

I have been developing a new party game. No doubt this will confirm all those who think I am completely dotty and those who would write me off for being out of touch with the latest marketing theory. It goes something like this. Name the business activity associated with the following commercial organisations:

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. <i>Corus</i> | 6. <i>MMO2</i> |
| 2. <i>Consignia</i> | 7. <i>Accenture</i> |
| 3. <i>Carillion</i> | 8. <i>Amicus</i> |
| 4. <i>Lattice</i> | 9. <i>Thus</i> |
| 5. <i>Xansa</i> | |

Yes, precisely! My argument is simple - surely companies need to name themselves in a way which allows us, the poor public, to understand the nature of their activities. How can it possibly help to have a totally batty name which can be neither recognised nor remembered.

For me, one of the most striking things about the resurrection stories is this issue of recognition. Time and time again the presence of the risen Jesus is unrecognised until he is seen doing the things people associated with him in his earlier life. So on the road to Emmaus the two men failed to recognise Jesus until it came to eating a meal together. On the seashore, while the disciples were fishing, Jesus wasn't recognised until he called out to them to cast their nets again. Mary, who had been in such close contact with Jesus, fails to recognise him until he calls her by name. Thomas wants hard fact until Jesus is in conversation with him.

It is in repeated, everyday living that the presence of Jesus is eventually seen - often only after repeated failure to perceive, after our inability to understand. Christian living is about finding the presence of God in the everyday, heaven in ordinary things. To that end we do need to think very carefully about the words we use in our bible reading, in our worship, in our ministry and mission. Our language mustn't build barriers, as if we had to sign up to "churchy" speak or "churchy" behaviour before we could find Christ in our world.

Unlike those business organisations in my party game, our Christian living needs to communicate what we believe. We need integrity, forgiveness, openness and generosity if we are to practise what we preach - that the good news of the resurrection, new, full life which can face and triumph through every suffering, is available today, in the church and the world. That's our business.

A joyful Eastertide to you.

Brian Leathard

P. S. The answers to the party game are:- These companies were previously . . .

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1. <i>British Steel</i> | 7. <i>Arthur Andersen Accounting</i> |
| 2. <i>Post Office</i> | 8. <i>Amalgamation Engineering and Electrical Manufacturing Science and Finance Unions</i> |
| 3. <i>Tarmac</i> | 9. <i>Scottish Power</i> |
| 4. <i>British Gas (Transco)</i> | |
| 5. <i>F.I. Group</i> | |
| 6. <i>B.T. Cellnet (wireless)</i> | |

ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

1347- 80

Feast Day 29th April

In today's overpopulated world, it is doubtful whether St. Catherine would have been born: it is said she was the youngest of a family of 25 children! Born into a rich mercantile family in 1347, Catherine Benincasa was a highly intelligent, headstrong little girl who showed no early signs of excessive piety. At birth her twin sister died, leaving Catherine as a spoiled surviving infant. When she was two, the plague hit Italy and the family business foundered.

When Catherine was 12 her beloved older sister died, and when she was sixteen her parents pressed her to marry the grieving brother-in-law, who was rich but considerably older than she was. In the same year, her younger sister died. Overcome by a sense of guilt at living after her sisters had died and panicking at the prospect of marrying her gauche brother-in-law, she made a bargain with God. In return for the guarantee of salvation for all of her relatives, she would embrace a life of radical piety and as an outward sign of this pact, she cut off her long blonde hair, put an iron chain around her hips, replaced her fine garments with a crude woollen shift and limited her diet to bread, water and raw vegetables! Flagellation with the chain - which was considered a form of penance and sharing in the Passion of Christ - and insufficient food reduced her weight by half within months. Neither her parents nor her confessors could persuade her to abandon her punishments of the flesh.

When she was about 17, Catherine joined a Dominican Order of lay women in Siena, to embark on a life of solitude and silence. She longed to serve God and said of him: "God is He who is, and I am she who is not". Her life changed course when in 1368 she felt called to leave her solitary life in order to serve others. It is probably also significant that she had learned to read, something which as the daughter of a local dyer she had had no opportunity to do previously, and which would have given her insight into the effective use of words.

Catherine undertook extraordinary acts of charity as she cared for the sick and the dying, most notably when the Black Death hit Siena in 1374 and this, coupled with her increasingly intense mystical experiences, led her to speak out for reform in the church, through which alone, she believed, those whom she served could be saved. By the 1370s Catherine was attracting a considerable following, thanks to her caring ministry and her life of holiness. So when she started sending letters to national and religious leaders, her reputation was such that they took notice and on occasions sought her advice.

Catherine lived in turbulent times. Two things in particular troubled her. The first was that European Christian leaders were engaged in conflicts with one another and the second was the state of the papacy. Since 1309 the popes had lived in Avignon in southern France. In 1376 she went to Avignon to beg Pope Gregory XI, who admired her extreme piety, to return to Rome, take up his proper role and cleanse the Church of lax practices. In one of her letters to him she says "Up then, father; don't

sit still any longer!"

When Gregory died en route to Rome, she implored his successor, Urban VI to take up the cause of Church reform. She also wrote very directly and more forcefully to secular leaders and to Charles V of France, referring to his war with Louis, Duke of Anjou, she said: "What an abomination before God that you should be making war against your brother and leaving your enemy alone Enough of this stupid blindness".

Her letters to Gregory were full of biblical imagery and at times read more like sermons. She was particularly fond of the image of sheep and the shepherd (good or bad) and appealed to the Pope to follow the example of Christ and the apostles.

"I long to see you a good shepherd for I see the infernal wolf carrying off your little sheep and there is no one to rescue them. So I am turning to you, our father and shepherd, begging you in the name of Christ crucified to learn from him who with such blazing love gave himself up to the shameful death of the most holy cross to save this little lost sheep, the human race, from the devil's hands".

Her efforts at renewing the papacy and the Church failed and she became despondent, gave up water and died three months later in 1380. She was the most powerful woman of the fourteenth century, becoming canonised in 1460 and is the Patron Saint of Italy.

Freda Evans

LIVING WITH UNFAIR RULES

Christian Aid
We believe in life before death



This year, Christian Aid week (12 - 18th May) is focusing on how international trade rules affect the lives of the world's poorest people, like Ama whose story is told below. Please consider providing support through your prayers, by taking action and by giving, and by buying this badge which costs £2. Scales feature on Christian Aid's trade badge highlighting the imbalance of global trade. The figure in the middle reminds us that the imbalance is the result of human rules; but it also gives us hope because people are the solution - we must all take action to help tip the balance of trade in favour of poor people. Badges are available in Church or from Christian Aid Trade Badge, PO Box 95, Aldershot, Hampshire GU12 4GL (Tel. 01252 669628) (p&p £2 per order but free for 10 badges or more)

Ama's Story

A small village in Ghana, two hours' drive from Accra, may seem a far cry from the world of transnational corporations and international trade rules. Yet as international trade has continued to grow over the last few years, the people of Agbazo have had their lives turned upside down.

Ama Kale and her husband Samuel have seven children aged between 15 and eight months. They used to farm land which Samuel's family had rented for many years.

Then one day the owner sold the land to a company exporting pineapples and papayas to the UK and Germany. The director of this company didn't trouble to give the tenant farmers any notice - he simply came and destroyed all their crops. Although this was illegal, the farmers were too poor to take him to court.

The consequences for the Kale family were devastating. Ama says: 'We didn't have enough food to eat. I had to sit by the roadside and beg. I used the money to buy soap to wash the children and porridge to feed them. 'Fortunately for the Kales, Christian Aid's partner the Development Action Association (DAA) was working in their village. DAA's main work is supporting food production, and they provide small loans to help people start making a living. In particular they help people like Ama, who have been thrown off their land, to find new ways of earning an income.

For Ama, DAA provided training and a small loan. She used this to buy maize flour to make 'kenkey', a fermented dough which is eaten with fish or sauce. She sells her produce in the village and makes a small profit of around 60 pence per day. When the Kales first lost their land Samuel had to go to Accra to find work. But now he is back in the village and works as the local handyman. With his sister Mary he has bought machines to grind cassava and maize, which they rent out to villagers.

Since DAA has been working in Agbazo there has been a marked increase in the confidence of the women as the loan scheme has enabled them to provide for their families. They are now planning new projects, such as growing mushrooms and making oil.

While Christian Aid partners are helping put people back in business, Christian Aid's *Trade for Life* campaign is aiming to ensure that the benefits of trade are felt by those most in need.

Talking trade

Christian Aid is campaigning as part of the Trade Justice Movement to tackle the negative impact of international trade rules on the world's poorest people, on the environment and on democracy. Instead of bringing prosperity, trade often causes injustice and poverty, making the world's poorest



people poorer. The problem is that the rules, which govern international trade are shaped by rich governments and companies to their own advantage. Rules are important. With the right rules, trade could bring new products, new technology and new opportunities that would help countries tackle poverty.

It could create income, employment and investment for the world's poorest people. Rules could work for poor people not against them.

But they have to be the right rules, fully endorsed by those they seek to protect.

As a sign of your support for the *Trade for Life* campaign, why not wear the badge?

Could you be a collector for Christian Aid Week? Contact Margaret Taylor on 8979 3961

A DAY AT BROOK PLACE

A Parish Quiet Day was held at Brook Place on 26th January, attended by about 30 people. Freda had made the arrangements and the day was led by Malcolm Colmer, our archdeacon. We enjoyed three talks, each one supported by excellent biblical references (list available on request) and we were able to ponder them in the generous indoor space available; going outside in the grounds was not as good as it rained most of the time.

The first talk was entitled 'finding God in solitude'. Jottings I made at the time included: solitude is different from loneliness, never be in a hurry with God who may speak in words or in silence, try to be alone with yourself, true prayer requires us to be more passive than active. The text he used from Exodus 33 (one of 4 provided) described God speaking to Moses in the latter's special tent of meeting; a text worth revisiting.

Next: 'How does God speak to me?' It can be through the scriptures, thoughts in our own minds, through other people (if three say the same, take note!), through dreams and visions, nature, an audible voice, gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is worth pondering on this list and being on the look-out.

We finished with 'What will God say to me?' Points made were: God works slowly, maybe over 15 years, we may have different images in our minds and hearts with the latter more powerful; the prime message was that God is for us and salvation was His idea. To me, the image that came over was of a kind and loving God, more attractive than He is sometimes presented.

This was a good, well-organised day, giving us some new slants in our quest for God, for which we should thank those particularly involved, together with the staff at Brook Place.

David Taylor

S MILE S

During my recent visit to the States, I was given the following verse by a friend there. It gives me pleasure to pass the "virus" on!!

SMILE FOR YOU!

*Smiling is infectious; you catch it like the flu,
When someone smiled at me today, I started smiling too.
I passed around a corner and someone saw my grin.
When he smiled I realised I'd passed it on to him.
I thought about the smile, then I realised its worth,
A simple smile, just like mine, could travel round the earth.
So if you feel a smile begin, don't leave it undetected.
Let's start an epidemic and get the world infected!*

*Keep the smile going by sending this on to a friend.
Everyone needs a smile!!!!*

Barbara Grant

A Prayer

Lord, thou knowest better than I know myself that I am growing older and will someday be old.

Keep me from getting talkative and particularly from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion.

Release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details -

give me wings to get to the point,

I ask for grace enough to listen to the tales of other's pains.

Help me to endure them with patience.

But seal my lips on my own aches and pains - they are increasing and my love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by.

Teach the glorious lesson that occasionally it is possible that I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet: I do not want to be a saint - some of them are so hard to live with - but a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the devil.

Make me thoughtful, but not moody; helpful, but not bossy.

With my vast store of wisdom, it seems a pity not to use it all - but thou knowest.

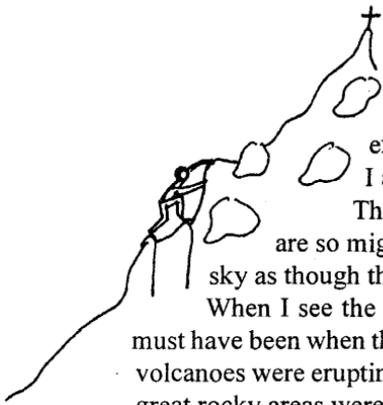
Lord, that I want a few friends at the end!

Amen

A Roman Catholic Mother Superior.

submitted by Linda Kingston

SOME THOUGHTS ON CLIMBING A MOUNTAIN



Recently, for the first time in my fairly long life I climbed to the top of a rocky mountain, the Mont Sainte Victoire in Provence of Cezanne fame. It was not only one of the most exhilarating things I have done for a long time, but I also found it was quite a spiritual experience.

There is something exciting about mountains. They are so mighty and majestic and reach upwards towards the sky as though they are challenging you to climb them.

When I see the mountains of Provence, I try to imagine how it must have been when they were formed seventy million years ago, when volcanoes were erupting, the surface of the earth was heaving about and great rocky areas were tilted up on end.

In ancient times, the people of Provence believed that the wind came from vast subterranean caverns beneath the mountains, hence the names like Mont Ventoux and Mont Ventoure. Mont Ventoure was re-named Mont Sainte Victoire in the 17th century when they discovered that it was the site of a battle where Caius Marius defeated the Teutons in 102 BC.

Mountains are often mentioned in the Bible. When God tested Abraham he told him to sacrifice Isaac on a mountain. Moses heard God speaking to him from a burning bush on Mount Horeb and again from Mount Sinai when God descended on it in fire and called Moses up to the top. He spent forty days there and received his instructions from God about the commandments and the law. Jesus was preaching on a mountain before he fed the five thousand. He was transfigured on a mountain and he went to pray on the Mount of Olives before he was arrested.

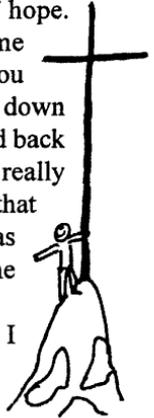
The Mount Sainte Victoire is not exactly of Alpine or Himalayan standard as far as climbing is concerned and my son, grandson and I and dog took the 'easy' route which did not require the use of ropes or other equipment. But it was quite difficult for an inexperienced person like me. Sometimes I had to go on all fours like the dog, and for the very steep parts I needed a helping hand from my son. There were little red arrows painted on the rocks to show us the way.

I know God does not live in the sky, but when you are climbing up and up it does give you a sort of feeling that you are getting nearer to him. Almost at the top of my mountain there is an old hermitage and a chapel (Le Priere), and at the very top there is a huge iron cross nineteen metres high. It was erected in 1871 as a thanksgiving to God that Provence had not been occupied by the Russians in the Franco-Prussian War. The hermitage was abandoned during the revolution and is now a refuge for climbers, but the 17th century chapel is open and cared for.

I could not help comparing my climb with my spiritual journey. At the top of the mountain was the cross, like the Kingdom of Heaven, the God we were striving to reach. Sometimes after a particularly hard part of the climb you could catch a glimpse

of it way up above you. It gave you a feeling of achievement, of hope. Sometimes it was hidden from view by the rocks. Sometimes you became so breathless and the cold air made it really painful to breathe that you wondered if you could make it. You had to rest and look back and down from where you had come. Sometimes you stumbled and even slipped back a little on the loose stones. Sometimes you needed a helping hand up a really steep part. And sometimes you can fall into a dark abyss (but luckily that did not happen to me on Mont Sainte Victoire !) Sometimes the path was easy, sometimes hard, but there were always the little red arrows like the words we hear and read which showed us the way.

I did reach the cross at the summit much to my joy and delight, but I think my spiritual journey will last until the end of my days on earth. I hope that then I will reach my goal and know an even bigger and better joy.



G.R.



The Council of Christians and Jews
(Staines and District Branch)
take pleasure in inviting everyone to
a particularly interesting talk by

CLIVE LAWTON

Author and Broadcaster
Lecturer, London School of Jewish Studies
(The only Jewish Radio 4 'Lenten' speaker)

Thursday 25th April 2002 - 8p.m.
at Staines Synagogue
Westbrook Road, Staines

**CAN
CHRISTIANS AND
JEWS EVER
UNDERSTAND
EACH OTHER?**

ENTRANCE FREE - REFRESHMENTS AFTERWARDS



Deirdre Curran is retiring from the Voluntary Care Group and going to live in France. We thank her for the enormous amount of work she has done for the community over many years and send best wishes to her and Malachi as they leave us.

We are sorry to record the deaths of Kirsty Hurd's father Don Bartlett and of Peg and Sylvia Boarder's sister-in-law Maureen. We send our love and sympathy to them in their bereavement.

Sid Heaford is now out of hospital. Stephanie Bailey has dislocated her arm and we send best wishes for a speedy recovery.

Congratulations to Alison France and Nick Smallwood, who were married at St. James's early in March. We hope that they, together with George and Susie, will be very happy.

We were delighted to hear of the safe arrival of Lucy, a daughter for Zoe and Andrew Napier, just in time for Mother's Day! After a difficult first week, we are glad that Lucy is now at home and we ask for God's blessing on her and her parents.

A Dial-a Ride service will be starting at the end of April, to take those who cannot get around themselves round the immediate area for a small payment. You must join the scheme first; ring the Greenwood Centre for details.

Congratulations to Hampton Hill Junior School, which has been awarded an Investors in People award, an Artsmark Gold and a Sportsmark.

WOMEN'S FORUM

Our last meeting of the Women's Forum was on Wednesday 20th March. The Forum has been a much valued part of our parish life over the last ten years and has provided an interesting and stimulating programme of events as well as friendship and fellowship.

It is hoped that some members of our congregation may continue to meet informally on the first Wednesday afternoon of each month, initially in each others' homes. However, the Committee of the Forum believes generally that when a door closes, another opens and we pray new initiatives will evolve that will be relevant and better meet the needs of our ever changing population in this century.

Mona invites all those who would like to meet to her home (31 Chelsea Close) on **Wednesday 3rd April at 2.30p.m.** to share a cup of tea and talk about any future possibilities or initiatives.

There will be a further occasion on **Wednesday 15th May**. The Vicar has suggested we should have a celebratory evening with a thanksgiving service followed by a shared meal, to mark the closing of this particular era and to give thanks to God for all that the Forum has provided for the enjoyment, and enrichment of our lives within the parish of St. James. Everyone is warmly invited to this. Nearer the time, there will be a list in the church where people can add their names and also indicate if they would like to contribute some food for the meal.

Mona Gow on behalf of the Women's Forum Committee

FROM THE FEBRUARY REGISTERS

Baptisms

- 3 Poppy-Jo Sparkle Robbins, 30 Burtons Road
Daisy Sunshine Robbins, 30 Burtons Road
- 17 Amber Futtit, 12 Winifred Road
Tyler Endean, 44 Fir Road, Hanworth

Funerals

- 1 Joyce Pullen, 77 Pigeon Lane 79
- 20 Robert Baker, formerly at 28 Park Road 82
- 21 Eileen Batten, 40 Bucklands Road, Teddington 74

DATES TO NOTE IN APRIL

- 7 Easter 2 09.30 All-Age Communion Service
- 8 **ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LORD TO BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**
- 9 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martyr, 1945
- 10 William Law, Spiritual Writer, 1761
- 14 Easter 3 09.30 Parish Communion followed by
11.00 Annual Parochial Church Meeting - All Welcome
- 19 Alphege, Archbishop of Canterbury, Martyr, 1012
- 21 Easter 4 09.30 Parish Communion
- 23 George, Martyr, Patron of England, 304
- 24 Mellitus, Bishop of London, First Bishop of St. Paul's, 624
- 25 **MARK THE EVANGELIST**
- 27 Christina Rossetti, Poet, 1894
- 28 Easter 5 09.30 Parish Communion with Holy Baptism
- 29 Catherine of Siena, Teacher, 1380

**Sunday 14th April 2002
at 11.00a.m.**

Annual Parochial Church Meeting
in Church Hall.

To elect Churchwardens, Parochial Church Council
Deanery Synod Representatives.

To review the past year, discuss current activity and future plans.

EVERYONE IS VERY WELCOME
It's your parish come and contribute to its life.