

FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS

FORDINGBRIDGE AND RINGWOOD PARISH MAGAZINE

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Fr Paul Says.....



The celebration of Christmas in our two parishes of Ringwood and Fordingbridge was both worthy and beautiful. I am grateful to all those who participated and who helped prepare for the liturgies. I know that many people gave a lot of time doing all the things that needed to be done. Much is involved and thanks are due to our singers and instrumentalists, to our flower arrangers, to our welcomers, our sacristans, our readers, our Special Ministers of Holy Communion, our Altar Servers and those who provide hospitality. The mulled wine and mince pies after the 8.00pm Christmas Mass was much appreciated.

I would like to say a word of thanks to those who look after our two churches and to those who open and lock our churches to ensure that they are available for prayer each day.

We had a large number of visitors this year and they commented on how they were made

“Oh Yes it is!”

It is pantomime season again! We went to The Playhouse in Salisbury between Christmas and New Year. I have always loved the pantomime and, when I was a child, my parents always made a point of taking me. I think it is where my love of theatre came from. Occasionally, they took me to the West End and I remember seeing the excellent Norman Wisdom in “Aladdin” at The Palladium in nineteen goodness-knows-what. More often, we went to The Pavillion in Bournemouth with friends and went to the Forte’s restaurant in Landsdown first, where I remember they served fish and chips in a small frying pan for a plate. Bournemouth always featured a famous person, but usually ones to appeal more to grown ups. I remember a rather portly opera singer.



Pantomime seems to be a peculiarly English institution but has connections to Europe, particularly via the commedia del’ arte.

English towns like Coventry and York, probably Salisbury as well, during the medieval period featured ‘Mystery Plays’ at festivals like Easter. These, often raucous, romps probably began in church as dramatisations of

religious stories, but moved out of churches to be adopted by craft guilds, probably because they were becoming something rather less than pious. Such plays, performed by appropriate guilds (carpenters got the ark to build and bakers did the feeding of five thousand) which served to some extent, to familiarise the illiterate population with The Bible, also provided plenty of opportunity for slapstick, inuendo and downright bawdy! The plays were performed on carts and were dragged round the town to different locations to be enjoyed by the populace at large, often lubricated with suitable beverages and who could be relied on to provide a bit of audience participation. This tradition lasted long enough to have informed Shakespeare. It didn’t survive the reformation, of course, but you can see their influence continued in later drama with characters like The Jew of Malta, Falstaff, Malvolio, Shylock, Feste and others.

Commedia dell’arte probably began in Italy and was performed by professional actors including women. Stock characters, Harlequin, Pierrot, Columbine and Pantalone, for example performed comical stories involving lovers, angry fathers and other follies derived from the well known characters. Of course, there was much humour and bawdy, and the stories portrayed became well-known with predictable outcomes. Pantomime picks up with the adoption of familiar stories and the humour.

This year’s Playhouse “Sleeping Beauty” is well staged and very funny with a cunning twist that certainly took me in, if not the whole audience. Go if you can!

(Chris Basham)

welcome at Mass. That is a real accolade for us because making people feel they belong is a vital part of parish life and mission.

Fr. John Adikwu concelebrated at the 11.00am Mass. Fr. John has been living in Ringwood during his time as Chaplain to the New Forest hospitals. He leaves us to go and live in Portsmouth because he is now the generic chaplain for the Portsmouth Hospitals. We wish him well in his very important ministry. Another word of thanks is due to everyone for the generosity shown to me over Christmas. Thanks indeed for all the gifts, cards and for the generous Christmas Offering which is a personal gift to me.

New Year's Day is always dedicated to Mary, the Mother of the Lord. In fact, it is the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God. The title 'Mary Mother of God' or 'Theotokos' is Mary's most ancient title and was given to her officially in 431. The visitor to Ephesus in Turkey can still visit the ruins of the Church of St. Mary where her title was made official.



St. Mary's Ephesus

Mary was defined as the 'Mother of God' at the Council of Ephesus, which met to deal with the teachings of Nestorius. Nestorius said that Mary could be called the Mother of Christ but not the Mother of God. Nestorius taught that while Jesus was truly human and truly God, the two natures were separate. It was as though there was a clear boundary between Jesus's life as God and his life as a human being. Therefore, Nestorius said that Mary could be the mother of Jesus but not the Mother of God because God is eternal and cannot have a mother.

More than seventy bishops met to discuss the matter, and they decided that Nestorius was a heretic and Pope Celestine I excommunicated him because he would not recant. The bishops came to see that the matter at issue was the nature of the Incarnation and therefore the nature of Christ. If Jesus the human being was not truly God without any division or separation then Jesus could not be our saviour. Nestorius's teaching was undermining the Church's tradition that Jesus was human and divine in the one person. Jesus's humanity and his flesh and blood existence had to be perfectly united for Christ as God to share our humanity. To be separate from our humanity and his own humanity would not work.

To clinch the matter, the bishops at Ephesus declared that Mary was the 'Mother of God'. Her son Jesus was perfectly human and truly God in the one person, without separation or division. Mary's oldest title provides a foundation for our belief and understanding of the Incarnation. As God in Jesus shares our humanity so we share in

Camping it up



Bill and I were always keen campers. Real campers I mean – under canvas - although in later years we made it all much more civilised with electric cool box, light and heater for the evenings and raised camp beds with thick sleeping bags. You can see from this picture taken in 2009 that we lived the good life. From a early days, we took the family with us and they love it too, even today.

It was August Bank holiday 1997 and Bill and I were taking the family away for a week camping at an adventure camp site that we had visited before. They provided ample entertainment for a fourteen to sixteen year old including climbing, rifle shooting, archery, abseiling, canoeing, hiking and so on. Being sited in Cheddar it was positioned on the side of a fairly steep rise, so the site was terraced with a shop and bar with entertainment at the bottom and it afforded some wonderful Somerset views.

Before we left home, with the trailer loaded up ready, Bill went round the corner to fill up with petrol for the journey. It was a very, very long time before he returned, rather flustered. The car wouldn't drive off from the garage and he'd limped home using only the starter motor. The holiday was off! It was hard to break the news to the family but we promised a weekend of activity at home and proceeded to book in for the Forest Water Park and anything else we could get to without a car. After a couple of days our brother-in-law came to the rescue – he offered us his car for what was left of the week and we gratefully accepted.

The weather was the usual English summer holiday stuff: drizzle and showers with a very little sunshine, but we are seasoned campers, and we weren't daunted. Arriving at the site, we pitched our tent on one of the higher terraces, conveniently near the showers and toilets and John and Rachel set off to explore the activities. In the ensuing four wet days they seemed to have a good time and Bill and I played a lot of cribbage and read several books.

However, it was our last day that was to provide the grand finale of this damp week's holiday. It was still raining, sadly, so we had decided to make an early start and get home as soon as possible. Bill and I put the kettle on for a morning cup of tea only to find the Gaz cylinder had run out. Perfect timing!

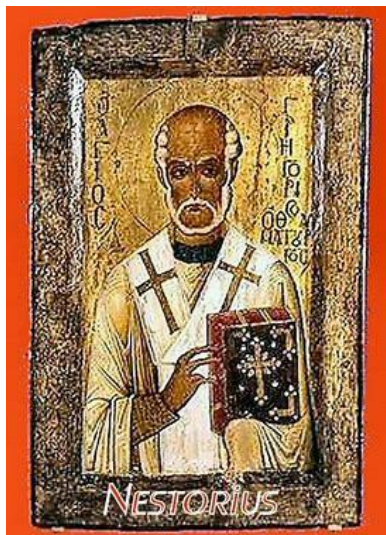
The piped music which we could hear in the background from the shower block was playing the National Anthem, of all things. Bill, a former service man, joked that he should stand to attention and salute but we needed a cuppa so Rachel and I offered to go down to the shop to get a new cylinder and leave him with John to finish getting some breakfast together.

Just as we were setting out in our macs and wellies the heavens opened with the mother and father of deluges. In the four or five minutes it took us to reach the shop it was becoming torrential and quite alarming. We saw a pup tent slip moorings and literally start floating down the slope. As we reached the shop, the shop keeper was organising customers to carry sandbags to block the door, and we were quickly barricaded inside the shop. The shop floor was flooded and as we rushed round picking up the goods on the floor, bread, toilet rolls, etc.; a manhole cover was lifted and I found myself being detailed to sweep the water towards the drain to avoid a deluge from what, we were to discover later, was a flash flood. After a while, as things started to become manageable in the shop, we were given the news which explained the music choice we had heard earlier. Princess Diana had been killed in a car crash in Paris, together with her partner Dodi Al-Fayed and their driver Henri Paul, in a dash to avoid the paparazzi. We were a sombre group imprisoned in the beleaguered shop that morning!

I don't recall how long we were kept there but the shop keeper was very reluctant to remove the sand bags from the door so we resigned ourselves for a long stay. Of course, this was before the universal use of mobile phones and poor Bill and John had no idea what was going on. They had witnessed the flash flood from the top of the site and, with no re-emergence from Rachel and I, understandably, started to be concerned as to our whereabouts. They made their way down towards the shop and John wisely repaired to the relative dry of the club house. Rachel and I heard, from inside the shop, Bill's voice calling, 'Hello! Is there a mother and daughter named Helen and Rachel in there?' Eventually the sandbags were removed, and we were soon all reunited.

When, eventually, we had breakfast and were packed and ready to drive home, we reversed the car to hook up the trailer. But even this led to more disaster! The wheels got embedded in the deep mud and we were going nowhere. Another walk down to the office in the shop to explain and we were

his divinity. While Nestorius was well intentioned, he was unable to accept that his teaching nullified the Christian doctrine of salvation.



Nestorius

The temptation is to think that the story of the Council of Ephesus and Nestorius has nothing to do with us in the 21st century. I would suggest that it has major significance in our own time. I wonder how many people believe that Jesus was a good person and that he came from God but was not completely God? The consequence of detaching the person of Jesus from his nature as God is not to take Jesus seriously. To appreciate that we meet God in the flesh and blood existence of Jesus is something to be taken seriously because it means that all humans beings are connected to a human being who is God. That changes everything.

Council of Chalcedon

The work of the bishops at Ephesus in 431AD prepared for the work of the Council of Chalcedon in 451AD. At Chalcedon the teaching about Mary, the Mother of God, was made into an infallible declaration. For those who want to see an infallible teaching, here is the Chalcedonian Definition. The language is dense, so good luck..

“Following, then, the holy Fathers, we all unanimously teach that our Lord Jesus Christ is to us One and the same Son, the Self-same Perfect in Godhead, the Self-same Perfect in Manhood (humanity); *truly God and truly Man*; the Self-same of a rational soul and body; co-essential with the Father according to the Godhead, the Self-same co-essential with us according to the Manhood (humanity); like us in all things, sin apart; before the ages begotten of the Father as to the Godhead, but in the last days, the Self-same, for us and for our salvation (born) of Mary the Virgin [Theotokos](#) as to the Manhood (humanity); One and the Same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten; acknowledged in Two Natures unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the difference of the Natures being in no way removed because of the Union, but rather the properties of each Nature being preserved, and (both) concurring into One Person and One Hypostasis (underlying reality); not as though He was parted or divided into Two Persons, but One and the Self-same Son and Only-begotten God, Word, Lord, Jesus Christ; even as from the beginning the prophets have taught concerning Him, and as the Lord Jesus Christ Himself hath taught us, and as the Symbol of the Fathers hath handed down to us.”

offered help from the site tractor, but we were not the only ones and we’d have to wait. That tractor worked very hard that morning! After an hour or so, we were finally on our way home.

A shocking holiday you might well say. But it is one we still talk about today and, with the passing of time, we can look back on it and laugh at the twists of fate. We have even forgotten how much it cost to have our car repaired – though we do remember it was eye wateringly expensive.

But it certainly didn’t put any of us off the camping experience.

(Helen Eales)

Doomed?

I was in Salisbury for some Christmas shopping in December and popped into St Thomas’s to have a look at their rather fine doom board. Unlike the one from my former Wiltshire village church of St James the Great, which is painted on wood panelling, this one is direct on to the plaster. It has the same motifs; heaven represented by a very elaborate mansion and hell with gaping mouthed dragons and devil and souls going up or going down. It is so similar in fact I wondered whether there was a template used in the 1400’s when the St Thomas and the St James ones were painted!

What Are Doom Paintings?... *from one of the guide books*

The theme of a Doom Painting, often simply called a ‘Doom’, is the Last Judgement. This is the final judgement by God of all people and depending on how they lived their lives they would either ascend to heaven or descend into hell.

Doom paintings were placed either at the rear of the church on the liturgical wall, or at the front of the church. At the front they were placed on the chancel arch so that the congregation could not avoid seeing and contemplating the imagery when looking forward during the service. If your mind wandered and your eyes strayed, the imagery above would have quickly brought you back to focus on the sermon being delivered. The painting was a striking visual warning of the fate that would befall you if you did not follow your religious instruction.



Doom paintings were once a common feature in the churches of England. Although all of them were painted over during the Reformation, about sixty have been restored, but it is widely accepted that the finest surviving example is that found in St Thomas’s Church in Salisbury, Wiltshire.

Here the painting fills the chancel arch and the spandrels. As with other doom paintings, Christ is at the centre seated on a rainbow, with his feet on a smaller rainbow. His hands are raised. Both his hands and feet show the signs of his crucifixion, with blood running from them. Behind him, angels hold the cross, his crown of thorns, a pillar, a sponge, spear and nails, symbols of his Passion. Further behind the Kingdom of Heaven is the Star of the East and the Sun of Righteousness. To his right is the Blessed Virgin and to his left is John the Evangelist.

It is well worth going to see if you are in Salisbury. (I’m always amused by the souls on the right being driven into the jaws of hell. Does one wear a mitre? Is it a papal crown? Ed)

Also in St Thomas’s, at the time of my visit, was the Christmas tree festival with over a hundred Christmas trees decorated by local groups and schools. Refreshments and local choirs entertaining the visitors... all very nice and festive.

(Sheila Wade)

Turkey Trot

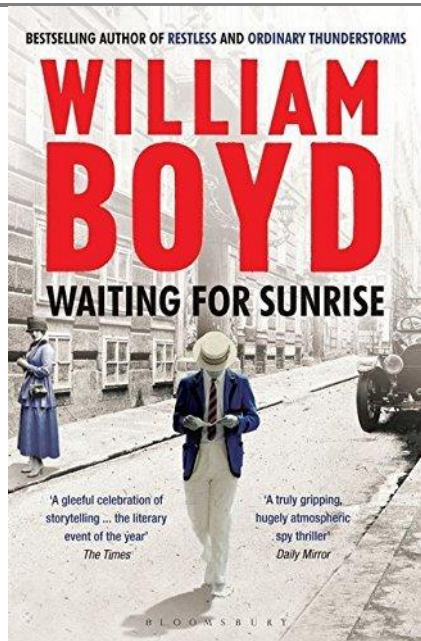
Thursday 23 November was Thanksgiving Day in the USA and (what seemed like) a couple of

Winter Warmer

As is the tradition, the Joint Parishes CAFOD Group laid on our Winter Warmer on the first

Happy New Year to everyone and may Mary the Mother of God guide us through the year!

Reading Recommendations



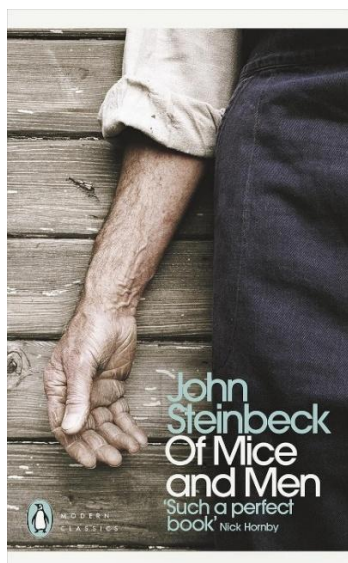
Another novel by this fantastic author, this time a spy novel. It is 1913, and Lysander Reid, an actor, has left his actress fiancée in London, while he seeks treatment from a well-known psychoanalyst, Dr. Bensimon. While there he falls for the charms of the slightly unstable Hettie Bull, quite a bohemian character, a sculptor, who is also a patient of Dr. Bensimon. A delicious affair ensues, but Lysander is surprised when the police call at his lodgings and arrest him for assault on this girl. After a few days in prison, he is bailed by the British Embassy, and with their blessing manages a daring escape himself via Switzerland.

Based on this evident resourcefulness, back in London Lysander is recruited as a spy by his saviours from the Embassy. A German speaking actor - who could be more perfect for the job. Here begins a thrilling mission in Europe. We have not heard the last of Hettie Bull.

This is a perfect book for lovers of spy fiction, but William Boyd is a master story teller and so I think anyone would enjoy it.

There is a fair amount of the 'birds and bees' in this book, so maybe not a book for your teenage grandson. (On the other hand, teenagers know far more about the birds and bees than we do, so maybe it would be all right).

(Penny Sharp)



With the onset of Christmas and her involvement

thousand people gathered on Pinzo Beach, California, your book reviewer among them, see picture with turkey, for a hearty four mile run along the beach. The crowd included people dressed as turkeys, children, athletic young men, teenagers, parents pushing buggies, dogs on leads, elderly souls etc. etc.

Off we all went in a great throng, and I kept up a (what I thought was) respectable pace. I was halfway up to the turning point when I saw some of the athletic young men returning, followed by little boys and little girls including my granddaughter who fortunately didn't see me.



It was fun and exhilarating and the best part was crossing the finishing line to the applause of the official applauders all dressed as turkeys. A bit surreal, really.

This event was in aid of the St. Luis Obispo food bank. Perhaps Father or our kind editor may be able to tell us a little about this Saint after whom the little town is named?

(Penny Sharp)

Gardeners' Corner

The weather forecasters keep telling us that it is going to be cloudy but mild. However, I cannot remember a December so raw and miserable. There normally seem to be sunny days which encourage you to go out, but this year I have had to force myself to get on with all that needs doing.

I started the month by digging the beds and putting compost on them but had to give up because the ground was too wet. Instead, I cleared out under hedges, digging out bramble, raspberry and other invading plants and removed the dead wood which was very considerable on this particular leylandii. I am actually wondering whether I will need to replace one but will wait and see what happens. I am encouraged by how much growth there is on the shrub I attacked two years ago. It is almost entirely green and has reached the height it needed to.



My holly tree is still there but that was mainly thanks to the birds who took all the berries very early on; rather greedy of them I thought because there were plenty of other things to eat,

weekend of Advent.



It was held in the hall at Fordingbridge this year but of course people from both parishes are always welcome as they all support CAFOD so generously throughout the year. It is a free event and is the group's way of saying 'Thank You'.

We all made mince pies and there was shortbread and stollen there to grace the table too. An alcoholic punch and a non-alco punch were both on offer and on the Sunday there was coffee to add to the choice.

In the background there was seasonal music and the tables were decorated with winter motifs and candles.

Despite it being a free event, the wonderful people who came along found a dish in which to offer donations. A total of £86 was raised - proof of the great generosity and support CAFOD receive at all times!

Here's to a Happy, peaceful, and prosperous New Year for all people!

(CAFOD Group)

Fabulous Forest!

It is the turn of the year and the Forest is wet and soggy in the valleys, so people tend to stick to the paths on higher ground. Holly, which I need for Christmas decoration grows mostly in the low lying parts where it is wet and slippery.

I left collecting holly late this year and consequently the birds had taken most of the berries, so what I got tended to be a bit disappointing. Same story with mistletoe; plenty about if you are prepared to reach for it, but not many berries. Here's an example of what I made of it. You can count the berries for me. I cheered it up with some baubles.



Ponies have shaggy coats. and watch out for deer on the roads in the dark.

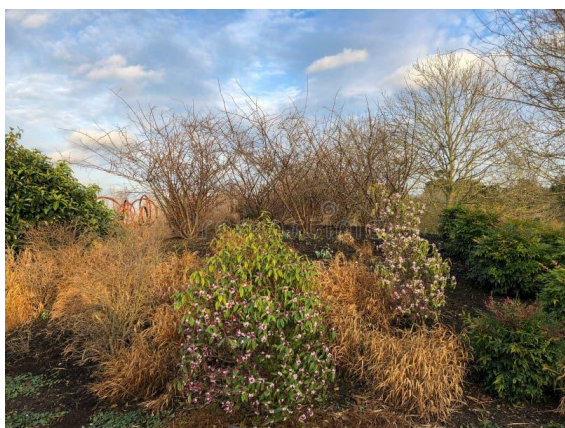
(Chris Basham)

with turkeys, Penny has left me to fill the childrens' book space. Well, I'm not too good with the little 'uns, but I certainly going to put in a plug for this American classic read and enjoyed by generations of GCSE candidates of all abilities, some of whom I have seen, often hard cases, moved to tears by it. It is a story of friendship and devotion between two itinerant workers in California during The Depression years. It is intensely moving, but now, since the Philistines have taken over the curriculum, no longer 'recommended'. It seems that the treatment of Crooks, the black stable hand abused by many of the other characters, but given dignity and compassion by the author is now 'objectionable' and there are a few 'other issues', too.

Please shield your young folk from reading anything challenging, they might become anxious and depressed (or even moved and thoughtful).

(Chris Basham)

Poetry Please!



Year Ending

Cold has spelled the garden while we were sleeping
and has turned the soil to embers, witched the leaves
to rust. Overnight clouds of white blossom

like ruffs have come to the arms of trees. The Lawn
is ashen, pinned out, scared to stiffness
and a hoarfrost tells the spiders' secrets, lacing stalk

to stalk like rigging thickly roped, catching
the rays of the early sun. The willow weeps
with frozen diamond tears; so the garden

has not been banished but is coming back
obliquely,
tranced at rakish angles – still alive but altered,
a charged light, snowlight, picks out other
themes

- the wafer-penned honesty along scant lines,
dark, brittle seed crowns with their architecture
underplayed before, and orange blobs of
physalis

that smoulder grounded. Clutches of berries
hang on tightly

as well as the sunflower seeds I put out for them.

I have lived here for fifty years and was almost suicidal with the deer eating all my plants. About twenty years ago I decided I would try to prevent them by putting green plastic-covered chicken wire round all the beds. Not only was this very expensive and time-consuming, it was a huge nuisance. However, it did work. I tried machines which emitted a noise that deer were said not to like. Failure. Then I read one that claimed that it WAS effective. I was sceptical but gave it a go. I looked out in the middle of one night to see a deer having a lovely munch of a rose right beside it. So on I went until this summer, fencing in all the beds, until a friend told me he shut his gate at night and they didn't jump over it. Though I had thought about doing the same, I just imagined they would make an elegant leap over. Touch wood, it has worked; I can't believe after all these years I MIGHT have a solution.

My compost pens gave up the ghost over the last year and my help, John, said he could rebuild them. My neighbour's son-in-law-to-be is a builder and he has to pay for his pallets to be taken away so was only too glad to give me as many as I wanted. I now have five bins, exactly where I want them, away from the hedge but not visible from the garden.



The two storms we have had have littered my lawn with branches too big to be picked up by my tractor mower. I am raking them up a little at a time as the garden is too large to do it all at once. I will then give it a light mow. The beds are still covered in oak leaves, so they need dealing with before everything dies. Lots still to finish and then the apples need to be pruned so that I can spend hours again next autumn picking them or clearing the windfalls so you can rely on your apple crumble!

One last comment, I probably burn two pairs of secateurs and at least one hand fork in the bonfire each year so for my Christmas present, I asked one of my sons for a belt with pockets to put them in. What a saving that will be.

Wishing you all a very happy and successful New Year.

(Jill Coke)

Cookery Corner

Sausage Rolls and Stilton

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 1 red onion, finely sliced
- ½ x 20g pack sage, leaves finely shredded, plus extra to garnish (optional)
- 400g sausagemeat

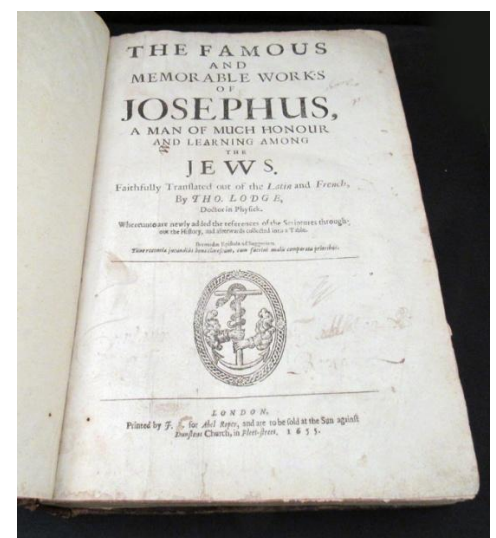
Texts and Gospels

At this point I was hoping to continue John's interesting commentary on early Christian texts, but like Penny, he has found his preoccupation with Christmas has got in the way. He promises to continue next month, and I promise I am on his case, but for now, I'll busk on a related theme.

Most early Christian writings are just that, Christian, and we can imagine a huge body of oral tradition and stories about Jesus, what he said and did, circulating amongst the early Christian diverse and scattered communities, each cherishing and preserving their own versions of their special connection with Christ. Christianity was a popular movement and most of the adherents semi-literate at best, so why write anything down because the Second Coming was imminently expected?

These traditions were eventually collected, written down, edited and evaluated and become the four Gospels we all know about, the various epistles where the earliest Christian accounts are found, Acts and some other fragments and works considered uncanonical.

This makes you think, well, this is all very fine, but what else is there to go on apart from what the Christians had themselves? To be honest, from very early, you probably wouldn't expect much commentary from outside the Christian community, but historical material does exist in Josephus, a Romanised Jew writing in Rome and certainly not a Christian sympathiser, and also the Roman Historian Tacitus, as well as hints in other, more remote sources.



Josephus tells us, writing toward the end of the first century:

About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who performed surprising deeds and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the Christ. And when, upon the accusation of the principal men among us, Pilate had condemned him to a cross, those who had first come to love him did not cease. He appeared to them spending a third day restored to life, for the prophets of God had foretold these things and a thousand other marvels about him. And the tribe of the Christians, so called after him, has still to this day not disappeared.

to the firethorn. Dogwood reddens. The cotoneaster stretches out its fishbone limbs. An intimate is stranger – grown contrary.

Still there is wit in icicles zigzagging gutters like a dragon's grin and candyfloss caught on the beech, pompoms of mistletoe, and snow like icing freshly piped along bare branches.

Caroline Cook.

The Year's Midnight

The flown, the fallen,
the golden ones,
the deciduous dead, all gone
to ground, to dust, to sand,
borne on the shoulders of the wind.

Listen! They are whispering
now while the world talks,
and the ice melts,
and the seas rise.
Look at the trees!

Every leaf-scar is a bud
expecting a future.
The earth speaks in parables.
The burning bush. The rainbow.
Promises. Promises.



Gillian Clarke

(Provided by Helen Eales)

- 50g fresh breadcrumbs
- ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
- 50g walnut pieces, roughly chopped
- 75g Stilton, crumbled
- 1 x 375g pack ready-rolled puff pastry
- 3 tbsp Taste the Difference quince jelly (or redcurrant jelly)
- 1 medium egg, beaten
- 1 tbsp poppy seeds

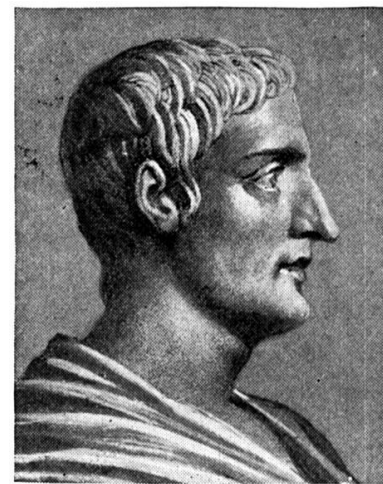


Method

- Heat the oil in a frying pan and fry the onion over a medium heat for 6-8 minutes, until it's soft and starting to caramelise. Add the sage and continue to cook for a minute, then set aside to cool.
- Combine the cooled onion mixture with the sausagemeat, breadcrumbs and nutmeg. Mix well to combine. Season, then gently mix through the walnuts and Stilton, taking care not to break up the crumbled Stilton too much.
- Unroll the pastry sheet on your worktop, with a long edge facing towards you. Brush the central area of the pastry with the quince jelly, leaving a good 5cm border all the way around the edge. Shape the sausagemeat mixture into a long roll and lay it along the pastry, 3cm in from the edge nearest you. Brush the near edge with some of the beaten egg and then bring the pastry from the top to tightly cover the meat. Seal by crimping the edges with a fork. Cut the roll into 12 chunky sausage rolls and then place on a lined baking sheet. Brush with the remaining beaten egg and scatter over the poppy seeds. Chill for 30 minutes or for up to 48 hours.
- Preheat the oven to 200°C, 180°C, gas 6. Bake the sausage rolls for 25-30 minutes, or until golden brown and crisp. Cool for at least 10 minutes before eating, and garnish with sage sprigs, if using.

(Waitrose)

Slightly later, Tacitus writes:



"called Christians by the populace. Christ, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus."

Although scant, but supported by oblique references in other literature and taken together with the enormous body of early Christian writing is enough to establish the reality of an historical Jesus.

(Chris Basham)

End Bits

Well, that is edition fifty-nine going to bed. Next edition will be number sixty – five twelves – so it must bring us close to five years of Forty Days. I think we started in March or April, but originally, in my enthusiasm (and COVID induced boredom), I think I did more than one a month. Cause for celebration so lots of copy for February, please.

Thanks to all who have contributed in 2024 – or ever! Please keep it coming and never think that people will not be interested - they are - in your activities, interests, visits and thoughts and ideas; in fact, anything you or your family and friends get up to and want to share.

I didn't miss Penny's invitation to research St Luis Obispo. I'll save that for next time.

A very happy and prosperous New Year from the entire Forty Days team!

Chris