

Parish OF THE ENGLISH MARTYRS Goring Way

15.11.2020

Father Liam O'Connor, 37 Compton Avenue, Goring-by-Sea, West Sussex. BN12 4UE

Presbytery 01903 242624 / Church repository 01903 506890

Email: emgoring@english-martyrs.co.uk Website: www.english-martyrs.co.uk

Deacon Gary Bevans 01903 503514

Arundel & Brighton Diocesan Trust is a Registered Charity No: 25287

Thirty-Third Sunday of the Year

| | | |
|-----------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Saturday | 14 th | The Parish |
| Sunday | 15 th | Vera Musto RIP |
| Monday | 16 th | Intention of Pat Duggan |
| Tuesday | 17 th | Patricia Nora Murphy RIP |
| Wednesday | 18 th | Peter Boyle RIP |
| Thursday | 19 th | Don MacDonald RIP |
| Friday | 20 th | Toni Judd RIP |
| Saturday | 21 st | Peter Ayre RIP |
| Sunday | 22 nd | Patrick, Jack & Mary Haugh RIP |



SATURDAY: Reconciliation: 10.15–10.45 am

TODAY'S READINGS: Proverbs 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-6; Matthew 25:14-30

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS: Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17, Corinthians 15:20-26, 28, Matthew 25:31-46

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS: Sister Raymond, Liz Harvey, Mick Brouder, John Smith, Father Chris Ingle, Eileen Beech, Ian Threlfall, Thomas Duggan, Len Argent, Sister Catherine Lai, Maithé Bennett, Justin Gould, Rose Little, Lelia Murray, Mary Murphy, Anne Steere, Anthony Canneaux, Lawrence Brownlee, Margaret Birch, Lita Yong, Patrick Ryan, Brenda Peazold, Mary Wessel, Gina Palermo, Elizabeth Hoskins, Joan Cutmore, Christine Watson, Gordon Milne, Alfred Deacon, Roni Horstead, Ronnie Tyler, Jenny Begley, Bill Hogg, Breda Schlimgen, Michaela Finn, Winifred Lyons, Yvette Allen, Kerry McStravick, Lydia Van Melsen

2. THOSE WHO HAVE DIED RECENTLY and those whose anniversaries occur about now: Elfriede Sinden, Jean Billing, Edith Pearce, Ruth Winter, Edith Carrode, Frances Fraser, Florence Peters, Stanislaw Carlton, Henry Ivison, Valencia Bowes, Maureen Pitt, Peter Boyle, Kathleen Sidwell, Vera Musto *May they rest in peace and rise in glory*

3. THE GOOD NEWS is: our church is still open for one and a half hours every day for private prayer. That is from 9.30 – 11.00 am. Many thanks to those who have already agreed to be present during those times to make sure that everyone stays safe and ensure that all areas used have been cleaned by the person sitting there using the 'Wipes' provided at the entrance. Entrance by the Front Porch and exit through the West Porch, maintaining Social Distancing at all times please.

4. FATHER LIAM will say Mass each day in The Good Shepherd Chapel without any congregation present so Mass intentions will continue to be offered in the usual way.

5. FIRST HOLY COMMUNION 2021: Is your son or daughter in Year 3 this term? If so, they are at the age where they can start the preparation course for First Holy Communion. Please email the Parish Office so that a letter and application form can be emailed back to you. Please return it to the Parish Office as soon as possible. The Parents Meeting will be held on Thursday 3rd December at 8.00 pm, Lessons commence on Tuesday 8th December at 4.30 pm in The Barn and First Holy Communion will take place on Sunday 23rd May 2021.

6. NOVEMBER – IS THE MONTH FOR HOLY SOULS: The usual 'November envelopes' are available in both porches for those wishing to remember their loved ones at the Altar. Any donations will go towards offering Masses for the Holy Souls. Please fill in and return to the Parish Office

7. AN ADVENT GROUP will be commencing online on Monday 30th November at 11.00 am. For further details please contact Dermot or Jane Anne via email on dermot36@gmail.com or 07765403883 prior to the 30th

8. CONFIRMATION 2021 will be celebrated in the Autumn. More information will be available in January

8. MARY'S MEALS: The Coronavirus pandemic is worldwide and Mary's Meals are unable to ship all the valuable items they have collected because the countries for whom they are destined are not receiving imports. As a result all their warehouses are full and, more locally, so is Tony's house. Therefore, for now please look after your items for Mary's Meals until the ports reopen and the items can be delivered to those very much in need. From now until the end of January our Government is prepared to match any donations Mary's Meals receives. For further information please see semarysmeals.org.uk/doublethelove or call 08006981212

9. ENGLISH MARTYRS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL is looking to recruit a practising Catholic to join our Governing Body as a Foundation Governor. The Governing Body work as a team in co-operation with the Headteacher to ensure legal responsibilities are met and to preserve the Catholic character of the school. Lack of experience should not deter you from expressing an interest if you have a genuine desire to serve the school by devoting your time & expertise. The Governors of English Martyrs School Community are committed to a working environment that is diverse and all inclusive. For further information please contact the school on 01903 502868.

10. GODLY PLAY is a creative and engaging way of praying with children, young people and even adults! Telling stories helps us explore God's story, Bible stories, our own story, and where we fit in to it all. Are you involved with, or interested in Godly Play? Join members of the Diocesan Formation Team on Zoom, on Saturday 21st November at 10.30am. Please contact rosie.read@abdiocese.org.uk for booking information.

11. TURNING TIDES (WCHP) WISH LIST: Many thanks to all who so kindly donated in recent weeks for the Harvest Collection. It was much appreciated. Please could you donate: Squash, Sugar, small Juices, Tinned Meats, Corned Beef, Tinned Rice Pudding. Peanut Butter, Sandwich Spread, Instant Noodles, Mayonnaise, Cereal Bars, Microwave Rice, Tinned Custard, Instant Mash, Crisps/Sweets and Jam. There is a blue box in the West Porch for your donations. Many thanks in advance

FATHER LIAM SAYS: It seems that a great scientific advance has been made in tackling the Coronavirus pandemic with the development of the Pfizer vaccine. It is a great triumph for scientists and will no doubt be followed by many other vaccines with slightly different qualities – all produced in record speed and hopefully tremendous efficacy. Science is advancing on many fronts in highly encouraging ways. The advances that we are witnessing today are due to all the studies and experiments that have been taking place since time immemorial. Isaac Newton, the hero of the Scientific Revolution, said that he was 'standing on the shoulders of giants.' He was paying tribute to all the nameless men and women down the ages who had made the discoveries of his day possible.

For the past ten years a team of engineers, physicists and builders have been constructing the world's biggest science project. This is a 'Sun Machine' being built in Provence in France. It is hoped that it will provide the world with clean energy for ever! Those behind this £18 billion International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor project hopes to show that nuclear fusion – the atomic reaction that drives the Sun – can be harnessed into a viable power source. The project involves 35 countries including Britain, the EU, the US, Russia, China, India and Japan. Officials say that it might take up to eighty further years before the first fusion generators are fitted to an electricity grid. Hopefully many of our young friends will be able to benefit from this appliance of science.

The wonders of today should not blind us to the wonders of the past. Calendars for 2021 have been in the shops for weeks. It is so easy for us to find out when Easter 21 (or even Easter 51) will take place. Such calculations would have been extremely difficult hundreds of years ago. At that time substantial numbers of people lived in monasteries. It is thought that 700 years ago 2% of the men in England were monks. The calculation of Easter was of particular importance to them. There was much conflict within early Christianity about when to celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus. These events had taken place during the Jewish feast of Passover, which began at the full moon in the Hebrew month of Nisan. The first Christians decided that the Lord's Resurrection would always be calculated on a Sunday – the Lord's Day. So from the beginning the date of Easter diverged somewhat from the date of the Jewish Passover as the Jewish religion saw no religious significance to Sunday. For them – following the Book of Exodus – their Passover took place on the 14th day of the month of Nisan irrespective of the day of the week. Differences emerged also within Christianity as to the date of Easter. This sometimes resulted in husbands celebrating Easter while their wives were still observing Lent and vice versa. This would be the case when people from different Christian traditions married one another. The Christians in the West agreed among themselves on the question by the end of the 7th Century but Eastern Christians have their own system. All Christians however did find agreement on designating the year in which Jesus was born. This they did in 525 and so we have the Common Era we still use today – Annus Domini (AD) – the year of the Lord, even if their agreed date was a few years out.

Monks had a particular need to calculate the time of day – long before clocks were invented. Life in monasteries had to run like clockwork even when there was none. Daylight hours varied from place to place and monasteries were all over the place. Work had to be done in the fields at times that enabled the monks also to sing the Divine Office. The Rule of St Benedict that most monasteries followed from the year 540 laid great stress on the regular routine of the daily recitation at stated times of the various hours of the office - Lauds, Prime Terce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline. An important job in each monastery was that of ringing the bell to summon the community to its various tasks. Computing time was essential. Some early devices were water-driven. We are not given details of how they worked but the mechanism had to be reset each time it was used. Gradually more sophisticated appliances were invented – again by the monks. Foremost among them was the astrolabe. It was apparently ideally suited for enabling the celebration of the Divine Office hour by hour. 'Everything proceeds, more pleasantly and smoothly when the Lord's services are appropriately carried out at the appointed times under the Rule of the just Judge.' Said the Rule of St Benedict.

The Astrolabe was a complex and astronomically advanced device. It was expensive too and such instruments as listed among the items and books in the monastic libraries. In 1951, while researching the history of scientific instruments at Peterhouse, the oldest college of Cambridge, a manuscript was found by Derek Price – entitled 'Directions for making an astrolabe'. It seems to have been in the library for 500 years and is dated 1392. The writer of the manuscript was the inventor of the instrument, which he called his Equatorie. It was written in Middle English and Price thought it had been written by Geoffrey Chaucer, the greatest English writer before Shakespeare. Price had spotted the beginning of

a word – chauc – in the document but the rest of the word was hidden in the binding. Price persuaded the librarian to have the binding cut and the word was revealed to be Chaucer. Was the author of the Canterbury Tales also a scientist? Geoffrey Chaucer had in fact written a treatise on the astrolabe. He had spent much of his working life as Clerk of Works, managing major building projects such as the new wharf for the Tower of London. But did he invent this instrument? Derek Price did not live to see the question resolved. It seemed it never would be – a huge number of manuscripts from the Middle Ages are anonymous.

A Norwegian scholar, Keri Anne Rand had long taken an interest in the Equatorium. She had researched this document at the University of Oslo and published a book about it in 1993. She showed conclusively that it was written using a dialect similar to Chaucer's but could be no more definitive than that. She continued her research into other instrument manuals of the same period until she found one whose handwriting perfectly matched the Peterhouse document. This matching document had been produced at St Alban's monastery and its writer had written his name – Brother John of Westwick – a virtually unknown monk. Westwick is near St Albans. He joined the Benedictine community there and had no interest in trumpeting his achievements.

What was the instrument and who was the inventor? The instrument was the Equatorium – and equation solver. It was a computer calibrated to give the precise positions of the planets. Astronomy was the first mathematical science. The formulae of modern science could not exist without it. It was the great aim of the devout scholars to learn more of God's wonders through a greater understanding of creation. It also had immense practical significance. It governed the calculation of time and the calendar as well as geography and navigation.

Who invented the equatorium? Geoffrey Chaucer had written a treatise on the astrolabe in the vernacular because his ten-year old son had not yet mastered Latin. It was also written in English for 'the King, that is lord of this language'. Chaucer maintained that English was as good for science as Latin or Greek or Arabic. Astrolabes were regularly found in monasteries. They were complex and astronomically advanced devices to observe the stars and tell the time. But was the astronomical instrument described in the Peterhouse document invented by Chaucer? Derek Price did not live to see the question resolved. Chaucer scholars were very sceptical. Many scholars came to accept that Chaucer's authorship of the document could never be proved.

It is very interesting that the inventor of the Equatorium and the Astrolabe was Brother John of Westwick a virtually unknown figure. So many histories are narratives of 'Great Men'. That is one reason why historians were so keen to ascribe the Equatorium of the planets to a famous name. But John of Westwick was an ordinary monk. When he moved to join the monks at Tynemouth in the far North-East of England he gave his document on the Equatorium to the library there. The life of an ordinary scientific monk gives us a picture of medieval belief and practice. It was an era of modest anonymity. John of Westwick did not even write his name on his most important original work. No English person has won the Nobel Prize for Mathematics because there is no such prize. If there was, I think John of Westwick would have been a worthy recipient. His document has 140 pages of the most complicated mathematical calculations leading to the production of this extraordinary computer of the planets. Tables were an essential tool for astronomers. The Equatorium was designed to represent the motions of the planets and compute their positions.

Unfortunately none of these 'computers of the planets' have survived but the computer of John of Westwick has been reconstructed. In March 1952 – just a few months after Price's discovery of the Equatorium manuscript – technicians of the Cavendish Laboratory in Cambridge began work on this most unusual project. A BBC reporter was there when it was completed. The reporter noted that it was startling that 'this instrument designed more than 500 years ago was made in a laboratory famous for atomic research.' The fact that the instructions of John of Westwick could be successfully followed so long after they were written is testament to his great skills of communication as well as to his other skills.

(Seb Falk has written 'The Light Ages' on this and other subjects)

May God bless you,
Mr. Lian,