premiums, but your estate receives the tax receipt for the amount of the life insurance paid out to the organization which receives a large financial contribution for the cost of a monthly premium.

You can also donate publicly traded shares. If you own stock, that stock can be left to the organization of your choice. When the stock is sold, the organization benefits from the sale.

This not only helps the organization, but benefits the bottom line of your estate.

If you were to keep the shares as part of the estate, the estate is responsible for paying the income tax on the shares. But if donated, the entire worth of the shares (minus the purchase cost) can be claimed as a charitable donation.

For those who have larger estates or more ready cash flow, you can set up a foundation in your name. This gives you the opportunity to take your time deciding what to do with the assets of the foundation, which can go to one organization or be divided up among several causes.

Murphy cautions that although these options are an easier way for the general public to make a large financial contribution, there can still be issues if not planned correctly.

"Make sure that your beneficiaries know ahead of time and understand. That's important from a legal perspective; make sure it's in the will properly."

You don't want your surviving family members to have any surprises at the reading of your will. Murphy has seen this situation before when a surviving spouse had no idea that a legacy

contribution had been made.

"Suddenly a large sum of money from the estate is going to an organization and the situation can become a bit contentious," he says. "It's good to have those discussions up front."

His other piece of advice? Leave it up to the organization to decide how to use the money.

"You can hamstring an organization by giving them a legacy contribution that stipulates how it should be used."

Case in point: The Chimczuk Museum.

In his estate, Joseph Chimczuk left \$1 million to the City of Windsor with the instruction that it be used to build The Chimczuk museum. Not only was the amount not nearly enough to carry out Chimczuk's wishes, even after 23 years, the total in trust - now little more than \$3 million - is still not enough to build a museum, fill it with exhibits and provide for staffing and maintenance.

In order to use the money to fulfill Chimczuk's wishes, the city would have to raise much more money.

"What was supposed to be a beautiful donation turned out to be more of a headache for the city," Murphy states regretfully.

For King, the WECAS is the organization that means the most to him. He encourages people to help in whatever way they can, but suggests that they aid the organization of their choice.

"People can probably best do that if there is something that they have a connection with on a personal level," he says.

According to Statistics Canada, there are more than 80,000 registered charitable organizations. We can't each help them all, but even the smallest contribution to any single organization adds up to the services and programs that are available to our community.

"I think there is in everybody, an instinct to want to make a difference somehow," King says. "Not through great dramatic gestures, but with simple acts of kindness."

© Windsor Star 2013

Editors Note: Dr King is a Templar in Windsor

Report on the Interfaith Initiative

On Sunday, October 27 2013, the *Assumption University Centre for Religion and Culture* and the *Inter-Faith group of Windsor and Essex County* hosted a symposium on "The Changing Role of Men: Perspectives from the Spiritualities of the World". This free attendance event hosted at the Freed-Orman Centre of Assumption University, Windsor Ontario, represents the fourth annual Inter-faith meeting; the previous years' having focused on Peace, Attitudes toward Children, and the Role of Women.

The devotion to Interfaith dialogue and Bridge-Building represents, of course, a key pillar of our Templar philosophy as one of the four commitments expressed in the Brussels Declaration. Our Priory of the Ascension of our Lord was suitably well represented with Knight Commandeur Graham Parker and Knight Norman King sharing MC and hosting roles, respectively. Of more import, our Vicar General kindly agreed to speak on the topic, sharing his view of the Christian perspective of the changing role of men in society. We were also blessed with the presence in the audience of Knight Commandeur Joe Ouellette, who has been a key figure in maintaining the enthusiasm and focus of our important involvement in this ongoing dialogue of faith.

We not only had presentations from men of **six** different faith traditions, we also had a reply from three women of different faiths! The speakers presented extremely well. The audience was very receptive and we had a valuable discussion with good responses from the speakers.

Without trying to encompass all that was said, we might mention a few common threads that emerged. One was the emphasis on the equality of women and men according to the traditions, even though it may not be fully realized in practice. This **observation** recalled a theme that has emerged again and again in our symposia: the need to understand the creed of a faith as being different from what we might observe as the cultural practices associated with people of that faith. Speakers also stressed the importance of assuming one's responsibility: responsibility to oneself, to others individually, and to the larger society; all of which is encompassed by one's responsibility to God. Most also spoke to the evolved role of man from being a protector and provider to learn the importance of kindness and compassion as being essential to any authentic religion or spirituality, echoing the words of the Dalai Lama: "My religion is simple, my religion is kindness." There was also recognition of the importance of education, both formal and informal, for understanding and carrying out one's tasks in life.

The spirit and enjoyment of these symposia by speakers, questioners and audience alike always ends with the same observation and question: we in this room understand the importance of such dialogue and the enrichment it brings to our understanding and devotion to each of our religions, how do we better share this **experience** with others?

Respectfully submitted by Norman King and Graham Parker

Consider This

After Fred Astaire's first screen test, the memo from the testing director of MGM, dated 1933, said, "Can't act. Slightly bald! Can dance a little!" Astaire kept that memo over the fireplace in his Beverly Hills home.

An expert said of Vince Lombardi: "He possesses minimal football knowledge. Lacks motivation."

Socrates was called, "An immoral corrupter of youth."

When Peter J. Daniel was in the fourth grade, his teacher, Mrs. Phillips, constantly said, "Peter J. Daniel, you're no good, you're a bad apple and you're never going to amount to anything." Peter was totally illiterate until he was 26. A friend stayed up with him all night and read him a copy of Think and Grow Rich. Now he owns the street corners he used to fight on and just published his latest book: Mrs. Phillips, You Were Wrong!

Louisa May Alcott, the author of Little Women, was encouraged to find work as a servant or seamstress by her family.

Beethoven handled the violin awkwardly and preferred playing his own compositions instead of improving his technique. His teacher called him hopeless as a composer.

The parents of the famous opera singer Enrico Caruso wanted him to be an engineer. His teacher said he had no voice at all and could not sing.

Charles Darwin, father of the Theory of Evolution, gave up a medical career and was told by his father, "You care for nothing but shooting, dogs and rat catching!" In his autobiography,

Darwin wrote, "I was considered by all my masters and by my father, a very ordinary boy, rather below the common standard in intellect."

Walt Disney was fired by a newspaper editor for lack of ideas. Walt Disney also went bankrupt several times before he built Disneyland.

Thomas Edison's teachers said he was too stupid to learn anything.

Albert Einstein did not speak until he was four years old and didn't read until he was seven. His teacher described him as "mentally slow, unsociable and adrift forever in his foolish dreams." He was expelled and was refused admittance to the Zurich Polytechnic School.

Louis Pasteur was only a mediocre pupil in undergraduate studies and ranked 15th out of 22 in chemistry.

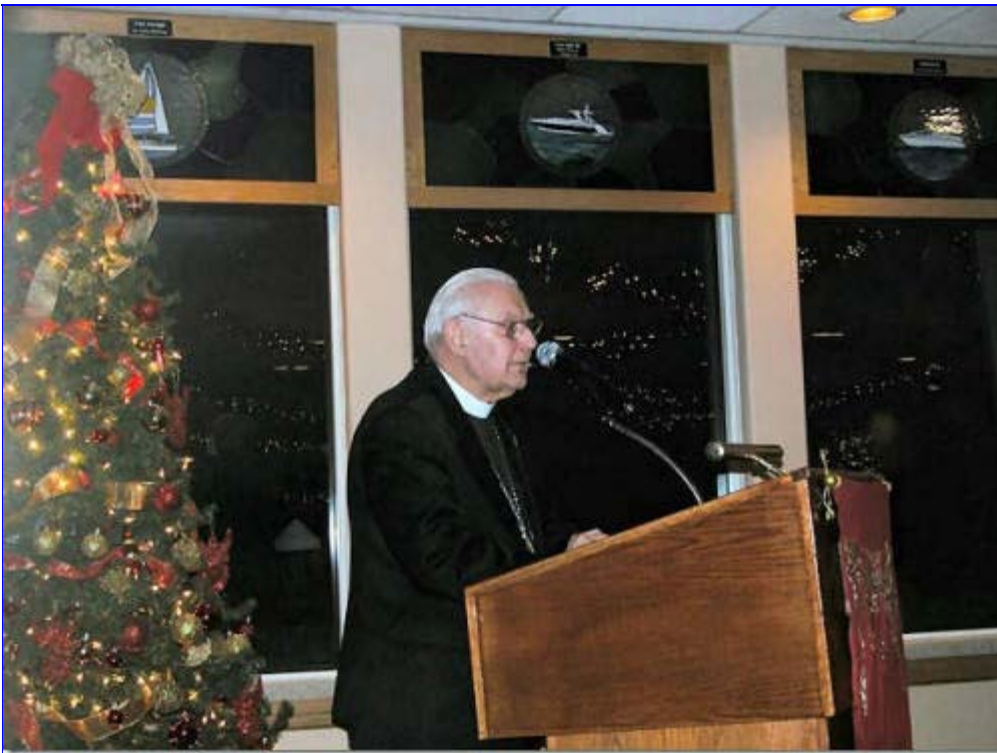
The Priory Of The Ascension Of Our Lord Christmas Social was held on Sunday afternoon 08 December 2013 at the Windsor Yacht Club and by all accounts it was a rousing success!



Members of the Priory enjoying the ambience of the Windsor Yacht Club.



Sir Norman King receiving his medallion for his leadership of the Interfaith Initiative.



Our Vicar General brings good tidings to our membership.



The beautiful Dining Room and some of our members.



Engaging in a Christmas Carol sing song under the direction of Sir Graham Parker.

FROM ALL OF US AT THE PRIORY OF THE ASCENSION, WE WISH EVERYONE A VERY MERRY AND BLESSED CHRISTMAS AND THE VERY BEST IN THE NEW YEAR!

News from St James Priory, Toronto

Our Work in Zambia
From Dame Barbara Boles-Davis

In my last letter, I wrote about our long drive to work every morning... one hour each way, to go 19 km. Now, I would like to share a little about our patients and our work.

Our patients walked, often barefoot, 20, 30, 50, 70 km. to the clinic. They quickly set up temporary shelter, or slept on the ground, as some had to wait several days to be seen. None of them had watches, although a few did have cell phones. All seemed to be very hungry. My husband did all the registrations: just under 1,300 patients.

My assignment was to be the "wound nurse" and to explain the medications to the patients. The language spoken was Tonga, and we all were assigned an interpreter. My interpreter was Duboleh, which literally translated to "need to read". His father knew that the road to a better life, meant that he had to learn to read and write English. Needless to say, we would have been of no benefit to the patients, without our translators.

My day would begin with cleaning and dressing wounds. Small wounds, as the ankle that you see, can lead to very bad infections, possible amputations, or even worse, loss of life. (In fact, one boy died of an infection three days after a sliver had been removed, and treatment by a witch doctor. Unfortunately, he did not come to the clinic for antibiotics.) Several of these patients came back every morning for dressing changes, and it was most rewarding to see the granulation and healing of the previously infected areas. The rest of my day was spent explaining the particular medications prescribed. This was complicated because times had to be defined by the position of the sun, how to open a "child-proof" bottle, and since no refrigeration was available, how to try to preserve the medicines (e.g. out of the sun, and in some water)

Many of the patients had never been to a modern doctor, nor had ever had modern medicines. The usual course of treatment was through application of leaves or herbal drinks, prescribed by the witch doctors.

Our dentist, (from British Columbia) did some fillings, but also pulled over 700 teeth. We also did Health teaching (very important) and physiotherapy, as well as spiritual counselling.

MMI (Medical Ministry International) worked on this project together with 40-40 Vision Africa Foundation.

My most poignant moment was a great lesson in humility and sharing. Please refer to the photos. I had given one slice of bread from my lunch to a child about 9 years old. Immediately, several little hands reached out to him. Not a word was spoken. Nobody pushed, and he did not run away or turn his back, to eat the bread himself. Instead, he broke it into little pieces, and each child enjoyed a very small piece. Big lesson!

Barbara - Apup Nua

HUG:

Happiness when you give one
Understanding when you need one
Great when you receive one

Live simply, Love wholly, Give generously, Care deeply, Speak kindly.







Wandering Knight, Carl Friedrich Lessing

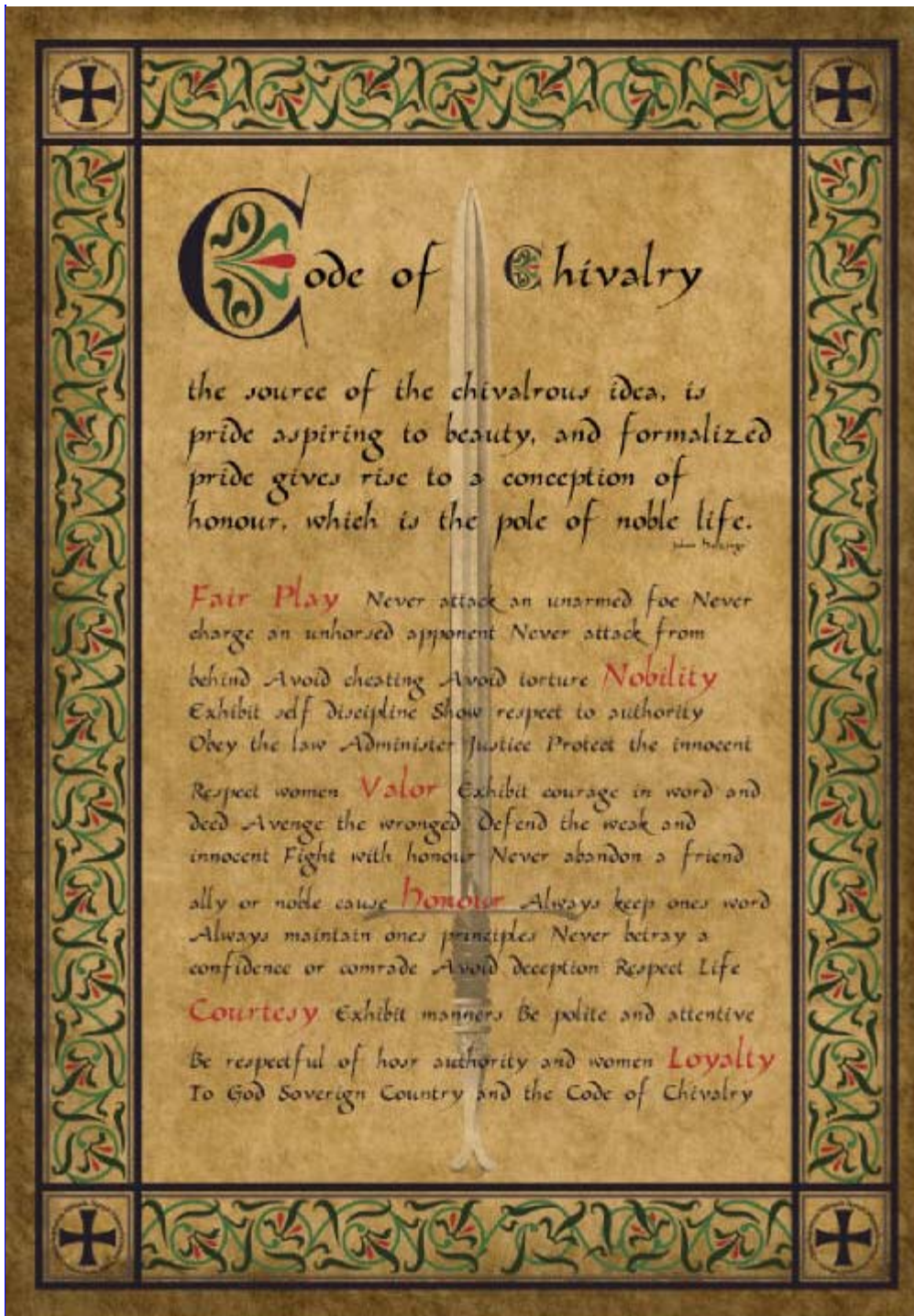


Wandering Knight, Carl Friedrich Lessing

Heavenly father
 Please bless us today as we meet in friendship and duty
 And lord whatever dangerous endeavors those among us may take, let them never be without your
 sanctuary
 For we all know in our hearts that even though we pass in the valley of the shadow of death
 You are with us, guiding and protecting us.
 Amen

Lawrence Kasdan

Code of Chivalry
 Our thanks to Sir Stuart Ross for providing this graphic he designed.



Code of Chivalry

the source of the chivalrous idea, is pride aspiring to beauty, and formalized pride gives rise to a conception of honour, which is the pole of noble life.

Fair Play Never attack an unarmed foe Never charge an unhorized opponent Never attack from behind Avoid cheating Avoid torture

Nobility Exhibit self discipline Show respect to authority Obey the law Administer Justice Protect the innocent

Respect women **Valor** Exhibit courage in word and deed Avenge the wronged Defend the weak and innocent Fight with honour Never abandon a friend

ally or noble cause **Honor** Always keep ones word Always maintain ones principles Never betray a confidence or comrade Avoid deception Respect Life

Courtesy Exhibit manners Be polite and attentive

Be respectful of hoar authority and women **Loyalty** To God Sovereign Country and the Code of Chivalry

You could save this graphic and then print it out to put on the wall.

The Priory of St James executive council is well into its 2014 calendar with events and activities planned monthly. Social events mixed with educational evenings will be held throughout the year and details can be found on the Priory social site.

The Priory continues its discussions with the St James Cathedral that would deepen its presence and participation in the Cathedral and in congregation life.

Preparations are underway to launch the Priory of St James store which will be accessible online.

The Priory of St James 10th anniversary will be held in the fall 2014 alongside the 2014 investiture. This special celebration is being organized with the leadership and assistance of HE George

McNeillie who is Prior I of the Priory of St James. Details will follow through the year.

In the recent months, the brothers and sisters have come together in mourning the losses of;

CAPT. RET. ZBIGNIEW KORWIN-KUCZYNSKI, father of Sir Chris Korwin-Kuczynski

ZOFIA (SOPHIA) JACKOWSKI, mother of Sir Dr. George Jackowski

JOHN BEVERLY WILSON, step-father of HE Randal Cronkite

The priory held a meeting on 20th November but we don't have any details on the outcome of the meeting. In the event that members don't know of this meeting then you can contact the Prior for further information.

News from the Priory of Simon Peter, Ottawa

Attached is the report from the Priory of Simon Peter for December 2013. I have included a summary of the strategy session of October 26 that was facilitated by Lyle Makosky, together with some relevant pictures. The next meeting in this series will be December 19, when I plan to go over the criteria for determining our operational posture with the committee responsible. We will then lay on a further general meeting by the end of January to work out our direction in detail for the next few years.

I am most pleased to report, thanks to sterling work by LCol Brock Heilman, whom I propose to recruit as expeditiously as possible, the agreement of the Canadian Forces to help with transporting our hockey materiel to Yellowknife, although I have no further details to pass on at the moment. I propose to take advantage of the situation, as far as the CF will allow, to publicize the action with a view to increasing support for further donations.

I have contacted Stuart Ross in Saint James, with the support of Nick Migliore and Randy Cronkite, who has assured me that Toronto will help collect more equipment. I have not yet had time to get into the details with them, but that is coming soon.

Current Activities. The Priory of Simon Peter continues to undertake its actions in support of its three charities: Kiva microloans in the Third World, the Aphasia Centre of Ottawa, and Hockey Knights in Canada. The microloans continue to be repaid at an astonishing rate, and the priory conducted a Trivia Night fundraiser for the Aphasia Centre and assisted in another over the Fall. Just before compiling this report, we were advised that the Canadian Forces will be able to transport our remaining boxes of youth hockey equipment to Yellowknife in the New Year, and we have started contact with the Priory of Saint James to seek new donations in the Greater Toronto Area. More on both of these in our next report.

We noted in our last report that we were to conduct an exercise in determining our strategy for the next few years during the Fall. The results of this renewal process are summarized below.

The Renewal Requirement. with one requirement in mind: to develop a set of criteria against which to examine the operations of the priory with a view to deciding which of our present activities to retain, and whether there were others we might wish to add. We realized from the start that one major criterion would have to be the people we have available, and that one major issue would likely be how to recruit the necessary new Knights and Dames.

Another major criterion would be fund-raising, and whether we considered that we would have the financial resources required for each activity. It was also clear that this would have to be an iterative function, with one activity probably needing to be fundraising as an activity in and of itself, something that the priory is not now engaged in doing.

The most important factor in all this analysis, however, would have to be personal and spiritual. The Priory Council felt that the major reason why such an examination was needed at this time, and perhaps every few years on a regular basis, is that one of the principal functions of the priory has to

be to ensure that all the members are gaining personal and spiritual satisfaction from their functions as Knights and Dames. There are many ways to conduct this kind of analysis, but it was felt that since the Priory of Simon Peter in its short existence had never taken time out to conduct such an examination face-to-face on a personal basis, now was the time to do it and to build a consensus around the activities that would enhance the commitment and satisfaction of everyone.

Beginnings. Chev David Moore advised us that one of his close colleagues and friends, Lyle Makosky of the management consulting firm Interquest, would be prepared to facilitate such a session and this offer was quickly accepted. An initial meeting was held between Lyle and the Priory Council to set up the parameters of the session, specifically the subjects to be discussed and the flow of discussion. It quickly became clear that a full day's deliberation would be essential if the full range of ideas and methods were to be explored satisfactorily, and that a Saturday in late October had the best chance of drawing a maximum number of Knights and Dames, although it was recognized that we could not find a day when everyone could show up. Particular care was given to tentative timings, so that those who could only spare half a day for the exercise could profit as much as possible. Then the draft agenda was sent out to all with about a month to go.



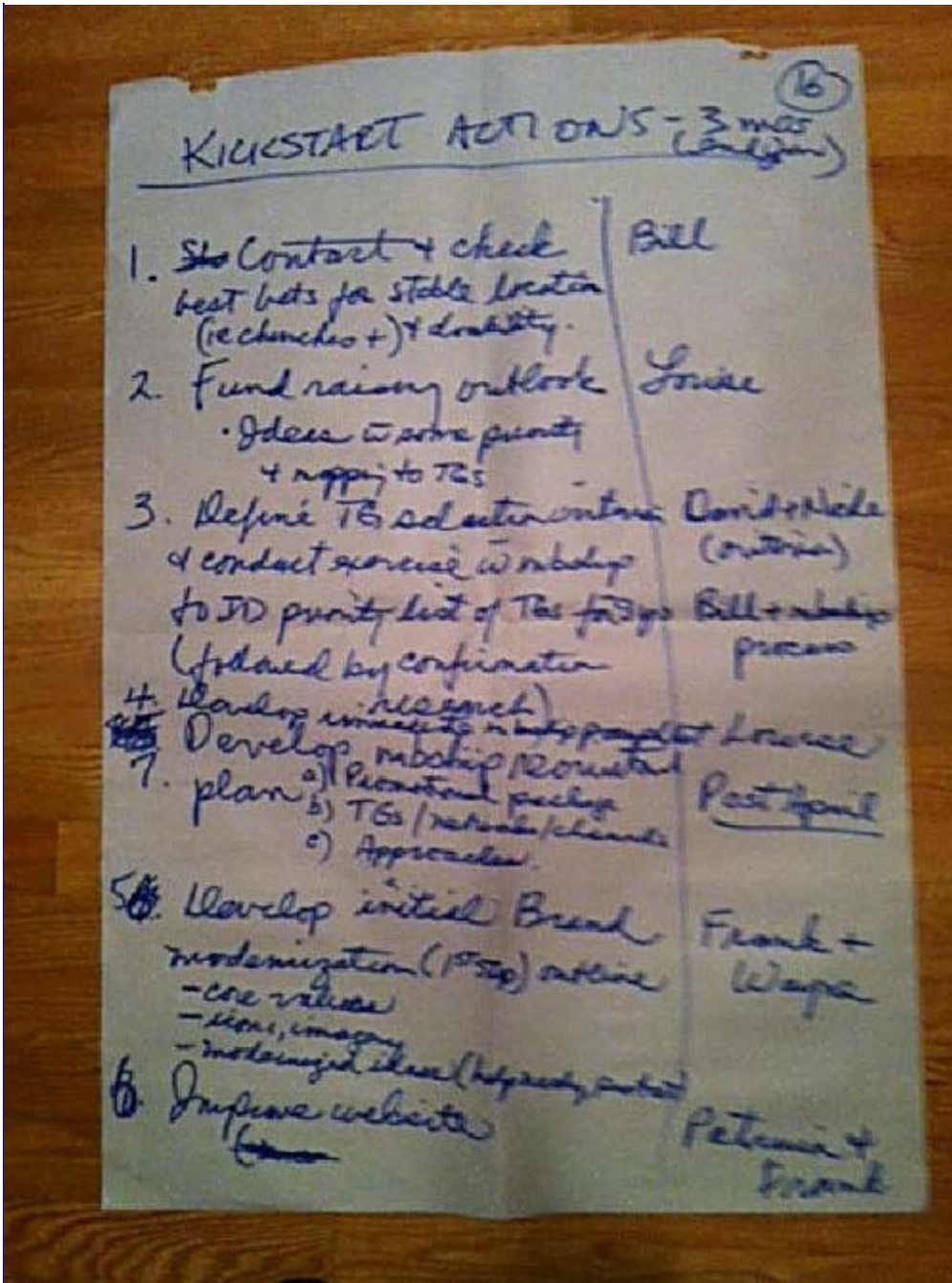
Chev Frank Garbutt, Chev Frank Ritchie and Facilitator Lyle Makosky

Deliberations. On October 26, 2013, the Priory of Simon Peter met in a Strong-as-Possible turnout at the home of Chevse Nicole Lassaline. Deliberations indeed took all day including a working potluck lunch under Nicole's supervision, where committed, searching, sensible and sometimes downright humorous participation by over half of the Knights and Dames was the order of the day. This account will spare you the details.



Chev Wayne Yetman ponders a point

Conclusions and Follow-up. The principal conclusion was that this session could only be the start of a rebuilding process. When the rapid handwriting of our facilitator is deciphered, there are seven areas requiring further work by sub-committees, sometimes of one person, whose members were determined largely by volunteers. Further meetings will be needed: one on December 19 to look at operational matters with the Prior, and one in January to look at the overall picture and to take decisions just prior to launching a recruiting campaign to find the essential people.



The Seven Sisters

The Seven Sisters. The seven areas and their assigned members are as follows:

- Stable Base – Contact churches for stable base – Prior
- Fundraising – Ideas, timelines, values and priorities – Chevse Louise Mercier
- Target Groups – Formulate selection criteria, prioritize – Inspector, Chev David Moore, Chev Paul Gauthier
- Membership Pamphlet – Develop immediately – Chevse Louise Mercier
- Brand Modernisation – Initial steps from core values – Chev Frank Ritchie, Chev Wayne Yetman
- Improve Website – Keep common look with Grand Priory – Chev Frank Garbutt, Patricia Eeles if available
- Membership Recruitment Plan – Mid - January (original document has misprint)



Prior Bill Megill and Past Prior Joe Peters discuss next steps

The Next Steps. An eighth necessary action was identified, that the priory reassemble by the end of January to take stock of progress on the Seven Sisters and to examine the actions required within the next 12 months to move toward our future vision, in light of the aspirations identified during the strategy session.

News from the Commandry of Edmonton

Our Commander Robert MacMullen was married on September 21 of this year to Jodi Beauchamp in Halifax Nova Scotia. Please help us to congratulate Rob and Jodi on their recent nuptials.



On October 26, Chevalier Bertrand Malo performed in the Edmonton Opera's rendition of Salome. Several members of the Edmonton Commandery were in attendance to cheer Bertrand on.



(Bertrand is the one in the middle with his hands raised)

Hope Mission

On Halloween, Members of the Edmonton Commandery volunteered at Hope Mission in downtown Edmonton, serving hot lunches to Edmonton's homeless and providing bagged lunches for those less fortunate. In total, over 150 meals were served and over 300 bagged lunches provided.



Edmonton Shoe Program

The Edmonton Commandery had another push this past fall, collecting footwear for those less fortunate in the Edmonton area. With a special need for children's footwear, several hundred pairs of shoes, boots and sneakers were collected and continue to be distributed through All Saint's Cathedral in downtown Edmonton.

News from the Nova Scotia Preceptory

Formation of Halifax, Nova Scotia Preceptory

The new Preceptory in Halifax had its first planning meeting on the 18th of November. The

Preceptor, Anne Matthewman, and member Christopher Killacky met with Father Gary Thorne, Chaplain of the University of King's College to determine whether the University's Chapel would be a suitable home for the Preceptory. A formal request to use the Anglican Chapel has since been sent to the University. King's College Chapel, (<http://www.ukings.ca/worship-kings-chapel>), is an inspiring and spiritual place known for its beautiful music and active life among the University community in Halifax.

The Preceptory, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Grand Priory of Canada, currently has three members: Anne Matthewman, Christopher Killacky and Alan Williams. They are looking for new members and already have some potential names. Members will meet again soon to begin considering the Preceptory's charitable aims and its role within the larger organization.

Anne Matthewman
Preceptor

Words to The Last Post

If any of you have ever been to a military funeral in which The Last Post was played; this brings out a new meaning of it.

We have all heard the haunting song, 'The Last Post.' It's the song that gives us the lump in our throats and usually tears in our eyes.

But, do you know the story behind the song? If not, I think you will be interested to find out about its humble beginnings.

Reportedly, it all began in 1862 during the American Civil War, when Union Army Captain Robert Ellicombe was with his men near Harrison's Landing in Virginia. The Confederate Army was on the other side of the narrow strip of land.

During the night, Captain Ellicombe heard the moans of a soldier who lay severely wounded on the field. Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the Captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back for medical attention. Crawling on his stomach through the gunfire, the Captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him toward his encampment. When the Captain finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead.

The Captain lit a lantern and suddenly caught his breath and went numb with shock. In the dim light, he saw the face of the soldier. It was his own son. The boy had been studying music in the South when the war broke out. Without telling his father, the boy enlisted in the Confederate Army.

The following morning, heartbroken, the father asked permission of his superiors to give his son a full military burial, despite his enemy status. His request was only partially granted. The Captain had asked if he could have a group of Army band members play a funeral dirge for his son at the funeral. The request was turned down since the soldier was a Confederate.

But, out of respect for the father, they did say they could give him only one musician. The Captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of the dead youth's uniform.

This wish was granted.

The haunting melody, we now know as 'The Last Post' used at military funerals was born. The words are:

Day is done.
Gone the sun.
From the lakes
From the hills.

From the sky.
All is well.
Safely rest.
God is nigh.

Fading light.
Dims the sight.
And a star.
Gems the sky.
Gleaming bright.
From afar.
Drawing nigh.
Falls the night.

Thanks and praise.
For our days.
Neath the sun
Neath the stars.
Neath the sky
As we go.
This we know.
God is nigh

Who has not felt the chills while listening to 'The Last Post' but I have never seen all the words to the song until now. I didn't even know there was more than one verse . I also never knew the story behind the song and I didn't know if you had either so I thought I'd pass it along.

I now have an even deeper respect for the song than I did before.

Remember Those Lost and Harmed While Serving Their Country. Also Remember Those Who Have Served And Returned; and for those presently serving in the Armed Forces.

Canadian History

Malcolm MacLeod

Malcolm MacLeod was very influential in the building of Canada including the CPR and Western Canada. I confess I hadn't heard about him but found a copy of his Memorial to the Government and Parliament of Canada which details all the work he carried out and it makes a fascinating read. You can get to a pdf file of this Memorial at: http://www.electriccanadian.com/makers/malcolm_macleod.htm

Road to Canada's Confederation

This a great video (in 2 parts) that uses both video clips from "Canada: A People's History" as well as summaries directly from multiple Ontario Grade 8 History textbooks. It pertains specifically to the Ontario Social Studies Curriculum. It a great learning resource for both teachers and students! Enjoy!

You can view this at: <http://www.electriccanadian.com/history/confederaation.htm>

Canadian Rangers

The Canadian Rangers are a sub-component of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Reserve. They provide patrols and detachments for national-security and public-safety missions in sparsely settled northern, coastal and isolated areas of Canada that can not conveniently or economically be covered by other parts of the CAF.

You can read more about them and watch a couple of videos at:

<http://www.electriccanadian.com/forces/rangers.htm>

International News

Syria's Christians Risk Eradication

An article from The American Conservative by Philip Jenkins

U.S. policy towards Syria is bafflingly inconsistent. If U.S. leaders are so concerned about regimes slaughtering thousands of their own people, did they notice what just happened in Egypt? If they are so exercised over about weapons of mass destruction, are they aware that Israel has two hundred nuclear warheads, with delivery systems? Will American warships in the region be making those other stops on their liberating mission?

Most puzzling of all, though, is why the United States seems so determined to eradicate Christianity in one of its oldest heartlands, at such an agonizingly sensitive historical moment.

Syria has always been a complex place religiously. Although the country has a substantial Sunni Muslim majority, it also has large minority communities—Christians, Alawites, and others—who together make up over a quarter of the population. Those communities have survived very successfully in Syria for centuries, but the present revolution is a threat to their continued existence.

Sadly, Westerners tend to assume that Arabs are, necessarily, Muslims, and moreover, that Muslims are a homogeneous bunch. Actually, 10 percent of Syrians are Alawites, members of a notionally Islamic sect that actually draws heavily from Christian and even Gnostic roots: they even celebrate Christmas. Locally, they were long known as Nusayris, “Little Christians.” Syria is also home to several hundred thousand Druze, who are even further removed from Sunni orthodoxy.

And then there are the Christians. If Christianity began in Galilee and Judea, it very soon made its cultural and intellectual home in Syria. St. Paul famously visited Damascus, and for centuries Antioch was one of the world's greatest Christian centers. (The city today stands just over the Turkish border.) A sizable Christian population flourished under Islamic rule, and continued under the Ottomans. Muslim and Christian populations always interacted closely here. A shrine in Damascus's Great Mosque claims to be the location of John the Baptist's head.

Christian numbers fluctuated dramatically over time. A hundred years ago, “Syria,” broadly defined, was home to a large and diverse Christian population, including Catholics, Orthodox, and Maronites. In the 1920s, the French arbitrarily carved out the country's most Christian sections and designated that region “Lebanon,” with its capital at Beirut.

In theory, that partition should have drawn a clear line between Christian Lebanon and non-Christian Syria. But Syria itself was changing in the aftermath of the catastrophic events of the First World War. The year 1915 marked the beginning of the horrendous genocide of perhaps 1.5 million Armenians, as well as hundreds of thousands of Assyrians, Maronites, and other Christian groups. After the war, Christians increasingly concentrated in Syria, where they benefited from French protection.

Arab Christians, though, were anything but imperial puppets. Determined to avoid a repetition of the horrors of 1915, Christians struggled to create a new political order in which they could play a full role. This meant advocating fervent Arab nationalism, a thoroughly secular order in which Christians and other minorities could avoid being overwhelmed by the juggernaut power of Sunni Islam. All Arab peoples, regardless of faith, would join in a shared passion for secular modernity and pan-Arab patriotism, in stark contrast to reactionary Islamism. The pioneering theorist of modern Arab nationalism was Damascus-born Orthodox Christian Constantine Zureiq. Another Orthodox son of Damascus was Michel Aflaq, co-founder of the Ba'ath (Renaissance) Party that played such a pivotal role in the modern history of both Iraq and Syria.

Since the 1960s, Syria has been a Ba'athist state, which in practice has meant the hegemony of the religious minorities who dominate the country's military and intelligence apparatus. Hafez al-Assad (President from 1971 through 2000) was of course an Alawite, but by the 1990s, five of his seven closest advisers were Christian. His son Bashar is the current president, and America's nemesis in the region.

Quite apart from their political influence, Christians have done very well indeed in modern Syria. Although they try to avoid drawing too much attention, it is no secret that Aleppo (for instance) has a

highly active Christian population. Christian numbers have even grown significantly since the 1990s, as Iraqis fled the growing chaos in that country. Officially, Christians today make up around 10 percent of Syria's people, but that is a serious underestimate, as it omits so many refugees, not to mention thinly disguised crypto-believers. A plausible Christian figure is at least 15 percent, or three million people.

To describe the Ba'athist state's tolerance is not, of course, to justify its brutality, or its involvement in state-sanctioned crime and international terrorism. But for all that, it has sustained a genuine refuge for religious minorities, of a kind that has been snuffed out elsewhere in the region. Although many Syrian Christians favor democratic reforms, they know all too well that a successful revolution would almost certainly put in place a rigidly Islamist or Salafist regime that would abruptly end the era of tolerant diversity. Already, Christians have suffered terrible persecution in rebel-controlled areas, with countless reports of murder, rape, and extortion.

Under its new Sunni rulers, minorities would likely face a fate like that in neighboring Iraq, where the Christian share of population fell from 8 percent in the 1980s to perhaps 1 percent today. In Iraq, though, persecuted believers had a place to which they could escape, namely Syria. Where would Syrian refugees go?

A month ago, that question was moot, as the Assad government was gaining the upper hand over the rebels. At worst, it seemed, the regime could hold on to a rump state in Syria's west, a refuge for Alawites, Christians, and others. And then came the alleged gas attack, and the overheated U.S. response.

So here is the nightmare. If the U.S., France, and some miscellaneous allies strike at the regime, they could conceivably so weaken it that it would collapse. Out of the ruins would emerge a radically anti-Western regime, which would kill or expel several million Christians and Alawites. This would be a political, religious, and humanitarian catastrophe unparalleled since the Armenian genocide almost exactly a century ago.

Around the world, scholars and intellectual leaders are debating how to commemorate the approaching centennial of that cataclysm in 2015. Through its utter lack of historical awareness, the United States government may be pushing towards not a commemoration of the genocide but a faithful re-enactment.

Even at this late moment, can they yet be brought to see reason?

Philip Jenkins is Distinguished Professor of History at Baylor University and serves as Co-Director for the Program on Historical Studies of Religion in the Institute for Studies of Religion.

'It's disgraceful': WWII veteran rails against possible sale of Canada's historic official residence in Italy.

[An article from The National Post](#)

A retired major who fought in the Italian campaign during the Second World War is urging the government to drop plans to sell Canada's official residence in Rome, saying the building has symbolic meaning for veterans.

"I think it's disgraceful," Ted Griffiths said Wednesday. "They waste billions of dollars and then they start nitpicking on things that really matter. They have no sense of what has gone on in the past."

He was responding to a government plan to sell Villa Grandi, the residence of Canada's ambassador to Italy. It is to be sold as part of a strategy to supplement the Foreign Affairs budget by shedding diplomatic properties.



The 1934 villa could fetch tens of millions on the real estate market, and the government says it is just too big and too expensive to operate. Gardening costs alone are almost \$250,000 a year.

“This now exorbitant mansion on a four-acre lot in the heart of Rome was four floors, 13,000 square feet ... had more than eight bedrooms and cost nearly a half of a million dollars per year to operate,” said Rick Roth, Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird’s press secretary.

But critics argue it is akin to a war monument, since it was purchased with reparations paid by Italy to the Allies. Mr. Griffiths said he had visited the home and noted that portraits of Canadian soldiers hung in the Ortona Room, named after a key Canadian battle against Germany.

“It’s a very nice residence, it is worthy of a Canadian ambassador,” he said. “The Prime Minister and all his staff are all post-World War II babies and none of them understands what went on and what the feelings of the veterans communities are. They just don’t give a damn. This is my feeling, I’ll stick by it.”

Concerns about the sale were raised in February by Robert Fowler, who served as ambassador to Italy between 2000 and 2006, and was later kidnapped in West Africa. “That residence was paid for with the blood of 6,000 Canadian soldiers,” he said in testimony to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Roth said the property, which Canada purchased in 1950 by deducting the amount from Italy’s war reparations, remained vacant and “in a state of ruins” until it was refurbished in 1984. Since 1999, the government has spent another \$2.3-million on repairs.

“I can understand that Mr. Fowler enjoyed living in a 13,000 square-foot mansion in the heart of Rome,” he said. But he said during that time, the government was not investing in the military. “That is the real travesty for our veterans.”

Canada owns two official residences in Italy — one in Rome for the ambassador to Italy, Albania, San Marino and Malta, and a second for the Holy See ambassador in Vatican City. The government plans to move the ambassador to Italy into the Vatican City residence. The Holy See ambassador will live instead in staff quarters.

The government has sold 20 official residences and staff quarters in six countries since last April, resulting in revenues of more than \$13-million. The sale of Villa Grandi could bring in at least that

much again.

Editors Note: Ted Griffiths is a past Prior of Simon Peter in Ottawa and is a strong advocate for veterans.

Baroness Sayeeda Warsi Addresses Crisis of Christian 'Hemorrhaging'

Baroness Sayeeda Warsi, the United Kingdom's first Minister of Faith, came to Washington last week on a mission to stop the global persecution of Christians. Warsi, the first Muslim ever to serve in a British Cabinet, spoke Friday at Georgetown University about recent militant extremism in the Middle East against Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox Christians. Her goal? Cross-faith, cross-continent unity to protect Christian minorities. "We need a new approach," she tells TIME. "Of course there have been times when faiths have been at each other, but there are real periods in history where faiths have coexisted and have been incredibly supportive."

Christian populations are "hemorrhaging" in the very countries that birthed the faith, Warsi said. In Syria, the Christian town of Maaloula was attacked in September. Suicide bombers in Pakistan targeted a church in Peshawar. Hundreds of Christians have been arrested in Iran, including American pastor Saeed Abedini, who has been jailed there for more than a year. "For me, rejection of another faith just reveals a weakness in your own," Warsi said in her speech. "As Hillary Clinton put it after the tragic murder of US Ambassador Stevens in Libya last year, withstanding threats and insults are a 'sign that one's faith is unshakeable.'"

Warsi says she finds a lot of support for her cause in the United States, including from former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, whom she met with on Friday at a Georgetown symposium on Afghan women. Clinton told Warsi that she is in a unique position to make a difference on this issue. "I think that normal divide of us and them doesn't really apply, because I am us and I am them," Warsi says. (A Clinton spokesperson did not return an email regarding her conversation with Warsi.)

Warsi says religious persecution is the biggest challenge of this young century. "First of all, it is about working up the political will," Warsi says about confronting that challenge. "It is about getting some consensus, it is about politicians being prepared to take on these difficult challenges."

Warsi's own story as a woman of faith is one of overcoming historic divides. The daughter of Pakistani immigrants, she grew up in a Muslim family with a blended theological background, including both Shias and Sunnis. "We were taught to respect and love other faiths as much as we loved our own, and I suppose, you know, quite strong teachings that you can only truly be a Muslim if you also are Christian and Jewish before that, that actually Islam is just an extension of the other faiths and it has been a process where various books have been revealed at various times," she says. "I don't see there is a collision course between people of faith, I actually do think it is instinctively based up on the same values."

Former Archbishop of Canterbury warns Christianity at risk of dying out in a generation

Lord Carey, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, has a warning for Christian churches: Attract young people to the faith or risk losing it forever.

According to The Telegraph, Carey said Christianity is just a "generation away from extinction" in Britain unless churches have a breakthrough in attracting young people.

Clergy are gripped by a "feeling of defeat" and congregations are worn down by "heaviness," he said.

Carey said the public greets both with "rolled eyes and a yawn of boredom," according to The Telegraph.

Carey made his remarks at a Shrewsbury conference discussing how the church could be "re-imagined."

“So many people do not see the average church as a place where great things happen,” he said. “To sit in a cold church looking at the back of other peoples’ heads is surely not the best place to meet exciting people and to hear prophetic words.”

According to The Telegraph, Carey cited a lack of youth ministries as one of the sources of the problem.

“So many churches have no ministry to young people and that means they have no interest in the future,” he said. “We have to give cogent reasons to young people why the Christian faith is relevant to them.”

Sunday congregations in the U.K. have almost halved since 1970 to just 807,000 in the most recent figures, The Telegraph reported.

Last month one of the country's most senior judges delivered a further blow. President of the Family Division Sir James Munby declared the courts are not Christian and 'the days are past when the business of judges was the enforcement of morals or religious beliefs'.

Ministers – who ignored the CofE's objections to same-sex marriage – have gone so far as to threaten the autonomy of the Church of England by hinting that the Government will intervene to force its hand if it cannot bring itself to approve the appointment of women bishops.

Lord Carey's warning was delivered in a speech at Holy Trinity Church in Shrewsbury as part of the Shropshire Churches Conference 2013.

More to Canada's vineyards than icewine!

This is an article I spotted in the Scotsman newspaper which shows yet another aspect of Canada that we can be proud of.

ICEWINE is Canada's most famous vinous export, yet many do not realise that the country has more than 500 wineries producing many styles.

The snag for UK wine lovers is that we rarely see the wines over here – and if we do, they are hard to find and they're not cheap. I recently organised the UK's first Canadian wine master class with almost every Canadian wine for sale in the UK – including sparkling, dry white, red and icewine – from Canada's four main wine regions: Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec and Nova Scotia.

You can read the rest of this article at:

<http://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/wine-more-to-canada-s-vineyards-than-icewine-1-3199433> where a number of wines are marked as "STAR BUY".

Alice Munro 'so proud' to see daughter accept Nobel prize on her behalf
Canadian author's works lauded for 'serenity and simplicity'

Canadian author Alice Munro was lauded as a "stunningly precise" writer today as her daughter accepted her Nobel Prize in literature at a reception in Stockholm.

Alice Munro grew up in Wingham, Ontario, and attended the University of Western Ontario. She has published fourteen previous books — Dance of the Happy Shades; Lives of Girls and Women, Something I've Been Meaning to Tell You; Who Do You Think You Are?; The Moons of Jupiter; The Progress of Love; Friend of My Youth; Open Secrets; Selected Stories; The Love of a Good Woman; Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage; Runaway; The View from Castle Rock; and Alice Munro's Best. During her distinguished career she has been the recipient of many awards and prizes, including the recent Man Booker International Prize given to her in Dublin for “a body of work that has contributed to an achievement in fiction on the world stage.”

Alice Munro proudly watched daughter Jenny accept the Nobel Prize on her behalf in Stockholm on Tuesday, and reflected back on a writing life that began when she was a girl growing up in rural Ontario with "unreasonable" expectations.

"I expected to be famous some day," the short story legend told The Canadian Press during an interview at the home of her daughter Sheila.

"This is because I lived in a very small town and there was nobody who liked the same things I did, like writing, and so I just thought naturally, 'Some day I'm going to write books,' and it happened."

Nobel laureate Alice Munro says rural Canadian upbringing inspired her to write. She added: "It was only the way a very out-of-the-world person could do it, because I just had no idea about how I was going to achieve this. But I just made up stories all the time that I thought that some day I would tell them to people."

Sitting on a green couch with a cat perched nearby, Munro spoke just hours after watching a live stream of the Nobel proceedings in Stockholm. Jenny Munro made the trip to the Swedish capital because her mother was not well enough to do so.

"I was so proud of Jenny," said Munro. "I'm delighted. I think it's wonderful. It's something you would never dream of happening and so I'm still kind of dazed, but really, it's very pleasant."

Knights Templar History

Templars by the Numbers

Historical accounts tell that in 1307 when the king of France went after the Order of the Temple, there were approximately 15,000 Templars. Of these, about 3,000 were knights, 1,000 squires, and 3,000 sergeants. The rest were priests, masons, smiths, medical personnel, lawyers, financiers, clerks, cooks, farmers, and assorted other occupations. During the time the Templars were in the Holy Land, there were also "Associates," noblemen who served for some time in the Templars as punishment for a crime and did not take vows, but had to live like monks nevertheless. They underwent training and joined in fighting if deemed able, not as knights but in a lesser capacity. Most likely, there was a special place in the ranks for them.

The numbers in the Templar Order didn't vary significantly in the last two decades prior to 1307 that they were in existence. The number of commanderies (geographic groupings of castles, forts, farms, and other possessions) were reduced with the loss of the Holy Land, but these men were absorbed into commanderies in Europe. This was the usual process when combat personnel became too old, infirm, or disabled, they were sent to a commanderie in Europe to work in one of the many farms, mills, or if literate, act as a clerk. If unable to work, they were allowed to lead a life of quiet contemplation. It was an egalitarian system, in as much that sergeants were given similar consideration as knights, took similar vows and were well respected.

Templars' lives were austere and simple. When the French king ordered his men to find valuables in Templar castles in 1307, they were disappointed to discover that the monks actually lived in poverty. All the talk of a dissolute and luxurious life had been a fable.

Templar Types

Knights came from the middle and lower nobility, and sergeants from the merchant and working class.

Pages became squires and squires became knights. Grooms became sergeants. All took monastic vows, but not until a person became a sergeant or a knight was he eligible to take the appropriate permanent vows of dedication to serving Christ and loyalty to the Order. Grooms, pages and squires did not take permanent vows, and many in fact left the Order voluntarily, or by failing to make the grade.

Sergeants were there to support and assist their assigned knight, but also functioned as trainers of the squires to make them into knights.. So for a year or two, the proud knights took orders from lowly sergeants, who were the molders and shapers of the mightiest force of its time, the holders of the skills and abilities that made a Knight Templar. I wrote at length about Templar training in the novel

since it was left out of historical accounts. I looked at Templar skills and proficiency, and extrapolated from other military organizations with similar abilities.

You can read more of this history at:

http://grigorfedan.com/main/Knights_Templar_History

Grand Chancellors Corner

Temple Wall

In Jerusalem there is about 160 feet of wall of the original Temple of Solomon remaining. Devout Jews and Christians pray there daily. One of the unique aspects to those prayers is the practice of leaving tiny pieces of paper with prayers on them of praise and supplication stuffed into the crevices of the Wall. I will be praying there in January and if anyone would like me to add their prayers or the wee bits of paper expressing them, please send them to me and they will join the prayers of millenia in this most wondrous and holy place. God bless.

The title given to Henry VIII by the Pope was "Defender of the Faith": a title carried by our monarch to this day. The Templars could well have been given the title, "Defender of the Faithful", because it was their foundational role to protect the faithful on their pilgrimages to the Holy Land. They cleared the roads of bandits and kidnappers and joined the Crusaders in critical battles as storm troops, carving their way through enemy lines to regain the towns and cities, the castles and the sites of Christ's life stories. And they lived lives of piety and lives of service.

To-day the call must go out again . . . only the battles of the 21st century Templar is not that of the 12th or 14th. It is not the sword lifted with the battle cry, but rather the call to the world to abhor the slaughter that is staining our century.

To-day it is sectarian attacks against Christians which are destroying our ties with our past. The very lands where Christ walked and our faith claimed, are being laid waste with the blood of our brother and sister Christians.

Long-ignored, the matter is becoming a crisis. In mid-November, Sayeeda Warsi, the Minister for Faith in Prime Minister David Cameron's government, warned that violence against Christian worshippers by religious fanatics has become a "global crisis", according to a report in the National Post.

Christians are fleeing the lands where their forebears have lived for 2,000 years as the only way to save their lives and those of their children. Iraq has seen its Christian population fall from 1.2 million in 1990 to 200,000 today. Lebanon and Syrian Christian populations have all but vanished in the aftermath of violence: dead or fleeing seem the only options on offer.

In London next year Minister Warsi will be hosting religious leaders, politicians and judicial representatives from around the world. The goal is to come up with a plan to end this violence: particularly in the Holy Lands. But the violence is far-reaching and not contained to that geography.

Christian churches, weddings and funerals are prime targets for bombings, drive-by shootings and suicide attacks: whether in Iraq, Niger, Egypt or Pakistan. Shattered bodies and lives lie in the wake of such ferocity.

So what is the appropriate response for a Templar?

As in all things, we should begin with prayer and contemplation. Prayers seeking hearts that can forgive: while reaching out with compassion for the victims of hate. Prayers that the love Jesus proclaimed may filter into even the hearts of the haters.

To-day, the call that goes out to the Templar is to kick up a stink, to educate those within your

sphere, to take political action: ensuring that your representatives are aware and supporting the upcoming Conference and your concerns. Making those you elect aware of what is happening and aware that their constituents care. Talking to your colleagues at work and your family at home, spreading awareness of a problem that is too little covered in our media.

A case of discrimination in Canada gets ink: Christians killed overseas rank little attention. Write letters to the Editor of the newspaper or magazine to which you subscribe. When radio and TV shows invite comment, COMMENT! Challenge the producers on what they cover: and more importantly, what they DO NOT cover. Support the charities that support these beleaguered souls.

Canada welcomes those of all faiths who come to this great land. They build the temples and mosques and churches of their faiths with our blessings. Even when they come from lands where one cannot wear a cross or carry a Bible or construct a church. Let us continue to lead by example, but never be silent in expressing our concern for our sisters and brothers who bear the burden of fanaticism on their broken bones and bodies.

And never underestimate the power of prayer.

If you have any ideas on what Templars can do to address this problem, please share it with us. Sent your thoughts to alastairi@electricScotland.com

One of the Best Emails I Ever Read

At a fundraising dinner for a school that serves children with learning disabilities, the father of one of the students delivered a speech that would never be forgotten by all who attended. After extolling the school and its Dedicated staff, he offered a question:

'When not interfered with by outside influences, everything nature does, is done with perfection.

Yet my son, Shay, cannot learn things as other children do. He cannot understand things as other children do.

Where is the natural order of things in my son?'

The audience was stilled by the query.

The father continued. 'I believe that when a child like Shay, who was mentally and physically disabled comes into the world, an opportunity to realize true human nature presents itself, and it comes in the way other people treat that child.'

Then he told the following story:

Shay and I had walked past a park where some boys Shay knew were playing baseball. Shay asked, 'Do you think they'll let me play?' I knew that most of the boys would not want someone like Shay on their team, but as a father I also understood that if my son were allowed to play, it would give him a much-needed sense of belonging and some confidence to be accepted by others in spite of his handicaps.

I approached one of the boys on the field and asked (not expecting much) if Shay could play. The boy looked around for guidance and said, 'We're losing by six runs and the game is in the eighth inning. I guess he can be on our team and we'll try to put him in to bat in the ninth inning.'

Shay struggled over to the team's bench and, with a broad smile, put on a team shirt. I watched with a small tear in my eye and warmth in my heart. The boys saw my joy at my son being accepted.

In the bottom of the eighth inning, Shay's team scored a few runs but was still behind by three.

In the top of the ninth inning, Shay put on a glove and played in the right field. Even though no hits came his way, he was obviously ecstatic just to be in the game and on the field, grinning from ear to

ear as I waved to him from the stands.

In the bottom of the ninth inning, Shay's team scored again.

Now, with two outs and the bases loaded, the potential winning run was on base and Shay was scheduled to be next at bat.

At this juncture, do they let Shay bat and give away their chance to win the game?

Surprisingly, Shay was given the bat. Everyone knew that a hit was all but impossible because Shay didn't even know how to hold the bat properly, much less connect with the ball.

However, as Shay stepped up to the Plate, the pitcher, recognizing that the other team was putting winning aside for this moment in Shay's life, moved in a few steps to lob the ball in softly so Shay could at least make contact.

The first pitch came and Shay swung clumsily and missed.

The pitcher again took a few steps forward to toss the ball softly towards Shay.

As the pitch came in, Shay swung at the ball and hit a slow ground ball right back to the pitcher.

The game would now be over.

The pitcher picked up the soft grounder and could have easily thrown the ball to the first baseman.

Shay would have been out and that would have been the end of the game.

Instead, the pitcher threw the ball right over the first baseman's head, out of reach of all team mates.

Everyone from the stands and both teams started yelling, 'Shay, run to first! Run to first!'

Never in his life had Shay ever run that far, but he made it to first base.

He scampered down the baseline, wide-eyed and startled.

Everyone yelled, 'Run to second, run to second!'

Catching his breath, Shay awkwardly ran towards second, gleaming and struggling to make it to the base.

By the time Shay rounded towards second base, the right fielder had the ball. The smallest guy on their team who now had his first chance to be the hero for his team.

He could have thrown the ball to the second-baseman for the tag, but he understood the pitcher's intentions so he, too, intentionally threw the ball high and far over the third-baseman's head.

Shay ran toward third base deliriously as the runners ahead of him circled the bases toward home.

All were screaming, 'Shay, Shay, Shay, all the Way Shay'

Shay reached third base because the opposing shortstop ran to help him by turning him in the direction of third base, and shouted, 'Run to third! Shay, run to third!'

As Shay rounded third, the boys from both teams, and the spectators, were on their feet screaming, 'Shay, run home! Run home!'

Shay ran to home, stepped on the plate, and was cheered as the hero who hit the grand slam and won the game for his team

'That day', said the father softly with tears now rolling down his face, 'the boys from both teams helped bring a piece of true love and humanity into this world'.

Shay didn't make it to another summer. He died that winter, having never forgotten being the hero and making me so happy, and coming home and seeing his Mother tearfully embrace her little hero of the day!

AND NOW A LITTLE FOOT NOTE TO THIS STORY:

We all send thousands of jokes through the e-mail without a second thought, but when it comes to sending messages about life choices, people hesitate.

The crude, vulgar, and often obscene pass freely through cyberspace, but public discussion about decency is too often suppressed in our schools and workplaces.

If you're thinking about forwarding this message, chances are that you're probably sorting out the people in your address book who aren't the 'appropriate' ones to receive this type of message. Well, the person who sent you this believes that we all can make a difference.

We all have thousands of opportunities every single day to help realize the 'natural order of things.'

So many seemingly trivial interactions between two people present us with a choice:

Do we pass along a little spark of love and humanity or do we pass up those opportunities and leave the world a little bit colder in the process?

A wise man once said every society is judged by how it treats it's least fortunate amongst them.

IN MEMORY OF SHAY

Book Reviews

SEARCH FOR TEMPLAR GOLD

By Alex Wilson

[Kindle Edition] \$9.99.

503 Pages

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00G9FG2Z2>

The book is a novel set in Leith, near Edinburgh, Scotland and is of the Dan Brown genre but much more fascinating.

The greatest corporation the medieval world ever knew, was that of the Knights Templar. Spectacularly wealthy, far beyond that of individual Kings and Emperors they amassed over the few centuries of their existence, not only the wealth of nations, but the ire of many of the crowned heads of Europe, deeply in debt to this organization which paid no taxes and was beyond the reach of even, the Church.

The Templars could have lasted for many centuries more, but for the evil intent of King Phillip the Fair of France, who plotted with the Pope, their downfall. Sensing the end of their 'empire' the Templar's sought out a safe refuge for their many treasures, not all of them in the form of gold. Scotland, on the periphery of Europe and helped by the fact that their King, Robert the Bruce had been excommunicated by the Catholic Church after murdering his cousin in a church.

Leith at this time, was the pre-eminent Templar port in northern Europe. It was here that the contents of the Paris Treasury was relocated to a safe haven, far from prying eyes. The vast treasure lay undisturbed for century after century expertly secreted away, out of sight, out of mind. Eventually, the Templars realized that the treasure would be recovered but not until circumstances or technology allowed for such an event.

The book begins with an unusual climatic condition which resulted in the catastrophic destruction of an ancient house, falling masonry revealing an underground pit wherein lay an artifact, key to the rediscovery of the treasure.

The young boy who makes the discovery is no ordinary kid. He lives in Leith in no ordinary family. His father 'works for the government' and arriving home, helps his son uncover the meaning of the symbols decorating the artifact. By seeking 'professional' help in this matter they set off a chain reaction of latent interest in this revelation that has been waiting in the wings for centuries, for just this moment.

The exploits of the family take them to London and Cyprus, the action moves to Beirut and back again to Cyprus. With the boy's father taking on a greater role in the story, the scene moves to Geneva where a further revelation sees the book move to France before heading to Edinburgh.

There are a further set of circumstances which see the United States being drawn into the narrative. However, the action doesn't move to the United States; the United States comes to the action in the form of the world's largest battleship, the Nimitz class carrier, USS Abraham Lincoln.

The arrival of this great battleship in Leith totally transforms the fortunes of the exploration and it is only with the able assistance of the U.S. Navy that the whole enterprise succeeds.

There is indeed treasure to find. Gold to the value of ¼ Trillion \$'s that is \$250.000.000.000.00. Hidden in Leith. Treasure in other forms too, the 'rescued' balance of the Dead Sea Scrolls which the Templars had 'removed' from the remains of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem and perhaps, the most important relic of all, the Holy of Holies.

Could it be that they discover hidden for all these years just outside Edinburgh the – Ark of the Covenant? The book reveals all!

My first two chapters concentrate on telling the story of the family, all of whom are integral to the progress of the story. My historical research, which was conducted prior to writing the book, is drip fed into the story throughout.

I trust it is as exciting a read as it was to write. Packed full of local interest certainly, I hope its parochial nature will transcend the potential readership and reveal for them the often ignored great history we have on our doorstep.

I'm sure that the great Scottish Diaspora will also find it interesting, if not the world as a whole?

As the author relates it... The book is a fictional account of the adventures of a young Leith boy and his family who discover an ancient artifact and in the desire to understand the significance of the item embark on an adventure all around Europe. It was the best way I could articulate all the amazing stuff I discovered about Leith's history that doesn't appear in history books. Time will tell if this was the best way to bring such a great story to the public.

I know Alex quite well as we've corresponded on a number of occasions. He wrote a most interesting article on the ancient Flag of Leith which can be read at:

http://www.electricscotland.com/history/articles/leith_flag.htm

Alex is an ex-pat Scot who having arrived back in Edinburgh from Southern California, he happened to land a job at the famous Vaults. It was this that triggered an interest into this most historical of buildings and spawned the origins of the book. Research in local history books and many visits to the local libraries failed to extract the information now available in this book. Omission of this most important component of Leith's history is the fault of lack of interconnectivity, nothing else. No-one sought to join all the dots until now. The Author is semi-retired and working on a Timeline History of Leith which will be published in early 2014.

I got a note in from him telling me... on the day of launch I was languishing at 154.194 out of 1.5 Million books. I then proceeded to slip down the rankings over the weeks ahead of the promotion down as far as 306.349. On day 1 of the promotion I shot up to 89.000 and now on the last day, I sit

at 7.861 and #5 on the Childrens e-book list.

Templars: The Rise, Fall & Survival of the Knights Templar."

Attacks on the Knights Templar by the Vatican were not excused by discovery of the Chinon Parchment in 2001 by Barbara Frale, according to the new book "[Templars: The Rise, Fall & Survival of the Knights Templar.](#)"

New evidence now disproves earlier claims that the Chinon Parchment absolved the Vatican from blame in its attacks on the Knights Templar after 1307, as shown in the new book "Templars: The Rise, Fall & Survival of the Knights Templar."

Barbara Frale made those claims when presenting this manuscript she found in the Vatican Secret Archives. However historian Sanford Holst now presents additional documents in "Templars" that tell another story.

"Grand Master Jacques de Molay and other Templars were put on trial in 1308 at Chinon in France. This parchment recorded a plea-bargain in which they pled guilty to lesser forms of heresy in order to win reconciliation with the church," said Holst. "Other Templars did the same. Yet when they later renounced their confessions as false testimony, they were declared 'relapsed heretics' and put to death in flames."

So rather than exonerating the Vatican from guilt in the killing of the Templars, the Chinon Parchment and other documents shown in "Templars" mark the clear trail along which royal and religious leaders led these knights to their execution.

Sanford Holst is best known as the author of Amazon's #1 book on the Phoenicians, the people who helped build Solomon's Temple. That temple inspired the Templars and gave them their name.

"Templars: The Rise, Fall & Survival of the Knights Templar" also follows the remarkable paths taken by those who survived these attacks on the Templar Order. This book was published on September 16, 2013, in the USA and Europe.

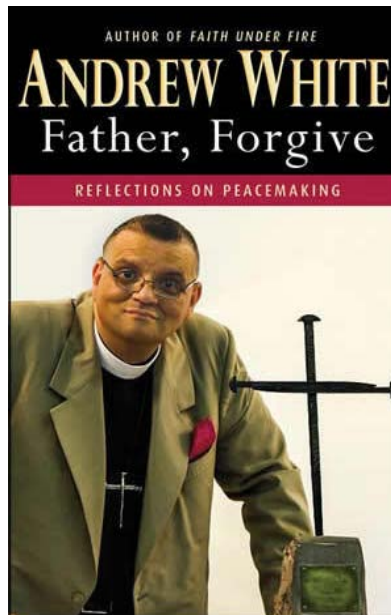
Father, Forgive: Reflections On Peacemaking
Canon Andrew White
176 Pages

Andrew White reflects the glory of God more than any other Christian writer I know. He is a man wholly given over to Jesus, and because of that God is able to work through him in an extraordinary way.

His book shows the power of God's presence in Iraq and the middle east. He is an academic who loves being with people. He lays out the causes of the conflict and shows the way to resolution - through forgiveness.

But more than that his writing reveals the glory of God - the sheer goodness of God and how He can be trusted. He and his church live in the most appalling conditions; experiencing murder, kidnapping, rape, and deprivation on a scale those of us living in the West cannot imagine. People here get annoyed when their wheelie bins are stolen, yet over there whole houses and districts and families are destroyed, without a second thought.

The keynote of Christians belonging to St. George's church is 'Joy', because they are held by the Holy Spirit - they know the presence of Jesus. Even writing of the horrors, and revealing the source of deep injustice, including the attitude of influential leaders of the Anglican church down the centuries (and now even) to Israel, it is the joy of the Lord that spills out of the pages of this book.



Father, Forgive is a seminal work, and the truthfulness of it will annoy many. But for those who love Jesus Christ and who love to glorify God, it is an utter delight. I keep buying copies to give to others.

You can purchase this book at Amazon.com

You can also purchase the book through his web site at: <http://frrme.org/>

News from Canon Andrew White 09/12/2013

Greetings My Dear Friends,

It has been another period of Glory and Tragedy. The daily reports of the massacres continue to be awful. We have not sent you the reports of all the killings because they just seem too awful, but sadly they continue and we so need your prayers. What is so sad at this time is also the fact the Christians and Yazidees have started to be targeted again. Eleven were killed yesterday near here and another three were shot in the head today.

Sheik Khalid, the Sunni leader, came to see us this evening to tell us how bad things were and how we had to work urgently to try and bring some reconciliation. We indeed must as it is a matter of life and death. Added to this, has been the murder today of one of the Muslim women in our women's group. Her husband did not kill the woman because she was in our group. However, now we have the serious situation of finding a home for the three young children.

Whilst things have been so awful we have been experiencing an incredible presence of the Spirit of G-d. Look at the video below which shows the immense joy of last Fridays young peoples service.

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=10152103241491369&set=vb.617111368&type=2&theater>

We continue to move forward knowing that our Lord will never leave us. There is much excitement amongst at the moment, as this week we have our Bishop Michael coming from Cyprus and our President Bishop Mouneer coming from Cairo, both with their wives Julia and Nancy. Please pray for us.

Many Blessings,

Andrew

Harper and Canadian contingent set off to pay Mandela final respects

Prime Minister Stephen Harper and a group of Canadian dignitaries have left for South Africa to pay their final respects to Nelson Mandela.

Harper is leading a Canadian delegation to the public memorial planned for Tuesday in Johannesburg, as well as his lying in state in Pretoria on Wednesday.

The prime minister is joined by former PM's Jean Chrétien, Kim Campbell and Brian Mulroney onflight to South Africa.

"He was a great, great man," Chretien said of Mandela as he boarded the plane.



Mulroney led Canada's efforts to free Mandela from prison in 1984, and was instrumental in pressuring the South African government to end its

apartheid regime through strong economic and political sanctions.

Mulroney told CTV's Question Period this weekend that Mandela's legacy as a leader and freedom-fighter will always be remembered by the South African people.

"I think the roots that Nelson Mandela sowed are deep enough or secure enough for South Africans to realize that what he wanted for them was happiness, prosperity, education, healthcare," Mulroney said.

"I'm confident about the future because of the tremendous legacy that he left," he added.

Other dignitaries joining the Canadian delegation in South Africa include former prime minister Joe Clark, NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair, Nova Scotia Premier Stephen McNeil, and Alberta Premier Alison Redford.

Redford met Mandela during his first visit to Canada in 1990, when she was a young lawyer specializing in constitutional and legal reform law. Not long after, she moved to South Africa soon to join a team responsible for laying the groundwork for the first all-race elections that led to Mandela becoming president, and to negotiate the country's first constitution.

"Lots of Canadian lawyers were involved," Redford says. "Young passionate lawyers who wanted to share their experience. A lot of us had an opportunity to spend time with him."

Also among the impressive Canadian contingent is former Gov. Gen. Michaëlle Jean. Jean travelled to South Africa in 2006 and had the opportunity to visit Robben Island, the prison where Mandela was held for more than 18 years. She said she was overcome with emotion when she walked into Mandela's prison cell.

"Being in Robben Island where he had spent, in that space of confinement, so many years gave me the reality of the sacrifices and what he had suffered," Jean said.

She said she has used Mandela's message of peace and hope to inspire her own role as a leader.

"What Nelson Mandela gave me is the capacity of being myself, being who I am, using everything that is me in my role and this is what I did during my time as Governor General,"

"This is something I really admired in Mandela, his capacity to listen to people and his humility knowing that he didn't have all the answers always," she added.

Assembly of First Nations national chief Shawn Atleo, Yukon Premier Darrell Pasloski and Liberal MP Irwin Cotler have also joined the delegation.

Irwir, who served as Canada's Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, was a part of Mandela's international legal team during his 27-year imprisonment and met the leader in 2001 when Mandela became a honorary Canadian citizen.

Mandela died on Thursday at the age of 95.

His body will lie in state from Wednesday through Friday. A state funeral for the former South African president is planned for next Sunday.

Advices on Entering a New Year

This is an old text written in 1863 but I think still has much relevance. It was written by Norman MacLeod who was chaplain to Queen Victoria.

1. Let a short portion of time be spent each day this year in private prayer, in reading God's Word, and, if possible, some devotional book.
2. Let it be the great work of the year to become better acquainted personally with Jesus Christ as

the living and ever-present Friend, Brother, and Saviour.

3. Endeavour to concentrate your efforts to do good upon some definite unselfish work in your family or out of it, which may help others, as it certainly must help yourself.
4. In all things try to live more towards God, seeking His approval of your inner and outer life. The less you talk about yourself or your doings before men, the better for yourself and for them.
5. Aim this year at being a peacemaker between professing Christians; to allay disputes, and to heal breaches among friends and relations; and to make men respect and esteem each other more.
6. Do not leave behind you in the old year guilt unpardoned, but believe in Jesus for the remission of sins; nor enter a new year with sin loved and cherished, but accept of and rely upon His Spirit to sanctify you. Begin the year without enmity to any man on earth, "forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, even so do ye."
7. If you are the head of the house, resolve to read a portion of God's Word once a-day at least to the family; and either read or offer up, always with them, a short but hearty prayer.
8. Endeavour to keep an account of your income and expenditure, that you may be able to live justly and generously. Give what you can to assist poor relatives, and poor Christians, and the Church of Christ. Try this one year to tax yourself ten per cent, on your free income for such purposes.

Learn to do these things, and many more will the Lord teach thee to know and do; and may the God of love and peace be with thee!

The above came from his book Parish Papers which you can read at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/history/macleod/index.htm>

Are you Proud of being a Templar? - You should be!

At the end of the day the Templar order is a Christian one and we do a lot of great work to assist Christians in the Holy Land. However, we also do a tremendous amount of good for National and Local charities at home.

Your annual dues go towards our charitable activities so that means your money is going to provide shoes for the homeless or to support a local charity. It might also go to providing clean water for a community somewhere in the world.

The Order also helps people in the world trying to bring peace and reconciliation to trouble spots in the Holy Land and our activities at the United Nations helps this effort. Templars are involved every day in this work and believe me some of the places we go are dangerous places and they risk their own lives by going there. That alone should make you proud of being a Templar.

In other words your annual dues make a difference to real people at home and abroad.

Of course it's not only your money which counts but the work that you contribute to others in your daily life. Some of our Knights and Dames go out of their way to help at homeless shelters, old folks homes, etc. Some of us actually go to Africa and other places to do special projects that give practical aid to those less fortunate.

Our Grand Chancellor is minister of the smallest and poorest Anglican church in Toronto (St. Monicas). There she runs a food bank and other activities that help the poorest of people.

The Jordon River project is mightily important as it will facilitate meetings between various parties and help to bring peace to that area of the world.

Just look at the Priory reports in each newsletter as they more than anything else show how Templars are making a real difference.

So given all that we do to help others in need why aren't you proudly adding your KTJ or DTJ to your business cards and adding it to your signature any time you send out an email? We're not a secret organisation so we not only have nothing to hide but we sure have lots of things we can boast about.

So tell the world you are a member of the Knights Templar!
And be Proud to tell them so!

Our Web Site

At a November meeting in Windsor the go ahead was given to do a complete makeover of our web site. Stuart Ross, a Knight in Toronto, has been tasked with the role of webmaster.

We'd like to thank Sir Andy Williams for looking after the site for us as its been no easy task to do so and the difficulty in getting in content for it. Despite this handicap he made a vast difference to our site and made it far more professional in its presentation and thus made a huge difference to what came before.

Sir Stuart has the experience in putting together web sites and running them in his day to day operations so he's in a much better position to run the site on a daily basis. At time of writing our domain is being transferred to a new hosting company that will give us the technical ability to manage it the way it needs to be run.

Recipe - Jeff Davis Pie

Sent in by Beth Gay

Jefferson Davis pie, named for the confederate president and baked from a recipe in the 1946 Joy of Cooking. Culinary historians believe that a Missouri slave named Mary Ann invented this pie during the Civil War, when she worked as a cook for a confederate merchant. If this story is true, the name of the pie is truly unfortunate. It is Mary Ann's name that should be attached to this brilliant pie, an opulent confection of raisins, dates, and pecans held together by a spicy custard and topped with meringue. If you can imagine a Christmas pudding crossed with a pecan pie, you will have an idea of this intense, complex dessert, which, like cognac or espresso, is something you savor in small portions. My sister took a bite and said, "This is it!" I took one bite and said "This is it!"

You will need:

- 1/2 cup butter or margarine (I used real butter)
- 2 cups brown sugar
- 4 egg yolks
- 2 teaspoons all purpose flour
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 1 large 9 or 10 inch unbaked pastry shell
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 cup light cream
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup chopped dates

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Cream butter and add sugar, creaming until light and fluffy. Add egg yolks and mix well. Combine the flour and the spices. Add to creamed mixture. Stir in remaining ingredients. Pour into unbaked pastry shell and bake 35 to 40 minutes or until set. Cool. Top with whipped cream or ice cream. Makes 8 - 10 servings.

This Is What Christmas Is All About

Sent to us by email from Jeanie Francis, author not known.

A dear friend shared this precious Christmas Story with me, and it touched me so much, I, in turn, wanted to share it with you...

Pa never had much compassion for the lazy or those who squandered their means and then never had enough for the necessities. But for those who were genuinely in need, his heart was as big as all outdoors. It was from him that I learned the greatest joy in life comes from giving, not from receiving.

It was Christmas Eve 1881. I was fifteen years old and feeling like the world had caved in on me because there just hadn't been enough money to buy me the rifle that I'd wanted for Christmas. We did the chores early that night for some reason. I just figured Pa wanted a little extra time so we could read in the Bible.

After supper was over I took my boots off and stretched out in front of the fireplace and waited for Pa to get down the old Bible. I was still feeling sorry for myself and, to be honest, I wasn't in much of a mood to read Scriptures. But Pa didn't get the Bible, instead he bundled up again and went outside. I couldn't figure it out because we had already done all the chores. I didn't worry about it long though, I was too busy wallowing in self-pity.

Soon, Pa came back in. It was a cold, clear, night out and there was ice in his beard. "Come on, Matt," he said. "Bundle up good, it's cold out tonight." I was really upset then. Not only wasn't I getting the rifle for Christmas, now Pa was dragging me out in the cold, and for no earthly reason that I could see. We'd already done all the chores, and I couldn't think of anything else that needed doing, especially not on a night like this. But I knew Pa was not very patient at one dragging one's feet when he'd told them to do something, so I got up and put my boots back on and got my cap, coat, and mittens. Ma gave me a mysterious smile as I opened the door to leave the house. Something was up, but I didn't know what...

Outside, I became even more dismayed. There in front of the house was the work team, already hitched to the big sled. Whatever it was, we were going to do wasn't going to be a short, quick, little job. I could tell. We never hitched up this sled unless we were going to haul a big load. Pa was already up on the seat, reins in hand. I reluctantly climbed up beside him. The cold was already biting at me. I wasn't happy. When I was on, Pa pulled the sled around the house and stopped in front of the woodshed. He got off and I followed. "I think we'll put on the high sideboards," he said. "Here, help me." The high sideboards! It had been a bigger job than I wanted to do with just the low sideboards on, but whatever it was we were going to do would be a lot bigger with the high sideboards on. After we had exchanged the sideboards, Pa went into the woodshed and came out with an armload of wood - the wood I'd spent all summer hauling down from the mountain, and then all Fall sawing into blocks and splitting. What was he doing?

Finally I said something. "Pa," I asked, "what are you doing?" "You been by the Widow Jensen's lately?" he asked. The Widow Jensen lived about two miles down the road. Her husband had died a year or so before and left her with three children, the oldest being eight. Sure, I'd been by, but so what? "Yeah," I said, "Why?" "I rode by just today," Pa said. "Little Jakey was out digging around in the woodpile trying to find a few chips. They're out of wood, Matt." That was all he said and then he turned and went back into the woodshed for another armload of wood. I followed him. We loaded the sled so high that I began to wonder if the horses would be able to pull it. Finally, Pa called a halt to our loading, then we went to the smoke house and Pa took down a big ham and a side of bacon. He handed them to me and told me to put them in the sled and wait. When he returned he was carrying a sack of flour over his right shoulder and a smaller sack of something in his left hand. "What's in the little sack?" I asked. Shoes, they're out of shoes. Little Jakey just had gunny sacks wrapped around his feet when he was out in the woodpile this morning. I got the children a little candy too. It just wouldn't be Christmas without a little candy."

We rode the two miles to Widow Jensen's pretty much in silence. I tried to think through what Pa was doing. We didn't have much by worldly standards. Of course, we did have a big woodpile, though most of what was left now was still in the form of logs that I would have to saw into blocks and split before we could use it. We also had meat and flour, so we could spare that, but I knew we didn't have any money, so why was Pa buying them shoes and candy? Really, why was he doing any of this? Widow Jensen had closer neighbors than us; it shouldn't have been our concern.

We came in from the blind side of the Jensen house and unloaded the wood as quietly as possible, then we took the meat and flour and shoes to the door. We knocked. The door opened a crack and a timid voice said, "Who is it?" "Lucas Miles, Ma'am, and my son, Matt, could we come in for a bit?" Widow Jensen opened the door and let us in. She had a blanket wrapped around her shoulders. The children were wrapped in another and were sitting in front of the fireplace by a very small fire that hardly gave off any heat at all. Widow Jensen fumbled with a match and finally lit the lamp.

"We brought you a few things, Ma'am," Pa said and set down the sack of flour. I put the meat on the table. Then Pa handed her the sack that had the shoes in it. She opened it hesitantly and took the shoes out one pair at a time. There was a pair for her and one for each of the children - sturdy shoes, the best, shoes that would last. I watched her carefully. She bit her lower lip to keep it from trembling and then tears filled her eyes and started running down her cheeks. She looked up at Pa like she wanted to say something, but it wouldn't come out. "We brought a load of wood too, Ma'am," Pa said. He turned to me and said, "Matt, go bring in enough to last awhile. Let's get that fire up to size and heat this place up." I wasn't the same person when I went back out to bring in the wood. I had a big lump in my throat and as much as I hate to admit it, there were tears in my eyes too. In my mind I kept seeing those three kids huddled around the fireplace and their mother standing there with tears running down her cheeks with so much gratitude in her heart that she couldn't speak.

My heart swelled within me and a joy that I'd never known before, filled my soul. I had given at Christmas many times before, but never when it had made so much difference. I could see we were literally saving the lives of these people. I soon had the fire blazing and everyone's spirits soared. The kids started giggling when Pa handed them each a piece of candy and Widow Jensen looked on with a smile that probably hadn't crossed her face for a long time. She finally turned to us. "God Bless You," she said. "I know the Lord has sent you. The children and I have been praying that He would send one of His Angels to spare us." In spite of myself, the lump returned to my throat and the tears welled up in my eyes again. I'd never thought of Pa in those exact terms before, but after Widow Jensen mentioned it I could see that it was probably true. I was sure that a better man than Pa had never walked the earth. I started remembering all the times he had gone out of his way for Ma and me, and many others. The list seemed endless as I thought on it.

Pa insisted that everyone try on the shoes before we left. I was amazed when they all fit and I wondered how he had known what sizes to get. Then I guessed that if he was on an errand for the Lord that the Lord would make sure he got the right sizes. Tears were running down Widow Jensen's face again when we stood up to leave. Pa took each of the kids in his big arms and gave them a hug. They clung to him and didn't want us to go. I could see that they missed their Pa, and I was glad that I still had mine.

At the door Pa turned to Widow Jensen and said, "The Mrs. wanted me to invite you and the children over for Christmas dinner tomorrow. The turkey will be more than the three of us can eat, and a man can get cantankerous if he has to eat turkey for too many meals. We'll be by to get you about eleven. It'll be nice to have some little ones around again. Matt, here, hasn't been little for quite a spell." I was the youngest. My two brothers and two sisters had all married and had moved away. Widow Jensen nodded and said, "Thank you, Brother Miles. I don't have to say, May The Lord Bless You, I know for certain that He will."

Out on the sled I felt a warmth that came from deep within and I didn't even notice the cold. When we had gone a ways, Pa turned to me and said, "Matt, I want you to know something. Your Ma and me have been tucking a little money away here and there all year so we could buy that rifle for you, but we didn't have quite enough. Then yesterday a man who owed me a little money from years back came by to make things square. Your Ma and me were real excited, thinking that now we could get you that rifle, and I started into town this morning to do just that, but on the way I saw little Jakey out scratching in the woodpile with his feet wrapped in those gunny sacks and I knew what I had to do. Son, I spent the money for shoes and a little candy for those children. I hope you understand."

I understood, and my eyes became wet with tears again. I understood very well, and I was so glad Pa had done it. Now the rifle seemed very low on my list of priorities. Pa had given me a lot more. He had given me the look on Widow Jensen's face and the radiant smiles of her three children. For the rest of my life, whenever I saw any of the Jensens, or split a block of wood, I remembered, and remembering brought back that same joy I felt riding home beside Pa that night. Pa had given me much more than a rifle that night, he had given me the best Christmas of my life.

Don't be too busy today. Share this inspiring message.

May God Bless You!

Christmas for Kids

At this time of year it can be difficult to keep the Kids occupied so here I am providing you with some simple resources that might help.

Children's Stories

I have a collection of some 800 children's stories and many have wee educational messages within them. You can get to these at:

http://www.electricscotland.com/kids/childrens_stories.htm

In particular there is a wee collection of Children's Christmas stories at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/kids/stories/xmas.htm>

Jigsaw Puzzles

A few years back I did loads of jigsaw puzzles to enhance my Kids section and so you can get to these at: <http://www.electricscotland.com/kids/jigsaws/>. Most of these jigsaws are a standard number of pieces but you can select smaller or larger numbers of pieces to make them easier or harder.

Dress the Chief

Many years ago I commissioned this software so Kids could design their own pictures. It was meant to then capture the picture and then allow it to be sent as a postcard but the company went out of business before that part could be completed. However the game is all there and you can do a screen capture of the picture. You can get to this at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/kids/dress12-20.swf>

Grandfather tells the children the story of the Great Flood

The problem of having a Scottish newsletter editor is that he has a great store of stories with a Scottish theme. and some of these stories are also told in a Scottish dialect. This particular story happens to have an audio recording of the story and so I thought you might enjoy reading it while listening to the audio recording.

This story was authored by Francis Kerr Young, a Scots Canadian, and you can read it and listen to it at:

http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/young/great_flood.htm

I might add that Peter Wright, who reads the story, is one of very few people living that can talk all day in the old Scots language. When you go to the page you'll see a picture of him reading the story to his own two grand-daughters.

Charlotte Bleh's Collection of Favourite Nursery Rhymes, Poems and Prose Book - Christmas Collection

Charlotte was born in Dundee, Scotland but is now a US citizen. She decided to write a book for her family and here is how she introduces it...

This collection began as a little gift of nursery rhymes, clip art, and a few family photographs given to Xochitl at her baby shower for her expected little girl, Lauren, in August of 2003. However, like everything else I seem to write, it later took on a life of its own and I find myself two months later creating an anthology of my favourite nursery rhymes, poems and pieces of prose from my childhood and those I enjoyed sharing with my son and my daughters when they were very young and as they grew into their childhoods.

I hope you will accept this gift: Johnny, Tina, Stephanie, Elisabeth, Alys, Xochitl and Adriana. I hope you will someday read my memories and find your own. I hope you will find, as I did, the beauty of words and the music of rhythm and rhyme and pacing and expression found in poetry. I hope you'll

feel the emotions of joy and hope and laughter and remembrance in your own lives and history as you read these works. I hope you'll share them with your families as you go through life. I hope you'll find yourselves and understand your character and strengthen your spirit and your philosophical values from these words.

And I hope you will know, long after I am gone, that I love you and will watch over you forever.

Again a little Scots dialect but hope you enjoy these which can be viewed at:

<http://www.electricscotland.com/kids/bleh/xmas.htm>

I might suggest this would be an excellent example for everyone to follow with their own families.

And a bit of seasonal video fun from your Editor...

You'll need to be online to watch these videos and I hope you enjoy them.

The Twelve Days of Christmas



<http://youtu.be/lbejNNCTr7k>

While the above video is an amusing version you can learn how the original was created at <http://www.electricscotland.com/poetry/12days.htm> which had a much more serious side to it.

And not to forget our Pets



<http://youtu.be/xRa62DszUjY>

We should certainly also remember our Pets over the Christmas period.



From your Newsletter team

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