

# In Touch

ISSUE 1 2007  
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● OUR PARISH MAGAZINE ●



## PRO-LIFE

a detail of the cross  
made from surgical  
instruments used in  
abortions that was  
carried in procession  
at the Pro-Life  
Conference at Fatima  
PAGE 14

## ALSO INSIDE THIS ISSUE THE JOURNEY OF FAITH

By Sr Elizabeth

## LOURDES

By Frank Fitzpatrick

## HUMOUR

a story of creation

## GLOBAL CONFLICT

By Leon Menzies

## NO 5 THE GREEN

By Sr Maureen Delaney

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In Touch is the parish magazine of the parish of St Thomas of Canterbury, Woodford Green, Essex (Served by the Order of Friars Minor). The parish includes Chigwell Convent Mass Centre & a Mass Centre at St Stephen's Church, Albert Road, Buckhurst Hill.

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### PRINTED BY

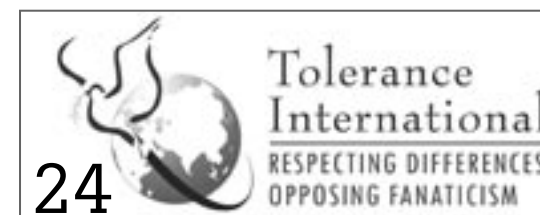
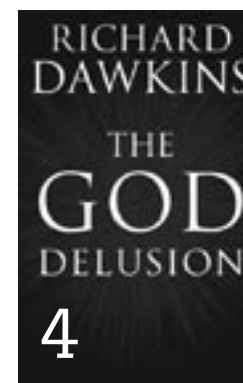
Metloc Printers Ltd  
Old Station Road  
Loughton Essex  
IG10 4PE

This is issue 52 of In Touch  
First published July 1992

# In Touch CONTENTS

ISSUE 1 2007

- 4** The God Delusion by Peter Walsh  
The killing of God for the sake of what?
- 5** From the Editor's Desk
- 8** The Journey of Faith by Sr. Elizabeth  
Another fascinating story about the missions in Africa.
- 10** Lourdes By Frank Fitzpatrick  
Frank and Rosa reminisce on 50 years of Lourdes pictured then and now.
- 11** Humour by Jo King  
Thought you knew the story of creation?
- 12** Chronicle of Parish Events:  
Telco, Bereavement group and the Lenten talks..
- 13** Letters to the editor  
Can you give an answer to Noel Duvin's question?  
Plus Cover story
- 15** Prayer from an elderly person  
translated by Yvonne Poulter  
Somewhat autobiographical perhaps?
- 16** Kids Pages by Rory Howes  
Easter special, with lots of fun ideas
- 20** Mary Knight's Page: Eat a Rainbow  
With spring in the air Mary gives some tips for colourful eating.
- 23** Who is this competition?  
Your chance to win £25 in tokens.  
Not a nun now, not a teacher then or now. Rarely photographed in the parish but was a very prominent person behind the scenes.
- 24** Global Conflict Myth or reality  
A quarter of a century of unimpeded fascism in Iran. A global threat or a local problem?
- 28** Sr. Maureen Delaney's article on the Holy Family Sisters  
An insight into the life and work of the sisters at No 5 The Green
- 30** Words, Words, Words  
Coleen's vocabulary of clothing.



# Richard Dawkins and the God Delusion

By Peter Walsh



Atheism has not previously been regarded as a religion but, surprisingly, the principles of atheism must now be included in religious education in state schools. But why surprisingly? Recent attacks on Faith Schools point to governmental attempts to secularise all education. Toward what end, you may well ask, since

there seems no logical reason to extinguish God in whom the majority of human beings believe.

The biologist and professor of Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University, Richard Dawkins, through his books, DVDs and public appearances in the media can be fairly considered a zealous advocate of atheism who seeks to convert others, particularly the agnostics, to his cause. But also those of all religions are fair game to him. His latest book 'The God Delusion' does not only expunge God as no more than a figment of man's imagination but goes further to suggest that parents who teach religion to their children are guilty of child abuse.

A central pillar of the atheist belief, or non-belief, is logic. But the logician is bound by the principles of the reason that arises from the observation of the created world. However, the God in which most humans believe resides outside of creation, His creation. The atheist expunges God because logical reasoning cannot prove His existence. The great Jewish philosopher who was consulted by all the last three Popes, Abraham Heschel, in his seminal work *The Prophets*, p.22 writes, 'There are no proofs for the existence of the God of Abraham. There are only witnesses.' And apart from the prophets about whom Heschel writes there are tens of thousands, nay hundreds of thousands, who have died in witness to the God that is, according to Dawkins, nothing but the product of deluded minds.

Dawkins is careful to distinguish between child sexual abuse or child cruelty and the child abuse that deprives a child of freedom of choice simply because of the lottery that places a newborn child in a religious family. However, he does not deprecate those of an older age seeking out and becoming Catholics, Muslims or whatever, as freedom of choice is not only a tenet of atheism but also a possible tool in the armoury of the atheist missionary.

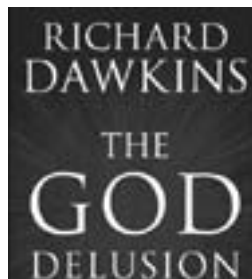
The abuse theory and denial of freedom of choice is somewhat surprising when it is a well known fact that many people born into a religion, and not just Catholicism,

give up their birth faith often in childhood or later when they become 'enlightened' at University or when they move away from the family home.

It is untenable to hold with the hypothesis that science and belief in God are mutually incompatible. Science is the discipline that discovers that which is already there. It delves ever more deeply into the wonders of creation. It is the discovery of those pre-existent wonders that often overwhelms the scientist and indeed is so frequently the harbinger of conversion of the open-minded scientist to the existence of the creator God.

Darwin's 'The Origin of Species' that has caused much controversy since its publication in the mid 19th century does not provide a valid argument for the atheist's central tenet that God does not and cannot exist. It is no easier for the atheist to prove that God is not than it is for the Judeo Christian to prove that God is. As Heschel says, there is no proof either way. Nevertheless, it would seem there is on its way, with or without proof, a media mission

with a pseudo-religious fervour to promote atheism. The aim of this mission, among others, is to free children from the abuse by parents and RE



'His latest book "The God Delusion" does not only expunge God as no more than a figment of man's imagination but goes further to suggest that parents who teach religion to their children are guilty of child abuse.'

teachers that derives from the teaching of Biblical tradition such as the Ten Commandments.

The human condition will be improved and Utopia, which has evaded mankind for so long, will be achieved through the civil law and on a sound atheistic basis. One feels like saying Amen. But alas what we observe of atheism is quite different. Atheistic tolerance is piteously patronising particularly toward these scientists that express wonder and awe at the order of the Universe and attribute that to the creator God. To the atheist, God is a myth. Their faith is in humanity through which will somehow arise a brave new Utopian world in which there is no God.

Humanism and atheism are synonymous one with

the other. Both understand the science of genetic evolution that began and evolves by chance. For them it is not required to question or to answer how these genetic determinants began to evolve. Chance is chance, the problem with the question is the question, and therefore, no answer need be given. The suggestion of design immediately begs the question, who is the designer? For this reason the atheist and humanists must perforce eschew design and rely totally on chance.

The time honoured heated debate, Creation versus Evolution, has again erupted in the USA. Richard Dawkins has announced that he has received appalling letters from Americans outraged by his well-publicised views. Thank goodness for the Americans. Hopefully similar objections will be made here in the UK and open minded scientists such as the teacher depicted in the 1960 film 'Inherit the Wind' will not be misunderstood by a less open minded public for suggesting that Darwinism is the alternative to Creationism. In fact his point was that the two theories could co-exist and at no time did he expunge God. The contemporary debacle still smouldering away in the Bible Belt has failed to grasp that point but they have correctly understood Dawkins who does propose the God myth. A timely warning to Dawkins then. Stay away from the Bible Belt!

So ardent is the atheistic belief that a world without God will enhance the Human Condition that they seek to airbrush God out of absolutely everything. A group of American campaigners sought to have "In God We Trust" removed from US currency. Let us not forget the cry of the agnostic, anti-nuclear veteran and proponent of free love, Bertrand Russell, "Remember your humanity, nothing else matters," a cry that at the time was drowned out by fears of a looming nuclear war. Indeed, let us remember our humanity by recognising the move by the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, to give more prominence in the constitution of the European Union to our Judeo Christian culture and to be tolerant to those of other faiths for it is human to believe in a creator God and all the humanist's efforts to make us do otherwise denies that very essence of humanity; the way we are created.

Dear God

THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES

Please put another  
Holiday between Christmas  
and Easter. There is  
nothing good in there  
now.

Ginny ★

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



In Touch, perhaps, has something in common with that doyen of city publications, Private Eye. It was always said that if you want to know what is going to make next month's news, read Private Eye. Well, we asked for comment on single sex adoption in

January 2006. We got a readers letter in the March/April Issue to which we added an editor's comment that Catholic adoption agencies may have to close. Twelve months later the debate has reached crisis point with Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor going head to head with the cabinet and failing to get any exemption for church adoption agencies, making the threat of closing Catholic adoption agencies a reality.

In issue 4 2006 published in December we speculated that children wearing a cross on a chain in St Anthony's School, where jewellery is banned, would be asked to remove it. By the end of January that speculation proved prophetic; Samantha Devine a pupil in a State School, was asked to remove a cross on a chain by the head teacher. But the relevance is that, thankfully, Catholic priests and Oona Stannard from the Catholic Education Service, when commenting on the incident on television and in the press, made it quite clear that one's Catholic faith can be witnessed effectively through the person's way of life but if overt symbols were desirable a simple lapel badge is quite sufficient. They all upheld the school's ruling. That is the fulfilment of the prophecy since it would also be so at St Anthony's School. Thank God for some common sense.

In this issue Peter Walsh, following on his earlier article on secularisation in the contemporary world, proposes that atheism may become the new world religion. Rose O'Doherty in the letters page tells some more of what is being done in the Woodford area to slow down the global hand of the human extermination movement. It is no coincidence that Fatima was the location of a massive pro-life conference in October last year and also for the conference of European Bishops. (See the photograph of Rose and Michael in the letters page) Portugal, the country with the lowest birth rate in Europe and one of only four European Nations where abortion remains illegal, only missed making it legal on account of insufficient people turning out to vote in a referendum. In spite of this the prime minister of Portugal says that a new law legalizing abortion within the first 10 weeks of pregnancy and bringing Portugal into line with European law, could come into effect as early as the end of March. The human extermination movement marches relentlessly on!

Talking of human extermination; see also page 24-26 on the extermination of all those who disagree with the regime of the Mullahs in Iran.

LEON MENZIES Editor



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In the last issue Sister Elizabeth told us of Christmas in Zimbabwe. Now we hear from her of the Easter celebrations there and of the striking resemblance to our own Journey of Faith, a two or three year journey leading to Baptism in the new waters of Easter.

## THE JOURNEY OF FAITH NEW LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS



side of the dusty road and hitch a lift. One of the long distance lorry drivers would usually stop and give me a lift to wherever I needed to go.

Initially each Saturday afternoon I met with about six youths. Gradually this number increased as I encouraged each one to bring a friend to the next meeting. Soon our numbers doubled to twelve. After a period of two years some of these young people

were ready to receive baptism, others were sponsored to do more studies and train in pastoral ministry so that they in turn became lead-

ers in their own rural communities.

Baptisms took place during the Easter Vigil, as they do here with adults on the Journey of Faith. There, the Vigil began around six p.m. as darkness falls suddenly and early in the tropics. Many people travelled long distances on foot, coming prepared to spend the whole night in prayer and celebration after the Vigil. (Young children would bring a blanket so that they could lie down and sleep in the Church when they were tired.)

Baptisms are by the ancient tradition of the early Christian communities, total immersion. Each person to be baptised, the catechumen, descends down three steps at the west side of the tomb shaped bath where they are totally submerged three times. The priest standing in the



**F**ATIMA MISSION is a rural mission station in Matabeleland, Zimbabwe. The Complex has all the facilities one might expect of a rural village. It consists of a fairly large church, a Franciscan friary, convent, pastoral centre, primary and secondary schools, a rural health clinic, farm, small bakery, grinding mill, butchery and general store. It is situated half way between the magnificent Victoria Falls and the city of Bulawayo. Hwange National Park is just 60 kilometers away. It is in the heart of rural Zimbabwe.

The mission is served by two Indian Franciscan Priests and three to four Franciscan Sisters. During my time there I was supervising the many income-generating projects and was responsible for some catechetical ministry. In my free time on Saturday

afternoons I would escape out of the complex to one of the many outstations to visit the young women and men and encourage them to pray with and study the Scriptures especially the Gospel of St. Luke. This was my hobby and it gave me great pleasure to accompany these young people on their primary journey of faith and to see how each of them grew into and developed a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Whilst many readers will be aware of the economic hardships in Zimbabwe few will know of its implications. One of these is the unavailability of petrol and diesel. This means one is more or less grounded except for emergency travel. It was my custom, not wishing to be beaten by the situation and in spite of the inherent risks, to pluck up the courage to stand by the

baptismal waters recites the familiar words "I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." With each name, Father, Son and Holy Spirit the catechumen is plunged anew under the water. The baptised person, the neophyte, then ascends out of the tomb by the three steps on the east side; now a new creation in Christ Jesus and facing eastwards toward the Holy Land. Rising from the waters of baptism the neophyte receives a rapturous applause from all present who share visibly in the joy of the new born.

On one particular Easter morning I accompanied a Spanish missionary priest to an outstation where he was going to baptise several people.

The Church building was completed, apart for the thatched roof which was only half completed. We received a very warm welcome from the people. The fires were already lit and the aroma of goat's meat cooking slowly in the pots along with the cabbage

Many people travelled long distances on foot, coming prepared to spend the whole night in prayer and celebration after the Vigil."

and corn on the cob wafted on the warm air to meet us. All was ready to eat after our celebrations.

Facilities at the outstations are not as they are at the mission complex and on this occasion a baptismal font was not available, but on the mission one learns to improvise. A new shiny tin dustbin was available to hold enough water. This became the focal point of our Baptismal Liturgy. The people sang and danced their hearts out, entering into the liturgy wholeheartedly and with gusto. Half way through the proceedings the heavens opened and through the half finished roof we were all, metaphorically speaking, baptised in the warm



Top: Easter Sunday morning, right: Palm Sunday procession

waters of a severe tropical storm. But this had no dampening effect on the joyous community who danced in and out of the muddy puddles with extra enthusiasm as we continued with our Liturgy throughout the storm. We enjoyed our meal afterwards as the sun was now shining and we all began to dry out.

The time came for us to depart from this small but faithful community. But not unusually in Africa there was yet another bridge to cross. Due to the heavy rainfall our truck presented a sorry sight sunk to its axles in the newly formed muddy puddles. There was only one way out and that was for everyone, laughing at our predicament and still singing, to get behind the truck with Fr. Alexander revving up the engine to try and get the vehicle on the road again. I was safely ensconced with Father Alexander in the passenger seat in case the vehicle shot off before I could clamber in. Therefore, I was not in the firing line of the mud and water that was shot backwards by the spinning rear wheels to cover the faces and whole bodies of our willing helpers. To my horror I turned around to see only the white teeth and eyes of the still laughing and smiling, mud covered, community who had been pushing the truck. As a gesture of thanks and appreciation while we sped off homeward bound I threw a large plastic football out of the window to some of the children. From the look of joy on their faces you would have thought we had just given them a bar of GOLD!!!



As baptised Christians we are all called to be missionaries bringing others to the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. God calls each one of us in a unique way. It is not for all of us to venture out into foreign lands as missionaries. Most of us give witness by being good and faithful spouses and parents. But let us remember that our church community needs many more young men and young women to respond to its call to serve Christ in the ministry of priesthood and in the religious life. THE HARVEST IS STILL GREAT BUT THE LABOURERS STILL REMAIN FEW.

One of the great joys and surprises of being a missionary on foreign soil is that one receives far more than one is ever capable of giving. I went to Zimbabwe thinking that I was going to give... to give of myself yes...but in reality I received far more than I could ever give. I went to serve and to share my skills and my time with people who have not had the same opportunities as I have had. Yet again I discovered that I was the one who was so greatly enriched in so many different ways.



# LOURDES 1956–2006

By Frank Fitzpatrick



Frank  
and  
Rosa  
1956

One strong piece of evidence of change over the years is the spread of nationalities present today. At our first visit the pilgrims would have been confined to the western European nations. The disappearance of the iron curtain and the explosion in travel now brings people from every part of the world. At the beginning of the torchlight procession each evening a welcome is extended to various groups on pilgrimage and we could hear many nations mentioned in those welcomes.

Another big difference was the language. In 1956 the Mass, Benediction and all the prayers and hymns were in Latin. Now of course different languages are used for the

“Nevertheless you do not find self-pity; you do not find anger and frustration. The sick are the people of importance in Lourdes and they are given pride of place and ungrudging service by those blessed with good health.”

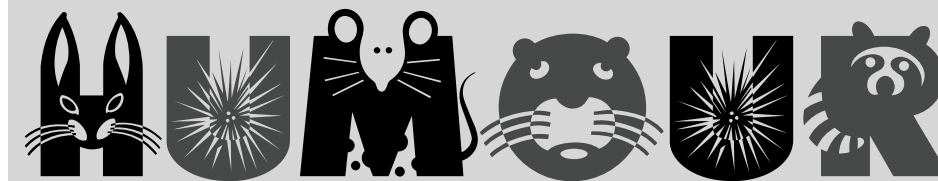
lation of several million while Lourdes has 17,000 inhabitants) In addition there are the innumerable souvenir shops. As there are more pilgrims now than then – about 6 million each year – there are probably more such shops. Some people do not like these places but they do not bother me. They obviously provide a needed service otherwise they would go out of business and it is easy to forget them once inside the Domaine.

rosary and each mass at the Grotto is in a different language. Although the use of the vernacular is an undoubted advantage, it is here in Lourdes that one misses the one universal language of the church. For me one of the most stirring experiences was to stand in the underground basilica when it was full for the international mass and hear some 20,000 people sing ‘Credo in unum deum’ and ‘Pater Noster’

The growing popularity of Lourdes and the tremendous increase in travel brings in some visitors whose understanding of and attitude to it is different from that of the ‘pilgrim’. In consequence we found much more conversation going on in the ‘Domaine’ and a greater reluctance on the part of the apparitors to check that conversation. One objectionable difference from 50 years ago – indeed from 20 years ago – is the presence of the mobile phone with calls being made and received in the midst of people praying at the grotto!

The annual pilgrimage of the Society of Our Lady of Lourdes always takes place during the summer mid term break of our schools. That means that young people can come along and they do. When we were there two schools, one from Bradford and one from Keighley, gave tremendous support to the sick pilgrims. They took them to the grotto and the baths of course but also round Lourdes itself to do shopping and sight seeing, and a wonderful rapport was built up over the week between the sick and their carers. This week cannot fail to make a strong impression on the students and strengthen their faith. This was not done fifty years ago and it is a fine way of instilling an appreciation of Lourdes in the young.

Being the place that it is, one inevitably encounters many people who are sick and disabled in some way, and some of these sights can be heart rending. Nevertheless you do not find self-pity; you do not find anger and frustration. The sick are the people of importance in Lourdes and they are given pride of place and ungrudging service by those blessed with good health. The relationship between helper and helped is of benefit to both and that shows in many ways. It is quite impossible to visit Lourdes and not be conscious of the overwhelming outpouring of love, service and prayer, which are what Our Blessed Lady wishes from her children.



By Jo King

## Psalm 8 EXPLAINED

**H**ey God! What is man that you should care for him? You have made him little less than a God (a little of Psalm 8).

Well I shall tell you how it was, says God;

On the first day, I created the dog and said: “Sit all day by the door of your house and bark at anyone who comes in or walks past. For this, I will give you happiness and a life span of twenty years.”

But the dog said: “That’s a long time to be barking, God! How about only ten years and you hang on to the other ten?”

So I agreed.

On the second day, I created the monkey and said: “Entertain people, do tricks, and make them laugh. For this, I’ll give you happiness and a twenty-year life span.”

But the monkey said: “Monkey tricks for twenty years? That will be a pretty long performance, mate! Suppose you only give me ten years and you do as you please with the other ten?”

So I chose to ignore the informality of the monkey but gave him his wish anyway. On the third day, I created the cow and said: “You must go into the field all day, the farmer will show you where to go. There you must suffer under the burning hot sun and in the winter snow. You must bear many calves and produce an abundance of milk to feed the farmer’s family. For this, I will make you happy and give you a life span of sixty years.”

‘Whoah! You expect me to be a drudge for man and beast for sixty long years?’ said the cow. ‘To feed the farmer and my calves for all that time and you will make me happy?’ How about I take a risk on the happiness

and serve only twenty years. See if you can do something more useful with the other 40’

I was a bit slighted by the cow and instead of creating him to laugh as I did the monkey I made him chew the cud and say moo instead but I gave him his wish anyway.

On the fourth day I made man, Moses was fibbing when he wrote in Genesis it was the 6th day. I said to man “Eat, sleep, play, marry, multiply and enjoy life. For this, I’ll give you a life span of twenty years.”

But man said: So what’s this then? In psalm 8 ‘you have made man little less than a God, only twenty years? In fact you want to make man less than a cow, equal to a monkey and not much more than a dog’s life! Be reasonable God, if you mean what you say could you possibly give me my twenty years, the forty the cow gave back, the ten the monkey gave you back, and the ten the dog gave back; that makes eighty, okay?’ I said okay my life, be it as you wish but don’t come back and blame me shmuck.

So there you have it; what is man? I’ll tell you what man is, a creature that eats, sleeps, plays and is only interested in enjoyment for the first twenty years. Then for the next forty years he slaves under the burning hot sun and in the winter snow, bears many young (well not so many these days) and produces an abundance of money with which to feed the family. For the next ten years he makes a monkey of himself trying to amuse the grandchildren. And for the last ten years he is a miserable old so-and-so doing nothing else but bark at people.

So now you know what is man!

# Chronicle of Parish Events

By PA Nache

## Telco

On Thursday 8th February thirteen people gathered in the William Scott room for the advertised meeting of TELCO. All but two who live in the friary had struggled through the worst snow for many years to attend what to most of them was a mystery meeting as it had not been advertised as a work shop.

Work shop it was and very interesting indeed. Two very young workers with TELCO led the meeting, which concentrated on giving guidance on one to one or 1-2-1. What on earth is that? Well, I thought that too. I thought, in business, dealing with people's personal problems on a daily basis I knew all about 1-2-1 interviews. But these are not interviews. We were role played on sitting down with, for example, the person next to you in the pew, as it were, and really getting to know them rather than just having a limp handshake at the kiss of peace. Starting a conversation after mass or over a cup of tea in the Becket Centre with someone you don't really know anything about is a powerful way to build community and find out the concerns, hopes and aspirations of people around you.

We were encouraged to start what might be a lasting relationship with simple not-personal questions such as, 'I have seen you before at this Mass but never really spoken to you. Why do you happen to come to this mass particularly?' I was amazed at the amount we learned about each other with such simple questions in the role-playing that occurred.

But there was more than just that. We heard how TELCO with members of our parish had won a seminal victory in persuading the Olympic organisers to make the 2012 London Olympics the first ever Living Wage Olympics. All contractors working on the project will have to agree to pay a living wage to their employees in order to win contracts.

And yet more! We heard an emotive story of a young man who lived a limbo-style life here in London, unable to work, unable to study or make any personal relationships because for four years he did not know whether he was here to stay or whether he

TELCO  
citizens

would be sent out of the country as an illegal immigrant instead of being welcomed as a refugee from a tyrannical regime in Africa.

There will be, on May 7th at 10 a.m. Mass for Migrant Workers on the Feast of St Joseph the Worker, taking place in Westminster followed by a march from 11.30 to 12.00 p.m. and a rally in Methodist Central Hall from 12.00 to 1.30p.m. in support of Strangers into Citizens.

The campaign seeks to persuade the government to allow these people to work legally for a limited period of time until the Home Office can regularise their situation on a permanent basis. This is a most noteworthy campaign of which St Thomas' parishioners are very much in the forefront of the petitioners.

Other TELCO dates for your diary  
April 19th: Redbridge and Waltham Forest Caucus. 7:30 – 9:00pm. The venue is yet to be arranged.  
April 26th: St Thomas TELCO Team meeting in the William Scott room – 8:00 – 9:15pm

## Lenten Talks

The problem with a quarterly journal is that it can never be current. The copy has to be done and dusted three weeks before the magazine goes on sale which means that much of the reporting is historic and very recent events don't get in the current issue. That is very much the case with Fr Thomas Herbst's Lenten talks. These were kicked off with a very motiva-

tional homily at the solemn opening of Lent in the evening of March 21st. It certainly was motivational as witnessed by the fact that 120 people turned up to hear him on the following Wednesday talking on the Gospel of John. The one-hour talk did not progress much beyond the prologue but was riveting nevertheless. Certainly nobody fell asleep. Hopefully the next four talks will be equally well attended but you will have to wait for the summer edition of In Touch to hear about them.

## Woodford Green Bereavement Support Group.

Reported by Angela Barnes

The annual Bereavement service held in St Thomas's on the 12th November 2006 was very well attended. Attendance for this service has increased steadily over the last few years. A number of new young readers joined the more experienced ones and all read very well. The service was very movingly led by Fr Anthony Cho after which many of the congregation joined us in the Becket Centre for a cup of tea and a chat.

This was the second successful bereavement gathering. Our first was a tea afternoon in June, which was attended by more than 25 people, some of whom had been recently bereaved and others who have joined us previously. There were others whose loss were not so recent but were happy to listen and share experiences. Some of the Franciscan community, who had been bereaved during the year, also joined us, as well as Sr. Elizabeth, our new Parish Sister. There was plenty of time to chat over cups of tea kindly provided by ladies from the Catholic Womens League.

Another important event for us was a Bereavement Training Workshop, which was held in the Becket Centre in September. We were joined by a number of people involved in Bereavement groups from

other churches in the surrounding area. Our own Colette Elliot Cooper who is a trained counsellor led the workshop. Other members of our group are sympathetic listeners who have all taken part in a variety of Bereavement courses and experienced their own losses.

We have also produced our own leaflet about bereavement and loss which is available at the back of the church

We meet every 6 weeks and we are always looking for ways in which we can help bereaved people in the parish. If anyone has ideas to contribute or any enquiries about the group please contact Angela Meyler on Tel 020 8504 2138

## FORTHCOMING EVENT

The Becket Centre Social Group flushed with their recent successes are now to run a St Georges Day Party on 21st April 2007 from 8 to 11 p.m. This is a family event. There will be a cold buffet and you are asked to bring your own drinks. Tickets Adults £6 Children £3 Family £20. For details or bookings call Jackie 0775 825 1144 or 0208 504 6227

## THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES

Dear God  
Thank you for the  
baby brother but  
what I prayed for  
was a puppy  
Joyce

# LETTERS

Please send your letters to The Editor, Idvies, 72 Malvern Drive, Woodford Green, IG8 OJP or email [leon@racionzer.net](mailto:leon@racionzer.net)

## FROM NOEL DUVIN

### Can anyone help me out?

As a callow youth the world was fairly straightforward and my limited knowledge allowed me to see things more clearly and in simple terms. Life was full of expectancy and I felt surrounded by certainty and constancy. Religion was clear-cut with no other answer than that provided in the catechism and pulpit. Practice was defined by very clear rules with the spectre of hellfire as a clear alternative to any breach.

As I have grown older the world has become more complicated. I have grown less certain and find that merely obeying the rules is far from good enough. I started to wonder to what extent compliance with rules and all tenets of dogma are necessary to continue to call oneself a Catholic? I do not believe that I am alone in confronting these issues but it seems easy to brush doubts aside and hope for greater certainty to return.

Accepting cognitive dissonance as a way of life is an option. Those who smoke do the same thing – despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary they believe they will come to no harm if they continue to indulge in that nasty habit.

A friend recently came to dinner. She was raised as a Catholic, attended a convent school etc. Her father was an atheist and her husband an agnostic. She was now recently widowed but she had lost her faith. She had seen the suffering her husband had endured in his fight with terminal illness and this strengthened her antipathy to God.

Her loss of faith made her quite angry because she also had no consolation about his death and grieving seemed even harder.

As faith is a gift from God, have you any advice?

*This letter raises many questions in our postmodern world in which the enlightenment of the faithful has had a drastic effect on those who were merely taught to obey rather than to pray. Hopefully there will be much discussion on this matter in future issues of In Touch.*

## FROM ANN FARMER

Dear Leon,

Your article on the 40th Anniversary of the Abortion Act makes some pertinent points. The link between abortion and eugenics is very real, as I found in researching the historical roots of the abortion campaign. Indeed, I found that abortion was not so much an end in itself (though the campaign pioneers did see it as a good thing) but as just one means to an end, the end being to control the quantity and quality of the population, i.e. eugenic population control. This was the philosophy, which drove the abortion campaign pioneers; they passed on the baton to the 1960s campaigners who actually succeeded in legalising abortion. Even before the Act passed into law, campaigners were discussing their next moves. My book, *By Their Fruits*, aims to show how abortion, divorce, sexually transmitted disease, infertility and even teenage pregnancies are functioning as stepping stones for the population

Views expressed in this page are those of the writers. The editor may cut long letters; letters sent anonymously will not be published. If your letter does not appear in this issue it may appear in a subsequent issue.

Comments on universal current affairs, the contents of this magazine or on matters within the parish upon which you have a view are particularly welcome. When writing please submit a photograph or mention a convenient time for our photographer to call on you.

MORE READERS LETTERS OVERLEAF



# LETTERS

Continued

control campaign on its way to a future dominated not by the search for cures for disease, or for ways of making sufferers more comfortable, but by the hunt for and elimination of defective genes. Your article is right to draw attention to the fact that if we wish to turn the tide of the culture of death, we must be aware of the philosophical currents driving it.



Ann Farmer is an active member of our parish. She has authored two seminal works on pro-life issues, *Prophets and Priests*, St Austin Press 2002 and *The*

*Language of Life*, St Pauls 1994. Ann is well known in the Labour Life Group through which she has made her mark as being unafraid to stick her neck out as a lobbyist, at party conference and fringe meetings. Her leaflets and articles on abortion have been very widely circulated. Her latest book, *'By Their Fruits'* should be published later this year and we look forward to the opportunity to review it in *'In Touch'*.

**FROM BILL BARRY WRITING FROM UPMINSTER.**

**Do keep up the good work.**

Dear Editor,  
I have just returned from a two-week holiday in Kenya where I felt particularly guilty at the sight of the Street Children in Nairobi as we whisked through it on our way to our luxury apartment and lavish way of life.

I was reminded of the horrific article that you wrote in an earlier issue of *In Touch* about the work of Fr John Harding with these very children thrown into jail for little or no cause. Unfortunately I did not think of asking you before I left home for Fr John's address as at that point I had forgotten about your article and the desperate plight of these children. Seeing

**FROM ROSE O'DOHERTY.**

Dear Editor,

I was interested to read in the last edition of *In Touch*, your article *Abortion on Demand* at the end of which you mention the international organisation *Helpers of God's Precious Infants*. I would like to make some very important comments about that. We are opposed to abortion not only because it kills the child, but also because of the devastating affects on the woman and indeed the whole family. Women in crisis pregnancies are led to believe that an abortion will solve the problems they are experiencing. The truth is that it adds to the problems. Which is why there is a *Silent No More* movement whereby women are coming out publicly to talk about their pain and regret of having an abortion with the hope that it will prevent others from suffering as they have and still do. Not only do they suffer spiritually, but mentally and physically as well.

This is why when we are at the site (outside Marie Stopes) we also speak to the women after they have had the abortion, telling them of God's love for them and giving them details of post abortion healing which they are very grateful for. We don't stop short either at speaking only to the women who have been aborted we also pray for and speak to the staff of Marie Stopes clinic. It is not for us to judge or to condemn anybody but only to live the Gospel message of 'love your neighbour as yourself.' Rachel's Vineyard Retreats are a very important part of the healing process. There is a poster on the notice board in the porch of St. Thomas of Canterbury Church advertising these retreats.

We provide counselling for woman who have had an abortion but also for those who have changed their mind and often find themselves homeless because of their decision to keep their babies. For these women we desperately need short term accommodation and if anybody is in the position to help by providing accommodation we would be very grateful.

them brought it all back along with a feeling of guilt that I could so easily forget such a thing and particularly as I had chosen to holiday in Kenya. Had I thought about it beforehand I would have certainly made time to visit Fr John.

Although I am no longer in the Woodford parish, my home is now in the Cathedral parish of Brentwood, I vowed that immediately upon my return I would make contact with you again and arrange through you to do something to help toward Fr John's work.

I am writing to you separately in your capacity as Gift Aid organizer.

**FROM MARY WOSKETT**

Dear Editor

I enjoy reading *In Touch*. It is good to read about the different events in the parish particularly as they are so amusingly reported. I also enjoy the views of your readers both in the letters page and in various articles, which are very informative.

I pass the magazine on to friends

and neighbours and on occasion it even gets as far as my daughter, Christine, in Seattle. She was particularly interested in the piece on the guides as she had Ros McPherson as her leader when she was at school.

**FROM SCOTT REID.**

Dear Editor

I enjoyed reading the article "Words, Words, Words" by Coleen Carlile in the December issue. I thought this was a "top notch" story that hit the "nail on the head" about Christmas shopping and mothers-in-law.

It has to be said, women have always been at the forefront of Christmas shopping. I should "thank my lucky stars" that my wife does all the Christmas shopping including buying her own present. I was "up a gum tree" for forgetting to wrap my wife's present before placing it under the Christmas tree, for which she "played merry hell". My wife bought a huge toy garage for our son, which went into the loft for storage until Christmas. However, it was so large



**Rose and Michael O'Doherty at the world prayer congress for life in Portugal October 4-6 2006 standing by the intricate cross made up of surgical instruments that have been used in abortions.**



that we had to take it back to the shop as our house "isn't big enough to swing a cat". But everything "came up smelling of roses" as our "nearest and dearest" were all happy with their presents even the smaller ones.

I am amazed at how Coleen can write such articles by stringing lots of idioms together. I find it "hard going" just writing this letter to the editor about your article

**FROM NICOLA SMITH**

Dear Editor,

I was rather disappointed to see that there was no mention of the Christmas Fayre in the last issue of *In Touch*. So much effort went into it particularly by Sharon Cameron, Michelle Say and Dolly Anderson who along with me dressed up in fancy dress to attract the crowds to the very popular toy stall. I never spent as much time as the others on the stall but because I know how much they

did I felt someone should say thank you for all their effort. The Fayre as a whole was a great community effort, which would not have happened without so many people devoting so much of their time to it.

*It is up to members of the parish to submit reports on their events in good time for publication. The Chronicle of parish events page is specifically designed for such reports. If you have an event and fail to write about it to the editor it will not be included. The last issue of In Touch did in fact feature a photograph on the front page of the ladies mentioned in your letter.*



To prove a point Sukie Whitehall made the chick in a basket according to the instructions. She photographed each stage and the result is reproduced on page 16.



## *Prayer from an elderly person*

Translated from Flemish by Yvonne Poulter

*Blessed are those  
Who understand that I walk with  
difficulty and that my hands shake?*

*Blessed are those  
Who understand that my hearing has  
diminished and take the trouble to  
speak louder.*

*Blessed are those  
Who understand that my vision is no  
longer good and that I no longer quickly  
comprehend things.*

*Blessed are those  
Who do not grumble when I knock  
things over.*

*Blessed are those  
Who smile at me and say a few  
kind words.*

*Blessed are those  
Who do not say, 'you have told me that  
story before.'*

*Blessed are those  
Who calmly listen and let me talk about  
my youth.*

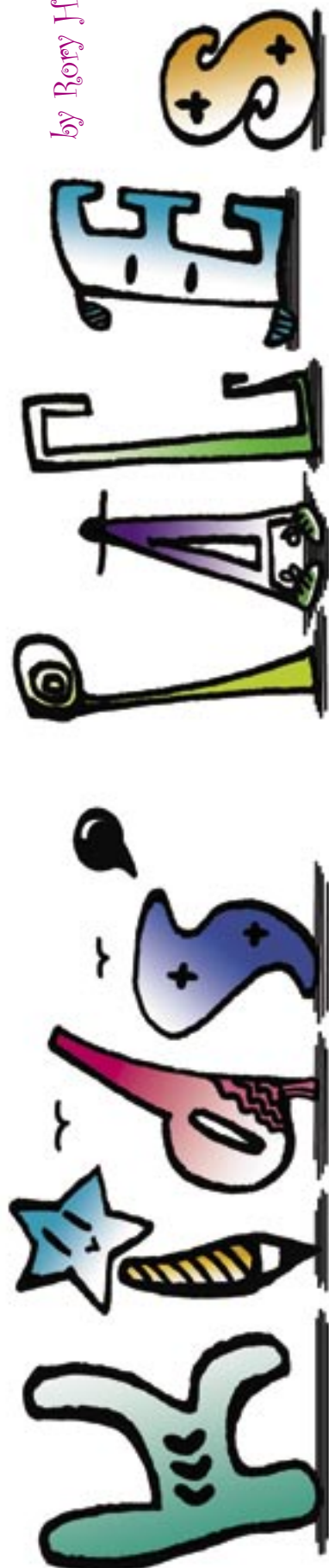
*Blessed are those  
Who make me feel loved and treat me  
with respect.*

*Blessed are those  
Who help me on the way to the  
eternal home.*

*Blessed are those  
Who are good to me and make my final  
journey easy.*

*Blessed are those  
In whom I see the face of God.*





# Make a... Chick in a Basket!

## You will need...

- ...Cottonballs
- ...Egg Carton
- ...Yellow Food Dye
- ...Bits of Orange Paper
- ...Marker Pen

1 • Dip one large cotton ball in diluted yellow dye, let dry. When yellow cotton ball is dry, draw two small speck eyes on it.

2 • Cut a triangle out of orange paper to make a beak. Glue it onto the cotton ball just below the eyes.



3. Cut the egg carton so you have one section. Sit chick in the carton to make it look like a basket!  
(You can add some grass and a handle if you like!)



E	Q	L	Y	A	M	Y	I	E	W	M	J	M	P	T
R	A	A	N	Y	B	Y	H	D	B	J	Z	A	S	Z
E	A	S	T	E	R	B	U	N	N	Y	N	B	L	Q
Q	W	T	T	U	S	R	Y	P	P	C	O	A	E	R
J	V	S	T	E	V	G	B	L	A	V	X	P	R	H
Q	Z	U	N	H	R	I	O	K	W	G	K	R	R	L
H	U	P	O	B	Q	E	E	H	J	B	Y	I	I	F
L	U	P	L	G	N	D	G	Z	E	M	K	L	U	M
R	M	E	X	G	A	U	P	G	S	G	A	B	Q	F
N	N	R	S	Y	J	S	S	R	S	Z	D	R	S	Q
T	Y	Y	A	D	S	R	E	H	T	O	M	E	C	A
Z	B	J	X	F	Z	W	E	W	G	F	Q	Q	H	H
Z	B	C	E	R	O	O	J	R	R	L	M	C	D	Y
N	T	G	J	L	Z	F	M	F	B	J	D	J	Q	W
E	Q	T	F	W	K	P	J	T	Q	M	J	J	K	M

APRIL  
EASTER  
EASTERBUNNY  
EASTEREKGS  
FLOWERS  
HEDGEHOGS  
LASTSUPPER  
LENT  
MARCH  
MAY  
MOTHERSDAY  
PANKAKEDAY  
SQUIRRELS  
SUN

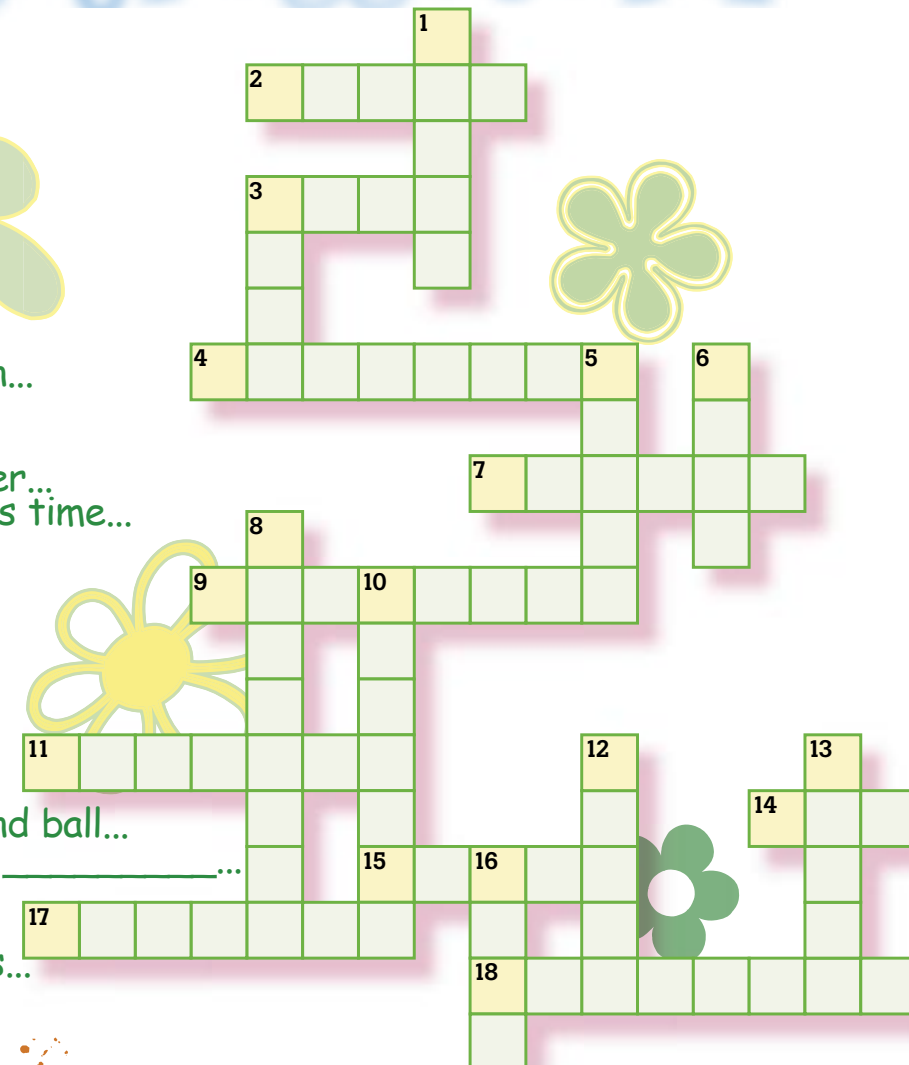
# Spring Crossword

## Across:

- Dutch spring flower...
- Fast moving air...
- Rain protection...
- A Season...
- Yellow spring Flower...
- Appears after rain in Sun...
- Spring Month...
- Spring Bird...
- Small formations of water...
- Savings time...

## Down:

- Winged animals...
- Temperature in spring...
- Spring Month...
- Spring Month...
- Game played with a bat and ball...
- April showers bring May...
- Type of Weather...
- Spring Month...
- The beginning of Flowers...



# Make an... Easter Bunny container!

## You will need...

- ...Tuna can ...Felt ...Markers ...Glue ...Scrap construction paper ...Cottonball

1 • Cut a piece of felt to cover the outside of a tuna can and glue it in place.

2 • Use your imagination, construction paper, scrap felt, markers, and anything else you can find to make your tin look like an easter bunny.

3. Glue on the cotton ball for the bunnys tail. These containers can be used to fill with easter treats... great for jelly beans!!!

Crossword Answers  
1. Birds 2. Wind 3. Umbrella 4. Rain 5. Spring 6. Baseball 7. April 8. June 9. Rain 10. Flowers 11. Rain 12. Sunny 13. March 14. May 15. Robin 16. Buds 17. Puddles 18. Daylight



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# EAT A RAINBOW EVERY DAY



We all know that eating at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day is the basis of a healthy diet – did you know that you can give yourself an extra health boost by eating a rainbow – choosing your fruit and vegetables from different colour groups? Experts call it pigment power; each colour contains different vitamins and minerals but it is the antioxidant properties in the pigments that colour these wonderful foods that are the best weapon against ageing and give protection against disease.

Scientists have known for decades that the essential vitamins, minerals and trace elements play a vital role in both the preservation of life and the maintenance of good health, but it is only in recent years that the overwhelming importance of antioxidants has been acknowledged. It's these protective chemicals that fight against the damaging free radicals that attack cells throughout the body.

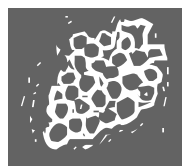
## THE COLOUR GROUPS REDS



**Choose from** Tomatoes - including cooked tomatoes, strawberries, raspberries, pink grapefruit, water melon, and cranberries

**Why eat them?** The antioxidant lycopene is present – it is particularly high in tomatoes, making them good protectors of the cardio-vascular system and against some forms of cancer.

## DARK RED/PURPLE/BLUE



**Choose from:** Red cabbage, purple grapes, blackberries, blueberries, beetroot, aubergine, red peppers, plums (prunes) red apples and cherries.

**Why eat them?** They contain antioxidants from the flavonoid family, anthocyanins. It is believed that foods in this group may play a role in combating the effects of ageing.

## ORANGE



**Choose from** Carrots, mangoes, butternut squash, cantaloupe melon and sweet potatoes.

**Why eat them?** The orange pigment comes from betacarotene. So there's truth in the old wives' tale about carrots helping you to see in the dark: the vitamin A that eyes need is made in the body from betacarotene.

## ORANGE/YELLOW



**Choose from** Papaya, oranges, tangerines, peaches, nectarines, satsumas and clementines.

**Why eat them?** These contain a form of betacarotene and citrus fruits flood your body with hesperitin, a plant compound that boosts vitamin C levels to keep your skin looking good and also gives resistance to viruses, including flu bugs and helps lower cholesterol.

## YELLOW/GREEN



**Choose from** Mangetout, spinach, peas, sweetcorn, avocado, honeydew melon, and kiwi.

**Why eat them?** These are rich in the carotenoid lutein which is linked to eye health. Cooking spinach helps lutein become more easily absorbed in the body. Kiwi fruits are a very rich source of vitamin C, more so than oranges.

## GREEN



**Choose from** Pak choi, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage and kale.

**Why eat them?**

These are a source of folic acid, which reduces the risk of birth defects. Steam or stir fry to retain maximum nutrients.

## GREEN/WHITE



**Choose from** Asparagus, garlic, onions, leeks, celery, pears and cauliflower,

**Why eat them?** Usually the deeper the colour the more antioxidants fruit or vegetable contains. However, white foods in the onion family are a source of quercetin and allicin; giving protective action on the circulatory system, leeks and garlic are beneficial in helping to lower blood pressure and cholesterol, they also offer protection from some forms of cancer.

There are many other fruits and vegetables that are not mentioned but are beneficial to health, the ones above tend to be highest in antioxidants and are proven disease fighters.

Fresh, frozen, canned, dried and juices all count.

## WHAT IS A PORTION? FRUIT

**Small fruits** 2 plums, 2 satsumas, 2 kiwi fruits, 3 apricots, 7 strawberries, 2 handfuls of raspberries, 1 handful of blackberries, 3 tablespoons of frozen summer fruits.

**Medium fruits** 1 apple, 1 banana, 1 pear, 1 orange, 2 halves of canned peaches.

**Large fruits** half a grapefruit, a 2" slice of melon or pineapple.

**Dried fruit** 1 tablespoon

**Fruit juice** 150ml glass

## VEGETABLES

3 heaped tablespoons of cooked carrots, peas, or sweetcorn etc

5 spears fresh asparagus

Half a pepper

1 corn on the cob

8 Brussels sprouts

2 whole canned tomatoes

1 medium fresh tomato  
3 heaped tablespoons of canned beans or pulses  
2" piece cucumber  
1 cereal bowl of mixed salad

Avoid chopping or slicing fruit and vegetables too far in advance

Avoid overcooking – steaming is a good option

Eat as much raw fruit and vegetables as possible and try and eat the skins where possible (ensure they are thoroughly washed first)

## RECIPES

**Smoothie** serves 1 - giving 2 portions of daily fruit count

**1 medium banana – peeled and roughly chopped**

**75g – 3oz fresh/frozen raspberries or 2 kiwi fruit – peeled and chopped**  
**mango or 2 tbsp frozen mango chunks – thawed slightly**

**Juice of two small oranges**

**1** Place all ingredients in a blender, liquidizer or food processor and blend until smooth, pour into a long glass and serve immediately.

**2** Smoothies are an ideal way to get some of your daily portions of fruit and a huge variety of fruit can be used – apple juice is a good 'mixer' and yoghurt can be added also

## Summer or winter - pudding

**750g 1 lb Mixed fruits – to include blackberries, plums, blackcurrants sliced apple, raspberries – I often use frozen Summer or Forest fruits – defrosted.**

**125g – 150g - 4-6oz caster sugar**

**8 slices white bread from a large loaf – crusts removed**

**900ml – 1 1/2pt pudding basin**

**1** Place fruit in a saucepan with the sugar and cook gently for 10 -15 minutes stirring occasionally until fruit is soft but still holding its shape.

IN TOUCH 2007 ISSUE 1

**2** Strain fruit, reserve juice.  
**3** Cut 3 circles of bread to fit basin, cut remaining bread into thick strips.  
**4** Dip bread in reserved juice briefly.  
**5** Place a circle of bread in base of basin and line sides with strips, trimming if necessary.  
**6** Put fruit in basin, place another bread circle on top – add remaining fruit and finish with a circle of bread, pour over any remaining fruit juice and cover with a saucer which fits inside basin.  
**7** Put a 500g – 1lb weight on saucer and put pudding in refrigerator overnight.

To serve – remove weight and saucer – run a knife around basin, turn out onto serving plate, pouring over any remaining juice. Serve with whipped cream or creme fraiche

## Slow Cooked Roasted Vegetable Soup

**225g – 8oz each of peeled carrots, celeriac and swede all cut into 5cm – 2" lengths**

**225g trimmed and washed leeks, halved and cut into 5cm lengths**

**1 small onion peeled and roughly chopped**

**1 large tin chopped tomatoes**

**2 – 3 tablespoons of red lentils**

**1.2 litres – 2 pints of stock – home made or Marigold Swiss vegetable bouillon powder**

**3 bay leaves**

**Salt and freshly milled black pepper**

**Garnish of chopped chives or parsley and Greek yoghurt**

**3.5 litre – 6 pint casserole with lid**

When vegetables are cooked very slowly for a long time their flavour becomes mellow but also more intense.

Pre heat oven to 140o C or Gas mark 1

**1** Place all ingredients in the

## Mary Knights FOOD PAGES

Please send in any recipes of your own making that you have enjoyed. See that the quantities of ingredients are clearly stated and only send in recipes that you have tried and tested. Submissions to Mary Knights c/o the editor 72 Malvern Drive IG8 OJP email [leon@racionzer.net](mailto:leon@racionzer.net)

casserole and bring it up to a gentle simmer on the hob. Put the lid on and place it in the lowest part of the oven for 3 hours, by which time the vegetables will be meltingly tender.  
**2** Remove the bay leaves and process or blend the soup in several batches to a puree.  
**3** Gently re-heat and serve garnished with chopped fresh herbs and a teaspoon of yoghurt swirled in centre

## Caribbean Bananas – a good use of over ripe bananas

**4 ripe bananas cut in half and split lengthwise**

**75g soft brown sugar**

**Rind and juice of a lemon or an orange**

**2 tablespoons raisins**

**25g butter**

**2 tablespoons rum – optional**

**Greek yoghurt or vanilla ice cream to serve**

**1** Put bananas, raisins and lemon or orange juice and rum if using, in an ovenproof dish, sprinkle with sugar and dot with butter. Cover with foil  
**2** Place in a moderate oven 180oC Mark 4 for 20 - 25minutes

Serve warm.

If using the rum - the dish is even better if you soak the raisins in the rum for 30minutes before preparing for cooking .

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• COMPETITION •

## WHO IS THIS?

An Irish lass at her first Holy Communion, she is not a nun or a school teacher but if you have ever met her you might think otherwise. The picture was taken in Dublin.



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### Competition rules

- Entries must be submitted to the editor marked 'competition' with the entrant's full name, address and telephone number.
- The first correct answer properly submitted and drawn out of the hat on 4 June 2007 will win a £25:00 token of your choice
- The closing date for entries is the 30 May 2007. The winner will be notified immediately by 'phone and announced in the next issue of In Touch
- Friends, family and anybody involved in the publication of In Touch are excluded from entering the competition

**Winner** of the last competition is Kathy Howes. She had no problem spotting her ex-boss Angela Meyler who was head teacher at St Anthony's for a quarter of a century and remains a driving force in the parish

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# GLOBAL CONFLICT

## MYTH OR REALITY?

By Leon Menzies

The collapse of Communism leaves a vacuum in the balance of power that is in danger of being filled by a new totalitarian order far more threatening to world peace than Communism ever was.

**W**hile his mother and six brothers watched, his tongue was cut out, boiling water poured over him, he was scalped and all his extremities cut off. Then, completely helpless but breathing he was fried alive in a pan. The smell of his burning flesh filled the nostrils of his brothers and mother who were made to stand close by. The next brother was put through the same torment, his mother and four remaining brothers suffered the same mental torture of witnessing the destruction of the still undefeated dying man. Each brother in turn indignantly refused to defile himself, preferring to be boiled alive and cut up in pieces rather than eat the unclean food being thrust into their mouths.

The last of the brothers still defiant, in spite of all he had witnessed and in full knowledge of what would befall him he set out deliberately to enrage the king. Antiochus Epiphanus was so infuriated that he devised new tortures for him so that he would suffer more than his brothers. Finally the mother who had witnessed the torture and death of her seven sons all in one day was herself put to death.

It's all there in 2 Maccabees 6-7.

Of course this barbarity happened about 165 years before Christ and



**Hamid Assadian alias Kazem Mostafavi, Iranian dissident, author and poet**

would not happen now!

Oh no? Well you have a little surprise coming if you still have the stomach to read on!

The Mesbah family of eight members, father, mother and six children were all executed, the youngest aged 13. Virgin girls, as is the fundamentalist custom, were raped to make sure they did not enter heaven. Execution by hanging is not a quick death; it is more akin to garrotting as the victim, sometimes under 18yrs, is slowly raised up on a crane from the back of a lorry.

Mrs Koushali still lives to tell the story of her six children whom she saw tortured and executed.

But these are only two samples of 120,000 people publicly executed by the fundamentalist regime in Tehran. There are also tens of thousands physically destroyed but not defeated. Then there are those who, as a consequence of the most brutal tortures

have been released stark raving mad as an example for all to see.

Kazem Mostafavi, the Iranian equivalent of Yevgeny Yevtushenko, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and Andrei Sakharov, has written 50 novels inspired by these atrocities. He has recorded interviews with thousands of ex prisoners who described 50 different physical tortures and a further 25 mental tortures. They include all those of Antiochus and more. Mostafavi has collected over 1,000 names of guards and Mullahs who personally carried out the tortures and rapes.

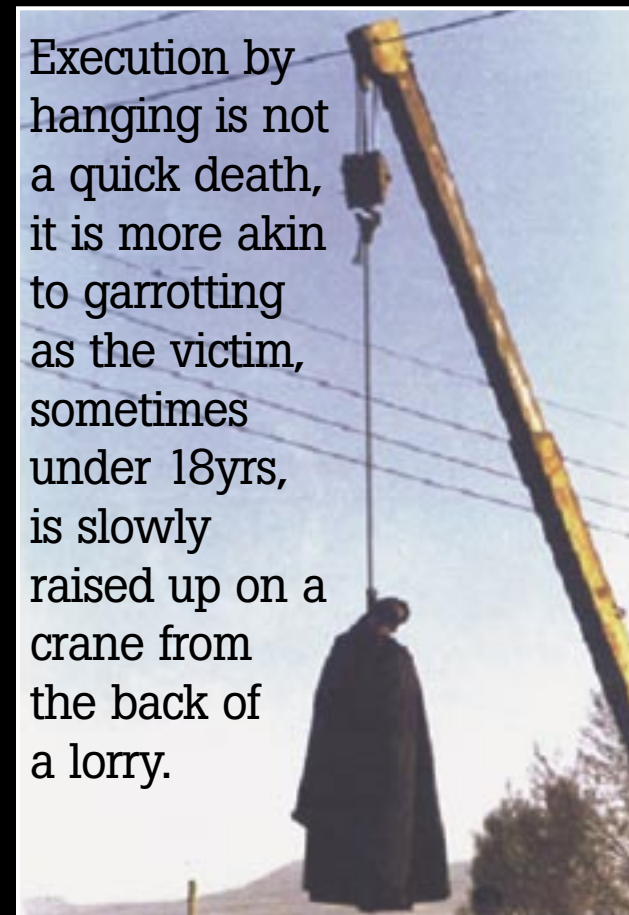
Kazem Mostafavi is the nom de plum of Hamid Assadian. These are the names of two of his closest friends who were tortured and put to death by Khomeini. His experiences are worth relating. In his late twenties, as part of Mohammed Reza Shah's purge on intellectuals he was gaoled for five years. In gaol he got to know certain fellow inmates, people who later become Iran's rulers.

He silently observed the moral depravity of these inmates. "They had little or no education and no scruples whatsoever". They would bow down to the Shah's tortures and cunningly betray their fellow inmates. Following the February '79 uprising and institution of the Islamic regime these same inmates rose to political prominence. He said; 'Seeing that, I knew the sort of morally depraved rule they would administer'.

Soon after, barbarities started. The

Execution by hanging is not a quick death, it is more akin to garrotting as the victim, sometimes under 18yrs, is slowly raised up on a crane from the back of a lorry.

**A woman in chador with her face covered is hanged, young men remain defiant as nooses are tightened around their necks and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad revels in global notoriety.**



executions that took place in the first four months of Khomeini's Islamic fundamentalist regime totalled around 250 more than all the executions that took place in the Shah's 38-year reign.

'Immediately, seeing the nature of this regime, I had no hesitation in joining Maryam Rajavi's popular movement and its Parliament in exile

[NCRI]. Maryam Rajavi – A Female Moslem leader is the president elect of the Iranian opposition movement. Inspired by Islam and humanity this movement fights Islamic fundamentalism; there's the irony.

On account of his writings and resistance during the Shah's reign Hamid had been imprisoned. Now for similar reasons under Khomeini's

regime the time came when he had to flee Iran. His pregnant wife was arrested and sentenced to twelve years in prison on his account.

Hamid visibly saddened, as he appeared to search his conscience when he related to me what fellow inmates had told him of his wife's fate. He struggled to contain himself; there was a slight quiver of his lip as

he said, perhaps to salve his own conscience, 'but what happened to them is no different from what is happening now to tens of thousands of women in Iran. I had to abandon them to make a stand for all the others. This is something that continues to trouble me.'

His wife was first incarcerated close to a roaring furnace where she became dehydrated causing her daughter to be born covered in blisters. Women prisoners tore off their clothes and sharpened bones from the food they were given to make needles so that they could make clothes for the baby. The infant remained in prison for the first year of her life as a form of mental torture of the other inmates before being delivered over to her grandparents. The Shah's regime never stooped to this sort of mental torture nor did they regard female prisoners as their personal property to do with as they wished.

For his wife there followed a period of solitary confinement in total darkness. Night and day became one continuous black period. Sleep deprivation, partial starvation and repeated rape eventually drove her mad. She was reduced to eating her own faeces, whimpering and huddling in a corner of her tiny cell. She would eat no food for a week at a time. Only when she resembled a starving animal, skin and bone with suspicious bulging eyes darting to and fro was she honed and ready to be used as a tool of mental torture for other inmates and a figure of amusement for her gaolers. Now she was placed with other prisoners where every so often she would attack them like a ferocious beast for no apparent reason, her gaolers reveling in the spectacle.

His daughter grew up with her grandparents where she was told her father had gone to the front with the army and her mother was at university. Today she knows the truth. She cares for her demented mother released after her sentence. In 25 years Hamid has had only one five-minute conversation with his daughter. With tears now visible he tells me, 'She said you have chosen your life but what is it that I have done?'

"A man can be destroyed but not defeated, nothing can take away the glory of his achievements"

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

Audibly drawing in breath he recites the continually occurring phrase in Ernest Hemingway's poem, The Old Man and the Sea, "a man can be destroyed but not defeated, nothing can take away the glory of his achievements". 'That poem gives me the will to go on fighting this monster for the sake of all those that continue to suffer in Iran and for all people worldwide who, if they did but know, are also threatened by this regime'.

Iran is a massive fundamentalist force that uses terrorism to achieve its political objectives. It boasts 50,000 suicide bombers ready to be deployed.

**M**ilitary action is not a solution and could well lead to global conflict with unprecedented rules of engagement. Whatever concessions are made to this regime will not stop their nuclear ambition. One of the concessions Iran claims will temper its ire is the repatriation of Iranian refugees in Iraq, the surviving members of Maryam Rajavi's popular movement, the cream of Iranian intelligentsia.

They represent the greatest threat to Iran's hegemonic ambitions and not surprisingly Iran wants them extradited so that they can be tortured, murdered and completely eliminated. Why is it such a threat? Because it is itself a force driven by Islam. However,

their view of Islam is totally opposite to what the fundamentalists preach. They live by Islam's true values of tolerance, coexistence, justice and peace, in general by the human values, which are diametrically opposed to what the dark forces of fundamentalism stand for.

Iran's continued efforts to destroy them include cutting off their water supply, blowing up their buses and kidnapping their members. Those kidnapped have never been seen again.

According to Lord Slynn of Hadley, former Judge of the European court of Justice and Lord of Appeal, who is the head of the legal team fighting to prevent their extradition; "Ashraf is a way of life." It is tolerant democratic Islam in practice in a prototype society. It is therefore the antithesis of Islamic fundamentalism. This is why it can bring a new peaceful order to the region.

Inspired by this concept, Tolerance International, a vibrant, innovative organisation, has embarked in a landmark community initiative to protect those vulnerable to extremist teachings, by engaging with them about the true and tolerant values of Islam.

The public launch of Tolerance International is at Central Hall Westminster on the second anniversary of the London bombings, July 7th 2007 at 2pm. Your support for this organisation could be your contribution toward world peace. Tolerance International has launched a petition calling on the Prime Minister to name the 7th of July 'The National day of Tolerance and Peace'. Please sign this petition. Visit [www.toleranceinternational.com](http://www.toleranceinternational.com) for more information.

Look out for further information and for the next issue of In Touch in which I will report on my visit to Ashraf City in the Iraqi desert where I intend to sample the "Ashraf way of life" at first hand.

Iran is a massive fundamentalist force that uses terrorism to achieve its political objectives. It boasts 50,000 suicide bombers ready to be deployed.



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# THE HOLY FAMILY SISTERS IN WOODFORD

By Sister Maureen Delaney



**T**he Holy Family Sisters are a religious order of sisters within the Church who have consecrated themselves to Christ, partnering Him in His work here on earth. His work could not be more clearly defined than in – (Luke 4:18)

‘... for he has anointed me to bring the good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free.’

The words of Lumen Gentium 46/47 refer, perhaps most appropriately, to those of the Holy Family that consecrate themselves through the vows of obedience, chastity and poverty but they also describe the mission of the many lay associates of the family around the world who do ordinary jobs of work and are parents etc.

‘Through them Christ should be shown contemplating on the mountainside, announcing God’s Kingdom to the multitude, healing the sick and the maimed, turning sinners to wholesome fruit, blessing children, doing good to all, and always obeying the Will of the Father who sent them.’

The first seeds of this family, illustrated by a tree that has become

the emblem of the Holy Family, were planted on May 29 1820 when the first three young ladies were seeking a life of poverty, chastity and obedience. But Fr Noailles, the Holy Family’s founder had a wider vision that was to bind together a family of consecrated people open to every vocation within the Church. A tree with multiple branches to include those who live in ordinary families married or single as well as contemplative sisters and priests, missionary sisters and secular priests as the tree depicted here shows.

Today the Holy Family consecrated sisters, priests and lay associates are in South Africa, Lesotho, and Sri Lanka who use their skills and recognise Christ in situations in Pakistan, Botswana, Rwanda, the Philippines, Belarouse and countries in South America. It was to the Holy Family sisters that Mary McAleese, President of Ireland, paid tribute during her recent state visit to Lesotho. In speaking of their missionary contribution to developing countries she recalled their efforts among the poorest of the poor in saying “these are the people who answer the question, does anyone care?”

The first of the sisters to come to Leeds in 1853, from whom our Holy Family in Woodford originated, were four in number one, English

is a story in itself.

By the end of the 1830s Holy Family Sisters were well established in France, Spain and Belgium with a fledgling foundation in Sri Lanka (Ceylon). Sister Josephine, who everybody in Woodford knows, served many years there but needless to say not in the Victorian era. At the time of Fr Noailles’ death in 1861 there was a membership of about twenty thousand.

By the end of the century, at the original location in Leeds, the sisters had witnessed the building of a church, school, convent, and due to so many adults dying from typhoid, a much-needed orphanage. Throughout Britain fifteen convents had been established and two in Ireland. Priests all over the country were seeking out the Holy Family sisters to help with all sorts of ministries from tending the sick and elderly to educating children and catechising adults.

**A**nd so in the context of the needs of the twenty-first century it is the same all-inclusive dream of the founder that inspires members of the Holy Family. His words spoken in the chaos of post Revolutionary France are as relevant today as they were then.

“In this divided world, thirsting for love and truth, justice and peace, freedom and dignity, we take up the challenge of our common mission – to be family and to build family.”

and three Scottish. They arrived on a cold, miserable day to the fog bound, Victorian city of the industrial revolutionary era, to help the poor, mainly Irish immigrants, in the sweat shops of Leeds and surrounding area. That

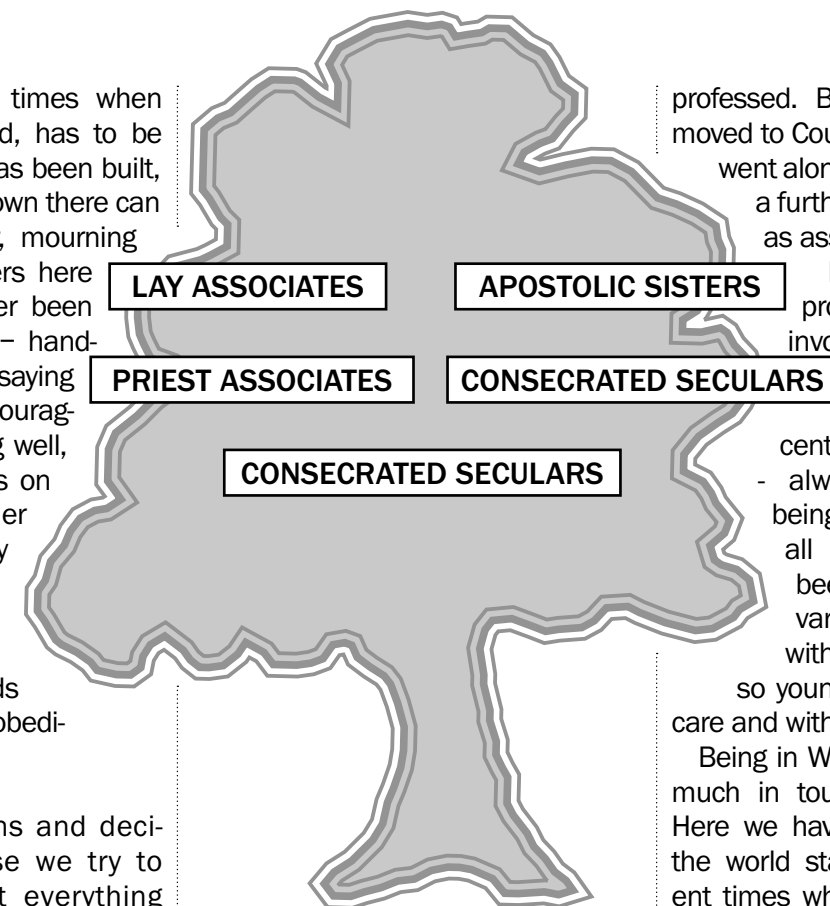
evant today as they were then.

“In this divided world, thirsting for love and truth, justice and peace, freedom and dignity, we take up the challenge of our common mission – to be family and to build family.”

So to Woodford: at times when what has been planted, has to be uprooted, when what has been built, needs to be knocked down there can be tears and laughter, mourning and dancing. Our sisters here in Woodford have never been immune from change – handing over, closing doors, saying good bye, parting, encouraging, supporting, wishing well, and then finding needs on the doorstep or further afield. The community here like all of our communities is continually requested to meet new challenges and needs further afield and in obedience to the call.

**I**t is in situations and decisions like these we try to remember that everything about our lives is part of God’s love for us, God’s creativity at work in us and for us. Many readers of this page will recall the Holy Family sisters who taught at St Anthony’s and at St Mary’s before it became the upper school of Trinity High. Memory of them remains in the hearts and minds of many parishioners, some who would have been taught by them and others who had their children taught by them. They will recall sadness when the sisters left the schools and the convent in Mornington Road and rejoicing when they resettled at 5 The Green.

The tabernacle in the Blessed Sacrament chapel in St Thomas of Canterbury church was a gift made by the sisters when they moved into their new convent at 5 The Green. I wonder how many of the parishioners and particularly the associates were among those that helped with the move.



Attached to all of our communities there are groups of lay associates who try to live the Holy Family spirit in their own situations, attending regular meetings within the community.

But I too have my own fond memories of them. It will be sixty years next year since I took my final vows in our convent in Rock Ferry, Birkenhead, Liverpool. There I had been a postulant straight from Ireland and there too I served my noviciate. Many of the sisters you knew in Woodford were among those that helped and nurtured me on my vocational journey; they were members of my family in the days when Religious were more separated than they are now from their biological family. (It is only in the past few years that the term biological family seems to have entered our vocabulary). I remained in Birkenhead for a further five years as assistant novice mistress after being finally

professed. But when the noviciate moved to County Kilkenny in Ireland I went along with the group. I spent a further four years in Kilkenny as assistant novice mistress.

In my tenth year as a professed sister I became involved in many apostolates, in the hospitals, prisons, detention centres and remand homes - always released without being charged!!! Throughout all of these years I have been involved in a great variety of ministries, always with people, young and not so young, in all areas of social care and with all age groups.

Being in Woodford keeps one very much in touch with the missions. Here we have sisters from all over the world staying with us at different times whilst studying English or attending other courses available to them in London or elsewhere in the locality. On occasion they are just spending a short time to re-energise in the peace of England before returning to where the need is greatest.

Before heading for Woodford my most recent assignment was pastoral ministry in a very busy parish outside Edinburgh, which also included being a member of the hospital chaplaincy team. For each of my assignments, all of which had elements of “care” I was given courses and every opportunity for training, personal renewal and upbuilding for my own spiritual needs and for the professional work in which I was involved.

Currently I work on the chaplaincy team at Whipps Cross hospital, teach and prepare adults for sacramental preparation among other duties. There is no such thing as retirement; each of our sisters regardless of their ages continue to do whatever they physically can in continuing their mission to the very end.

# The secret of the dress code

by Coleen Carlile



If you think I am doing this off the cuff, please don't get shirty with me because I have no intention of skirting round the issue. Although I am

often living on a shoestring, I can dress in my best bib and tucker at the drop of a hat, so while others are getting their knickers in a twist, I am laughing up my sleeve. I am no blue stocking, so I'm not going to pull the wool over your eyes on that score. However, I try to deal with my adversaries in a genteel, sophisticated fashion. "Put a sock in it! Button it and belt up!"

May I first offer my apologies for the strong language above. My only justification is that it was done in the name of art. That's my excuse and I'm sticking to it!

'Off the cuff' means to do or say something with scant preparation. This dates from Victorian times when cuffs were detachable. After-dinner speakers would secretly write notes on their cuffs to give their listeners the impression they were speaking

ad lib. This was especially useful to politicians who wanted to appear to be speaking from the heart. (Come to think of it, I can remember some classmates who did written exams off the cuff.....). The term 'shirty' was more difficult to research, but the con-

sidered opinion is that it stems from the practice of bare knuckle fighting, where the opponents threw off their shirts when they were ready to do battle. Personally, I think it's more likely to refer to the irritation caused by a stiff, starched shirt.

'Living on a shoestring' was first coined in America in the late 19th century, referring to a business operating on scant funds. Shoestrings or laces were one of the cheapest items for sale at that time, often sold by lowly street vendors. A person verging on poverty could only afford to buy something of this worth. Conversely, in the 17th century, those who dressed in their best bib and tucker were likely to be quite affluent.

Society men commonly used bibs to protect their fine suits, while women covered their modesty by tucking lace or muslin into their low cut bodices. Couples wore their best bibs and tuckers on special occasions.

In the Wild West, a hat was thrown down to signal the beginning of a fight. 'At the drop of a hat' subsequently came to mean something done immediately.

I think 'getting one's knickers in a twist' is self-explanatory - I just love the image! 'Laughing up one's sleeve', secretly laughing at someone, came from the days when voluminous sleeves were fashionable for men and women, enabling them to conceal inappropriate laughter by hid-

ing their faces in their sleeves!

The term 'blue stocking' refers to a woman who enjoys intellectual pursuits and has little interest in making herself attractive to the opposite sex. An intellectual group of men and women was formed in Venice in the 15th century. Their distinctive blue stockings, worn as a mark of their membership, was copied in the 17th century by erstwhile women in Paris and again in 18th century London by

## LAUGHING UP ONE'S SLEEVE

a society of women who named the club, 'Bluestocking'.

In the days of powdered wigs, the size of a man's bank balance was reflected in the volume of his headpiece, which was often referred to as wool since the curls resembled a sheep's fleece. As it was usually ill-fitting, it was easy for passing thieves to pull the wig over their victims' eyes before picking their pockets, thus giving rise to the phrase, 'pull the wool over your eyes'.

Having suffered the agony of listening to my children playing discordant notes on a brass instrument, I can empathise with the next phrase. In order to dampen down the sound of the instrument when practising, musicians often stuffed a sock inside it. Similarly, when wind-up gramophones first appeared, they had no volume button, so the sound had to be regulated by the size of the sock jammed in its horn! Ah, the miracles of modern science! Belt up and button up are just two of many epithets which describe the fastening of the mouth to prevent speech. A more modern one would be 'zip it'. I've not yet heard anyone told to 'velcrose it', but that may be on its way and, before you give me the order of the boot, I'm off to put on my thinking cap for the next issue.

## THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES

Dear God

If you watch in Church on Sunday I will show you my new shoes Mickey D



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**CAROLINA** COMMUNION / CHRISTENING WEAR  
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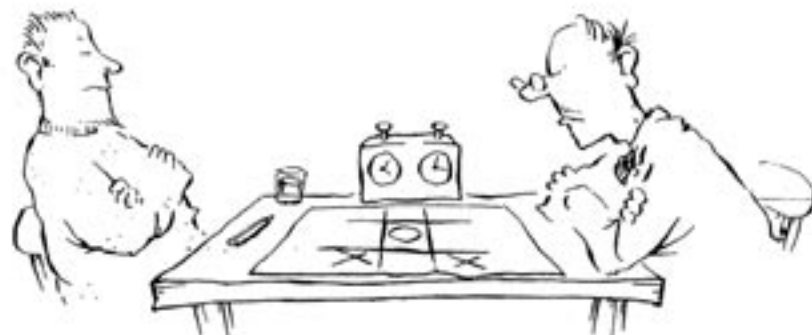
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