



Friends of Gordon Chapel **NEWSLETTER**

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Gordon Chapel as seen from the top of the Bellie Church Tower

Romance and marriage as described by kids.

How do you decide whom to marry?

“You have to find somebody who likes the same stuff - if you like sports she should too - and she should keep the crisps and sweets coming” (Alan aged 10).

What is the right age to be married?

“23 is the best age because you know the person forever by then” (Camille, age 10).

How can a stranger tell if two people are married?

“You might have to guess, based on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids” (Derrick age 8).

What do you think your mum and dad have in common?

“Both don’t want any more kids” (Lori age 8).

What do most people do on a date?

“Dates are for having fun, and people should use them to get to know each other. Even boys have something to say, if you listen long enough!” (Lynnette age 8).

“On the first date, they just tell each other lies and that usually gets them interested enough to go for a second date” (Martin age 10).

When is it ok to kiss someone?

“When they are rich” (Pam age 7)

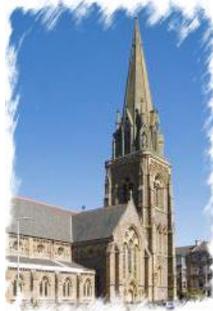
Supporting common denominators

At the beginning of January a very well meant event went wrong. Some Moslem guests attended the Epiphany service at St Mary’s Cathedral, Glasgow. This would help promote interfaith understanding and harmony and emphasise one of our common denominators, the

Annunciation which is so similar to Luke chapter 1. A Moslem student read the verses from the Koran, the Book of Mary, in Arabic.

A translation was on the service sheet. For me, my first reading of that Koranic account in 1973 was poignant and touching. It made me feel closer to my Moslem friends. However, the student took it upon herself to add a verse from much further on:- Verse 35 “It is not for God to take a son unto Him”. That is, denying that Jesus is God’s son. This was an abuse of the Cathedral’s trust by the student but brought a torrent of abuse against Provost Kelvin Holdsworth and the Cathedral. Did the student decide to ‘put one over’ on St Mary’s? She incited something so nasty that the police became involved because of offensive attacks against the Cathedral and its provost on social media. Some objected strongly against the Koran being read at all.

What happened in media don’t tell building stories, show the bad. upholding the much in common newsworthy.



St Mary’s is one incident. But the the good stories, the bridge with the same enthusiasm they And ordinary Moslems Pillars of Islam that have so with our rule of life are not so

When I visited respectfully

Iraq and Bahrain in the 70’s no-one questioned my right to be there. More recently, at Dundee Mosque’s Open Doors Day and at a local ‘Building Bridges’ day attended by the Imam from Aberdeen Mosque and several Moslem students, our questions were answered kindly, there was good discussion and we enjoyed eastern food. Common denominators are worth finding and keeping. After being subjected to a torrent of nasty comment, Kelvin Holdsworth’s sermon the following Sunday said, “Al I of this raises questions about how we live in a globally connected world but I cannot believe that moderate churches in the West should follow a policy of appeasement towards those who are Islamophobic, and particularly not towards the recently invigorated far-right media.” Unlike Jesus himself, we are always so ready to condemn.

Mosques (not acts of worship) shrouded but not veiled, in Iran,

Margaret Forsyth

Spring arrived at Gordon Chapel with the snowdrops and Aconites in the car park. What a welcome sight they are as we drive in the gate on a Sunday morning for our service.



We are delighted to welcome to the area our new Priest in Charge of the Isla Deveron Group with Gordon Chapel the Reverend Michael Last. He will be licensed as our Priest on the 18th March at Holy Trinity in Keith. We hope that he will enjoy living in such a beautiful area.

From Rome to Canterbury in the steps of St Augustine in 2002

Today is Thursday, and after a rush to breakfast, we managed to get Hilary on the coach to the airport, ready to return home to Burwash. Son John and I then went by train to the outskirts of Rome, Ponte Galleria. It was not quite that simple, but that is another story. Now I would begin my Pilgrimage from Rome to Canterbury following in the footsteps, where possible, of St Augustine of Canterbury.

In Rome we had stayed at the Monastery at Santa Cruz in Jerusalem. It was called Domus Sessoriana, and was on the South side of the church. The church itself was not easy to find – but splendid once inside.

We also visited the church of St John Lateran where Gregory the Great lived when he commissioned Augustine for his mission to England. Back in Burwash Bishop John had similarly commissioned me for my pilgrimage. Augustine lived in a monastery close to St John Lateran. While we were visiting the church a group of pilgrims sang a litany and then a four part harmony piece, unaccompanied. The singing, with those acoustics, was unbelievably beautiful.

In niches all around the church were marble statues of the apostles, they were huge, about fifteen to twenty feet tall. The first one on the left was St Bartholomew and was a good likeness to someone in our choir at home, complete with beard. Because it was believed that St Bartholomew was skinned alive, he has a tanner's flaying knife in his hand. There were other gruesome reminders of his fate in the piles of skin set about him.

We also visited St Bartholomew's Church on the island in the River Tiber. Another beautiful church with a splendid café just outside.

The whole world was visiting St Peter's when we were there, but the Basilica is so huge that it could accommodate everyone easily. We saw so much, but the beauty of Michelangelo's Pieta is absolutely

to get to the wonder. So with their viewfinder been the we forgot



brehtaking. It took a long time front of the crowd to gaze in many people did not see things own eyes but through the of their cameras. We must have only people without a camera – ours. When we visited the Vatican Museum and the Sistine Chapel, we did so in the company of thousands, from all the nations of the world. It is not the thing to do if you have dodgy feet, funny legs or are generally unfit – it is a very strenuous test of faith. There were so many wonderful things to see.

There were two paintings of women holding the Blessed Sacrament, the Host and the Chalice. I wonder how that came to be?

Today the walking started in earnest, about 27 kilometres. It was a latish start in overcast to burning sunshine, rain, and a violent were passing a petrol bar so we had a abated.

Tomorrow presents problem. It will be play Argentina at How are we pilgrims match? The Italians believe this to be the biggest game so far, so the roads might be quiet. Most of the walking has been done on minor roads so far. Walking in the country, certainly in this area, is not an Italian pastime, so we are viewed as curiosities and with good humour.



conditions, which turned which turned to pouring storm. Fortunately we station where there was a cappacino until the storm

an organisational the World Cup, England 1230 in the afternoon. going to get to watch the

Like pilgrims all down the ages we have done the ordinary things. On our visit to the Trevi Fountain, we knew it was there because there were so many people, all throwing money into the water. Would it catch on in Burwash? All of a sudden about 20 Irish people turned up – how did we know they were Irish? Well, they all wore emerald green flat caps with ginger hair sticking out, emerald green football shirts. There were none under fifty and they gave us a football chant. You have never seen such a flurry of video cameras and other cameras, all taking pictures. It caused a lot of amusement and good fun.

Just a couple more pilgrim notes. There was a priest celebrating Mass for the travellers at the main Railway Station in a chapel with glass walls. Just as we were on the outskirts of Ladispoli, the church bells played a pilgrim hymn. The route out of Rome followed the railway line and the A12 road. For such a small road it was very busy. Eventually it became the Via Aurelia which starts near Vatican City. At 1225 in the afternoon on the appointed day of the match we found a very nice ristorante and persuaded them to switch on the television. We had a beautiful risotto du mare plus a large beer. They were about to close but

a family appeared and saved the day. With England beating Argentina it was a wonderful lunch.

We stayed in Ladispoli, a small seaside resort that the world had passed by. Almost Blackpool out of season. Hotel Miramar was on the sea front and the wind was ferocious giving us a fine sea to view, very rough. Nice evening meal in a family restaurant.

The next stop was at St Marinella and a very expensive hotel, but needs must after a long day of walking on very straight roads. At one point we paused to put on waterproofs, when it rained too hard we stopped at a filling station for a drink until the monsoon had passed over. Another family business with petrol pumps, bar, servicing and cleaning.

At one point when it became very hot, we sat outside a bar with an ice cream in the shade of a wall, a middle aged lady on a bicycle came to have a word with us about our pilgrimage. For long stretches of this road there was a wall and fence as a boundary to a military zone. Also at fairly regular intervals there were nature reserves. At one place there was a crossroads with traffic lights but no obvious town or village, but at each corner there were beggars working the cars. On each corner of the road teams of women and children were begging and cleaning windscreens whilst the men stood in the background. It was an uncomfortable experience.

We arrived at Civitavecchia at about 1pm, we were able to buy a ticket for the 1400 sailing to Olbia on Sardinia. While we waited John found a Macdonalds where we had lunch.

*To be continued
Rev Roy Vincent*

When people are curt or ignore what you say, when other's words hurt and friends keep away, Remember God loves you.

When life feels all empty and weighed down with care, when tears come in plenty with no-one to share, Remember God loves you.

When money is tight and worries just stream, when nothing goes right So you're ready to scream, Remember God loves you.

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