



St. Patrick's Church

Broad Green/Cowley Drive Woodingdean BN2 6TB



Our Lady of Lourdes

Whiteway Lane Rottingdean

# St. Patrick's Newsletter

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### Live streaming of Mass from Our Lady of Lourdes:

Fr Benny continues to say MASS which is streamed live : 09.30 on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, preceded by Adoration at 08.30; 18.30 Saturday evening and 10.30 Sunday.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCc4VXBr3EOa43nCxzB-Edw>

**Welcome to the sixteenth "apart but together" e-newsletter (31st October 2020)**

**"Because where two or three have come together in my name, I am there among them." Matthew 18**

## Blessings

**Barbara Bond**

*He shall receive blessings from the Lord and reward from the God who saves him. Ps. 24: 5*

In the Gospel for All Saints, we hear a challenge to live the blessedness which is available to us as Children of God.

Maybe it is not a blessing exactly, but I do have a *guilty pleasure*; I am quite partial to watching medical documentaries. Give me "Ambulance" and a nice cuppa and I will be engrossed for the next hour, oblivious to everything.

At work, as we are distanced from one another when we are not actually out of the building, seeing patients, I have been much more aware of what people are saying when they are making phone calls to patients and their families, and I have noticed something that I never hear on the TV. Daily my colleagues are saying to fearful or distressed callers "bless you", or just "bless".

As I tuned in a bit more I realised that this is a sort of shorthand for showing deep compassion in someone's situation – especially now we are not allowed to physically touch. For a tiny moment I had a strong reaction to such a profound mystery being bandied about almost as a platitude... Then I realised that that wasn't it at all.

**Blessed are the gentle, for they shall inherit the earth...  
Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy...  
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.**

*Matthew 5: 4, 7, 8*

The Beatitudes lay out such a richness of blessings, but what does it mean to be "Blessèd"? Maybe it is in the fact that God is near: grace and love are freely and unconditionally given to each of us. Perhaps each of us has our own Beatitude..... What is the one in your life?

*thankful  
grateful  
blessed*



<https://pizzaranch.com/blog/monday-mission-count-your-blessings/>

**PLEASE SEE THE OLOL/ST PAT'S NEWSLETTER FOR MASS & PARISH INFORMATION, AND COVID-19 ARRANGEMENTS:**

**<https://www.ololandstp.org/>**

**Note: all previous editions of this newsletter are available on [https://www.ololandstp.org/st\\_-patrick's-woodingdean](https://www.ololandstp.org/st_-patrick's-woodingdean)**

*Next issue out on 14th November. Send your thoughts about life, parish and Coronavirus: short pieces (about 300 words) before Friday 13th November to me, Barbara Bond: [bond\\_barbara@ymail.com](mailto:bond_barbara@ymail.com)*

## Novena to Saint Francis, for a world under threat

Nine brief reflections asking St Francis of Assisi to pray for us and our world, based on his beautiful *Canticle of the Sun*. This novena is a song of penitence and praise, guiding us to care for the earth and for our most vulnerable sisters and brothers, especially the Amazon peoples. They are under grave risk from coronavirus, given their fragile situation, often in remote locations far from government services.

Communities with whom we work are reporting a sharp increase in predatory attacks on land. People smugglers are also active and those being trafficked are in more danger than ever, having no access to healthcare.



The pandemic shows us that “we have not heard the cry of the poor and our seriously ill planet” warns Pope Francis, describing this as “a time to choose what matters and what passes away”. (*Urbi et Orbi*, 2020).

### Sixth prayer: Earth

“We praise you, Lord, for Sister Earth, who sustains us with her fruits, coloured flowers, and herbs.” (St Francis of Assisi)

“There will be a point when we will not have this richness. And then what will we do?” (Yésica Patiachi Tayori, Harakbut indigenous people, Peru)

**Creator God,**  
we grieve for our sisters and brothers in the Amazon whose lands are wrecked by greed. We take more from the earth than we need: Forgive us.

St Francis, joyful steward of creation, from you we learn to live with less, to give and not to take.

**St Francis, pray for us.**

*Editorial Note: the ninth prayer of the Novena will appear on 12th December... God willing! You can see a short, one minute video presentation for each prayer at: <https://cafod.org.uk/Pray/Prayer-resources/Novena-to-St-Francis>*

## Guided Pre-Advent Walk

**St. Patrick's is running a Guided Pre-Advent Walk on Saturday, 28th November at 10am.**

The walk will be around Woodingdean and Ovingdean (about 5 miles) and will start from St. Patrick's Church.



All Welcome! £5 per entry to raise funds for the Church. Details and registration from Frances Low.

[frances.low@ntlworld.com](mailto:frances.low@ntlworld.com) or 01273 388910

Prayer of St Alphonsus  
Communion Spiritual Prayer

My Jesus,  
I believe that you are present in this Holy Sacrament of the altar.  
I love you above all things and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul.  
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come spiritually into my soul so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and forever.  
Amen.



**“Let the earth bless the Lord – praise and glorify him for ever! Bless the Lord, mountains and hills – praise and glorify him for ever! Bless the Lord, every plant that grows – praise and glorify him for ever!” Daniel 3**

You will be please to hear that I have now completed my last round of chemotherapy for breast cancer. I won't lie, I am pleased that this bit is now finished, it is quite a challenge coping with some of the side effects. This has been followed by 5 sessions of Radiotherapy which has been very easy in comparison (in and out within 30 minutes), you have to learn to hold your breath for up to 20 seconds to keep your chest still. A nurse from a private company now comes to administer the Herceptin injection every 3 weeks, these will take me up to the end of the year.



Reading lots of articles in the news about cancer patients missing out on their treatments has made me very aware of how lucky I have been, in getting my mammogram in March and being very swiftly diagnosed, given an appointment in May to have surgery at the Queen Victoria hospital in East Grinstead, and given the chemotherapy.

I have got used to ordering most things that I want online. It will be strange to go food shopping again actually in store! I have now ventured out to the farm shop in Falmer and to the garden centre by the race course. Who would have thought that these activities would become so adventurous!

The garden has been a saviour during this time as I am sure it has for most people who have one. It has kept me busy throughout the summer, which I have enjoyed.

We put in a new pond earlier in the year and it is already looking very established with 3 resident frogs.

Cheers! Hope to see you all soon. Jane.

### Prayer for Protection

**Be the eye of God dwelling with you,  
The foot of Christ in guidance with you,  
The shower of the Spirit pouring on you,  
Richly and generously.**

*Carmina Gadelica vol iii. p. 205, Hymns and Incantations, Rites and Customs... in the Gaelic oral tradition, orally collected in the Highlands & Islands of Scotland, 1860-69, by Alexander Carmichael*

### Mass Inside-Outside

Mike Lewis

So, Mass is back inside St. Patrick's. After twelve Sundays of sunshine, we had to move inside for the thirteenth. It's lucky none of us is superstitious. It was bound to happen but it was still disappointing at the time. Now, of course, I am only too grateful that we are inside!

Mass inside is different: it is quieter, more contemplative, with careful spacing of chairs to ensure that we manage social distancing as best we can. The PA system works, so those with quieter voices can return to reading. Some of those who attended Mass outside have decided that attendance in a closed environment is too risky. There is nothing wrong with any of this, it is just different and there is room and probably need, for both – as we have open and contemplative religious orders.



I liked Mass outside. There were distractions but, while they could be irritating, they could also be entertaining. It must be how Mass must have been in the early days of the church. Also, Mass outside is a reminder, that we are part of the wider community, that we are not separate and special (although fortunate to have our religion), and would, if the hedge were lower, show the village if not the world, the living reality of our faith.

**“Be holy in all you do, since it is the Holy One who has called you, and scripture says: Be holy, for I am holy.” 1 Pet 1: 15-16**

# Community News

## Fund raising (dependent on Covid restrictions) Irene Green

**NOVEMBER sale tables:** postponed to December because of lockdown announced on 31st October, but we are still collecting and labelling. Bring items (see below) to 42 Ainsworth Avenue Ovingdean (Bernadette) berskin@hotmail.com; or to 3 Sycamore Close Woodingdean (Irene) icgreen@ntlworld.com

### DECEMBER: SALE TABLES

**Saturday 5th December 10.00-12.30 and Sunday 6th December after 9 am Mass:** selling Christmas items, candles, lavender bags, lights, cards, gifts, chutneys, jams, jellies, with Xmas coverings

**Saturday 12th December and Sunday 13th:** Christmas food stall: home cooking, mince pies, plum pudding, cakes, winter casseroles in take away boxes, pasties, samosas, (cooks responses needed, requests taken).

*Please feel free to donate NOW, so we can label and price things in advance*

### IN THE NEW YEAR

**Walk:** We will do a guided walk for 30 people, this can also be sponsored

**Raffle** – 100 numbers on a board, choose your squares for £1 each (prizes welcome)

**New Year Silent Auction** using website Jumblebee <https://www.jumblebee.co.uk/site/> – Please donate items which can be made up into affordable bundles then photographed for posting online. Let us know if you have items you would like to donate.

**We will keep safe. Face, Hands, Space.**

## Prayer Groups

### Monthly Ecumenical Prayer Group on Zoom

Last Monday of the month 8pm. Members of other local churches are very welcome to attend and also take turns to lead the Group. It can include Ignatian Meditation, Lectio Divina, and any other ideas around prayer. If you would like to join us please email [tracy.stickland@gmail.com](mailto:tracy.stickland@gmail.com) for a zoom link. Please feel free to join when you can.

### Advent Prayer Group(s) on Zoom

Intend to hold an Advent prayer group on Thursday afternoons at 16.30 on three of the four Thursdays in Advent (3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> December). There will be a different leader each week.

## Church weekly collections

No cash for the collection? Pay the church by regular or one-off payments.

If you don't already donate by Standing Order please could you think about it. The form is on the website <https://www.ololandstp.org/>

Scroll way down to the bottom of the home page and you will find Gift Aid Standing Order form. If you are a UK tax payer, church can reclaim the tax back, equivalent to the amount that you would have paid on your donation. You would need to pay by Standing Order so that we are able to identify and record your donation.

If you want to make BACS payments directly to the St Patrick's bank account, the details are sort code 40 05 20 account number 31076477 RCD A&B Woodingdean St. Patrick but single payments can also be gift aided, our gift aid co-ordinator is Fiona Chambers [fiyule@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:fiyule@yahoo.co.uk)

## Covid Corner

**Local coronavirus advice:** [EastSussexCountyCouncil@public.govdelivery.com](mailto:EastSussexCountyCouncil@public.govdelivery.com) Libraries will open from Monday 19th October. <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/your-brighton-hove-email-newsletter> to sign up for fortnightly newsletter

**1st November Covid count:** Covid in Lewes: 422 cases; in Brighton and Hove 1,764 active cases; Daily new cases in the UK 43,171 Active cases in the UK 596,625

**New National Restrictions** take effect from 5th November: for information, see:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november?priority-taxon=774cee22-d896-44c1-a611-e3109cce8eae>

*"I am here and I call, you will hear me, O God, turn your ears to me; hear my words... Guard me as the apple of your eye. Hide me in the shadow of your wings from the violent attack of the wicked." Psalm 119:*

6, 8-9

**COVID: A Way Out – Devi Sridhar**

Prof Devi Sridhar is chair of global public health at the University of Edinburgh:

Most important in overcoming the virus is a robust system for testing, tracing and isolating, where test results are returned within 24 hours, at least 80% of people's contacts are reached and there is high adherence to a rule of 14 days' isolation for those exposed to the virus. Strong public health guidance on avoiding the virus at any age is needed, encouraging people to get outside as much as possible, to avoid indoor, crowded and poorly ventilated spaces, and to use face coverings and distancing wherever possible. And we need strict border measures to prevent the virus from being reimported, instead of our current system that is lax and poorly monitored.

This pandemic is still in its first or second chapter. Waiting for the virus to magically disappear, allowing it to run its course through society, or imposing continual lockdown measures without a clear strategy beyond waiting for a vaccine are all suboptimal choices that will damage our health, our economy and our society. At what stage will Britain look towards east Asia and the Pacific and say, "We want what they have"? At what point will we learn from their playbook: suppressing the virus, opening up the economy and regaining a semblance of normality in our daily lives?

**Slimming World returns to St Patrick's every week**

Slimming World was due to return this Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November, but lockdown will get in the way. When it resumes – likely on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, the first sessions are at 17.30 and 18.30 (with a 15 minute break for cleaning). New members sessions will be at 19.30. In the New Year, Thursday morning sessions will be added. Contact Karen Benham 07872 388 080

**"You and the Planet - the new normal"** *Discussion on*

*Thursday 29 October, organised by the Royal Society and British Academy.* (You can see the video at the link below but you must go to the 14th minute for the discussion). It is interesting on the role of society and large companies, as well as the critical need for the Paris agreement on cutting carbon to have short term targets, not just thinking of 2050.

- \* We are already living unsustainably (it is happening, there is no *Plan B*);
- \* Are cities efficient? Multinational companies can (and do) help;
- \* If we consume more renewables, less oil & diesel, demand will change;
- \* Put climate change on school curriculum;
- \* Shop for more plant-based meals, reduce meat & dairy in your diet;
- \* Don't waste, re-use, recycle, re-purpose
- \* Fly less, cycle, walk, work from home

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxxVb26l\\_2c&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxxVb26l_2c&feature=youtu.be)

I am delighted to see that on the Woodingdean Facebook community website people post a photo of unwanted items (before taking them to the tip). Result is usually a clamour of interest and no tipping required!!

**Recycling plant pots and jam jars**

Would be grateful for spare **plant pots**, especially first size SMALL ones. Lidded glass jars welcome as well. Bring to church or drop off plant pots at 3 Sycamore Close BN2 6SJ.

With thanks! Irene [icgreen@ntlworld.com](mailto:icgreen@ntlworld.com)

**FOOD HUB**

Holy Cross church have taken over from the Java Café many months ago the essential and tough role of Food Hub co-ordinator. Their food comes from the B & H Food Partnership, Fareshare, Downs Baptist Church Community Greengrocers in Woodingdean, and private donations.

Whether reliance on food banks comes from ill luck or entrenched inequality, it is a feature of our society which has mushroomed as a result of job loss and COVID-19. So far they have helped over 200 people. Food hubs are here to stay for a long time.

You can help by contacting [phil.holycross.woodingdean@gmail.com](mailto:phil.holycross.woodingdean@gmail.com)

You can donate non-perishable food: tins of fruit, vegetables, meat e.g. chilli, chicken casserole, curry, Bolognese.

And in supermarkets you can look at long life prepared food e.g. packs of cooked savoury rice, lentils, dried soya chunks, dried curried vegetables (e.g. Punjabi Choley) ready to hydrate and microwave.

Food banks need workers, drivers, people to phone those who need supplies and monetary donations (Irene or Phil can supply relevant bank details).

*"The Lord is good and upright. He shows the path to those who stray, He guides the humble in the right path; He teaches his way to the poor." Psalm 25: 8-9*

## Musings, &amp; A Request...

Back in March we had just been forced to cancel our Ceilidh and our Lenten journey had become like no other, when the St Patrick's **Lockdown Letters** were born.

I wrote then that "our prayer, togetherness and mutual support can shine a light for each other". As the person who has the privilege of receiving all the contributions, I have been really struck by all the inspiring sharing that has been happening through the newsletter. It does really feel as if we are *together though apart*. Many thanks to everyone who has helped make this happen.

We now have only two more editions prior to our Christmas Lockdown Letter (13th December, "Gaudete" Sunday). From here, the end of October, it looks as if Christmas 2020 is going to be a very different one. I can probably claim to be the only one whose celebration won't be disrupted – I already knew that I would be working!

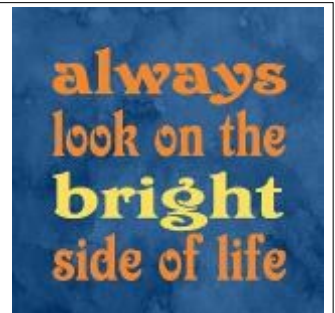
Please send us Christmas-related stories that you would like us to include. We would especially like to hear about memories you have, things that make you smile – and inventive ways of safely reaching out to people who may find themselves more alone than usual. In the past I, for example, have volunteered at the *Churches Together in Lewes* Christmas Lunch for people who would otherwise be alone – this year I am sure they will find a safe way of delivering festive food to people at home, but how to replicate the *human company* and *human contact* is more of a challenge. Any ideas?



## Milestones

Over the summer I did a course which involved going for lots of walks. One week we were invited to sing as we were walking. Before long I found myself compiling the eight records that I might take to my Desert Island. I can thoroughly recommend doing this! What starts off as a bit of fun, transforms into a very nostalgic journey. You are suddenly on a rollercoaster ride through your life. I was very surprised to see the extent to which my choices reflect both my personality and my values. It was also a novel and rather special way to mark a major life milestone (a Big Birthday).

As I was born on the eve of Bonfire Night, and was named after the patron saint of fireworks, I regard Handel's *Music for the Royal Fireworks* as my signature tune...though this year I won't have the whole town joining in the celebrations with me. Try my Desert Island Mini-Quiz...



Ginny Gaura <https://fineartamerica.com>

**Name that tune**, and the singer/group... from the following lyrics:

- You've got to get up every morning with a smile on your face, and show the world all the love in your heart
- Always believe in your soul, You've got the power to know, You're indestructible
- If you never try, you'll never know just what you're worth. Lights will guide you home
- If life seems jolly rotten there's something you've forgotten, And that's to laugh and smile and dance and sing

**Answers**

Carole King – Beautiful  
Spandau Ballet – Gold  
Coldplay – Fix You  
Eric Idle – Always Look on the Bright Side of Life

*"To both man and beast you give protection. O Lord, how precious is your love. My God, the sons of men find refuge in the shelter of your wings. They feast on the riches of your house; they drink from the stream of your delight. In you is the source of life, and in your light we see light."* Psalm 36: 7-10

# Healing and Hope

## I've Been There!

Mary Barriff



When I was at school, back in the 50's, we were taught from time to time by visiting nuns from the Salesian Sisters of St. John Bosco, a teaching order based at Friar Park, in Henley on Thames.

One nun in particular (I forget her name) used to take us for English Literature and she read us poetry so beautifully, sending us into a trance, that we were constantly pestering her to "read us another poem, please". My friends and I became friendly with her and one day she asked us if we would like to visit her convent. Of course we jumped at the chance! One Saturday, three of us ended up in Henley.

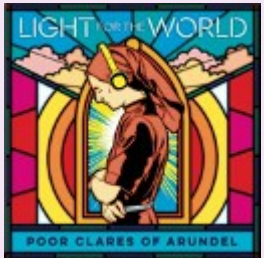
Friar Park was the most fascinating and unusual place we had ever seen. It was a 30-room Gothic-Victorian mansion built in the 1880's by the architect, Sir Frank Crisp. He must have had a great sense of humour because everywhere you looked there was something amusing to see. At the front of the house stood a statue of "The Holy Friar" – holding a frying pan! – and inside the oak-panelled house were many puzzles set into the walls and floors, buttons that opened trapdoors in the most unlikely places, and funny carved faces with noses that invariably did something saucy if you pressed them! What fun we had that day, shown around by our lovely nun.

As years went by I forgot about Friar Park, until one day I read in a newspaper that the Beatle, George Harrison, had bought a mansion in Henley called Friar Park. Oh, I couldn't believe it! I'd actually been inside a Beatle's house! Of course I did wonder at the time how on earth anyone could heat a place that size, but I daresay he managed it.

## Light for the World – from the Poor Clares of Arundel

Barbara Bond

Reading Frances' article from the last edition my interest was piqued when I heard one of the Poor Clares being interviewed on Woman's Hour, then I found an article in the Observer about them entitled "Swing out, sisters".



There were two things that really spoke to me in the article: first, their emphasis on using your time wisely, the way in which structure creates space; and secondly, in relation to their recording, is their insistence that

"the people who hear it will have to accept the ability of all of us"... "Here is our new album *Light for the World*. Enjoy

listening to our music. We hope it will help you find a place of peace and inner calm. We will be able to sell our CD from 9th of November. We are selling the CD for £10 plus postage and packaging.



Contact us at [arundel.poorclares@gmail.com](mailto:arundel.poorclares@gmail.com) for more details."

*I include this picture for everyone who joins me on a Tuesday evening – we are in good company – Ed.*

### Trivia Interlude – Various: Who said, or wrote: – (see p.9 for answers)

1. Maturity is a high price to pay for growing up.
2. I recently turned 60. Practically a third of my life is over.
3. When women go wrong, men go right after them.
4. Men seldom make passes /At girls who wear glasses.
5. I came in here in all good faith to help my country. I don't mind giving a reasonable amount [of blood], but a pint... why that's very nearly an armful. I'm sorry. I'm not walking around with an empty arm for anybody.

***"Let us give thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." Colossians 1: 12-14***

## The Wider Picture

### Yemen is experiencing a humanitarian catastrophe



#### Violence, cholera, hunger, coronavirus. The situation in Yemen could not be more critical.

Five years of brutal conflict has ravaged the country, leaving millions of people without a home and at risk of starvation. An estimated 80% of the population – 24 million people – require some form of humanitarian or protection assistance.



The people of Yemen are struggling to survive. UNHCR is one of the few humanitarian aid agencies on the ground in Yemen, helping families forced to flee their homes and struggling to survive. We are helping vulnerable families access urgently needed food, medical treatment, clean water, safe shelter and essential lifesaving aid.

**Unless urgent action is taken, more lives will be lost. Your help cannot wait.** Please give TODAY to protect displaced families. <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/>

- **£290** could help two families pay for essentials such as food, rent and hygiene supplies.
- **£138** could help provide a vulnerable family with an emergency coronavirus payment.
- **£69** could help displaced families access lifesaving medical care, clean water and safe shelter.

You can also donate over the phone **0800 029 3883** or by bank transfer at [supportercare@unhcr.org](mailto:supportercare@unhcr.org).

## FREEDOM FROM TORTURE – EMPOWERING SURVIVORS, REBUILDING LIVES

### Therapy & Support, Asylum & Rights, Fighting Torture, Survivor Activism

#### Story: Faryad called for women's rights

The day they arrested her in Iran, Faryad was just one term away from completing her Masters in Sociology. She had been a teacher for 18 years, but her life changed when she was blindfolded and taken away in a car, after taking part in International Women's Day.

She had tried to help others by speaking out for girls' education and against honour killings and domestic violence. But the government would not tolerate her speaking out. During a month in detention, she was insulted, beaten, threatened and, after her food was drugged, raped. She lived the next couple of years in fear of her life. Her sister and brother had already been executed, and petrified of the same fate, she fled Iran. Faryad travelled for 40 days before being dropped off in London by a man in a lorry, in pain and disorientated.

**At Freedom from Torture we're here for every step of recovery from torture. You can help by making a donation or sharing this today. Thank you for standing with us.**

<https://action.freedomfromtorture.org/freedom-torture-donation-page>

Freedom from Torture, 111 Isledon Road, London, N7 7JW. Registered charity: England 1000340, Scotland SC039632. Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner registration number: N201600022. Tel: 020 7697 7777, Fax: 020 7697 7799.



*"I call upon you, save me and I will do your will. I rise before dawn and call for help, I hope in your word. My eyes watch through the night to ponder your promise. In your love hear my voice, O Lord; give me life by your decrees. Those who harm me unjustly draw near..." Psalm 119: 146-150*



# Afterthoughts

## The Value of Silence

Patrick Bond

Given the flood of discussion on national and social media about the pandemic, much of it confused, fearful or plain ignorant, I feel the need to take a spiritual break. Fr Richard Rohr, my favourite Franciscan, advises:



*If you will allow, I recommend for your spiritual practice, for the next few months, that you impose a moratorium on exactly how much news you are subject to—hopefully not more than an hour a day of television, social media, internet news, magazine and newspaper commentary, and/or political discussions. It will only tear you apart and pull you into the dualistic world of opinion and counter-opinion, not Divine Truth, which is always found in a bigger place. Instead, I suggest that you use this time for some form of public service, volunteering, mystical reading from the masters, prayer—or preferably, all of the above.*

Now we have weeks of lockdown and no guarantees about Christmas. I am thankful that faith gives me a hold on Christmas which the coronavirus cannot take away. Even if the secular Feast of Excess and Consumption falls flat, I still have the “real meaning”, and more than that, I have Advent first – an opportunity to pause, be still, and listen.

Perhaps it is time to invent new ways of being together. Despite the power of the telephone, the internet, and Zoom meetings to counteract loneliness, these are only technological tools. They have no heart. I think the upsurge in book sales lately points to one way forward: the printed word. And more specifically, the handwritten letter, diary, journal entry, plan, note, or shopping list... Life slows down when you are writing, and more “heart” can flow into the words when you are holding a pen.



Outside, the weather is grim and our plans to go on lots of walks, birdwatching and eating out during Barbara’s week off, are looking doomed. My back garden looks normal at first glance, but is soaking wet and very soft underfoot. It’s a strange effect, as days get shorter and the leaves turn, but the garden still looks green. Yet the brilliant red of the cotoneaster berries are like warning

lights above the yellow of the apple leaves.

The chiffchaff and blackcap have disappeared, and the small birds are many fewer in number. Even the fat wood pigeons have a despondent look as they plod about on top of the garage or under the birdfeeders. But in the compost bin the slim red worms are still active. Life works on, beneath the surface, just as grace becomes more powerful the more you listen for it.



*Chopping wood is also a contemplative practice...*

### Trivia answers

**1. Tom Stoppard** (1937-) *Where Are They Now?* (1973). **2. Woody Allen** (1935-) *The Observer* ‘Sayings of the Week’ 10th March 1996. **3. Mae West** (1892-1980) in *She Done Him Wrong* (1933 film). **4. Dorothy Parker** (1893-1967) ‘News Item’ (1937). **5. Ray Galton** (1930-) and **Alan Simpson** (1939-) *The Blood Donor* (1961 TV programme, spoken by Tony Hancock)

*“Teach me the demands of your precepts, and I will keep them to the end. Train me to observe your law, to keep it with my heart. Guide me in the path of your commands; for there is my delight.” Psalm 119: 33-35*