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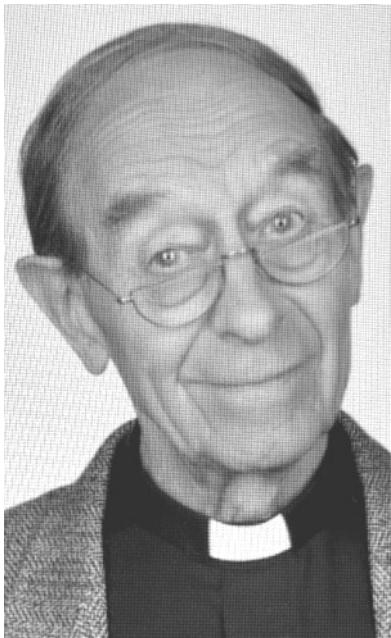
## *The VOX POP... Voice of the People*

**Lent 2026**

*Contributing Editor: Derek Hales*

### **Guilty thoughts of Lent long-ago**

“So, young Hales, what are you giving up for Lent this year?” I can’t tell you how good it felt to write that question down so many years after I first heard it. “Young Hales!” There, it felt so good I couldn’t resist repeating it. Put a spring in my step, it did, and I almost threw away my cane. O.K, so that’s over.



And now I’ll get back to reality and that original question. I was thinking of an old priest I knew of course (he didn’t look as kindly as the Reverend Gentleman in the picture, but it’s close). A doddery old chap, he was. At least I thought so at the tender age of twelve years. Father Willard or Father Francis we knew him as, and from his desiccated, wrinkled appearance everyone believed he

must have been on intimate terms with Methuselah. He was one of the clergy at the Church of St. Thomas of Canterbury in my adopted home town where my family had settled after the war. We'd said a tearful yet hopeful goodbye to the chaotic mess of bombed out buildings that we had become so familiar with after the Luftwaffe's horrifying attempts to reduce the Eastern side of London to ashes.

“So, what’s it to be, Derek?” At this point I think I was right in detecting a slight mollifying change of tone. Was “Derek” a more friendly honourific or salutation than “Young Hales?” Somewhat difficult to tell. But I responded in kind and ventured to say: “I’m sorry, Father Francis, but I really haven’t given it a great deal of thought.”

Talk about a BAD RESPONSE. “What? What’s that? You haven’t given much thought to Lent? What’s more important to you than one of the most important events in the church calendar? (Or words to that effect; it’s hard to get it spot-on after 71 years.)

At this point I witnessed several of my classmates silently shuffling by with looks that mingled sympathy with relief as they left me to my fate and escaped from the ancient embrace of the church doorway to seek sanctuary among the hordes of chattering youngsters on their way to lessons at the adjacent church school.

“There but for the grace.....etc., etc.,” I’d seen written all over their faces. But I had to shut them out of my mind and think fast. “I’m going to give up going to the cinema, I think. It’s something I really enjoy and I’ll really miss those Saturday

morning kids' shows." "That's very original," said the old parson," giving me an enquiring look that seemed to signify something between scepticism and outright disbelief. "But what about the days when you don't usually go to the cinema," he asked. "What will you give up on those days?"

"I'm not sure, Father," I answered, weakly. "I'll have to think again, I suppose." But the years had taught the old man a great deal about the young charges that he kept in check. "In that case, I'll think for you. Instead of enjoying yourself spending the money you will have saved by not going to the cinema, why not put that money to good use by adding it to the collection plate? That way you'll remember every day that Lent is a time for self-awareness and repentance. It's a time to stop putting yourself first. Your sacrifice will be well received and it will help you to give the Lenten season a little more thought in the future."

So, there you have it. My thoughtless, quick response had not only achieved nothing it had actually ended up hitting me in the pocket book. Needless to say, I never went through with it and gave up something like cakes or chocolate. My memory is a blank on this one. Only the guilt remains.

Anyway, whatever you decide to give up for the coming season of Lent, it's a good idea to perhaps couple your sacrifice with a positive action that benefits someone who is perhaps a little less well-off than yourself. People don't often think of it, but time itself can be a worthwhile sacrifice. Giving up time that is usually spent on oneself and perhaps visiting a lonely or sick fellow traveller can be a positive and rewarding addition to your Lenten observances. God bless, and stay warm.

D.H.



## *Rector's Reflections*

### *Led by the Spirit into the Wilderness*

***"Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil." (St. Matthew 4:1)***

The season of Lent is often framed as a time of personal effort. It focuses on our fasting, our seasonal disciplines, and our resolve to turn away from distractions and those things which separate us from who God calls us to be. However, the narrative of Jesus' temptation in St. Matthew's gospel (Ch. 4:1-11) offers a profound shift in perspective. The passage begins with a detail that is easy to overlook but is truly essential for us to reflect on within our own spiritual journey this Lent: "Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness."

This simple sentence challenges our typical understanding of the wilderness. We often view spiritually dry seasons or moments of trial as signs of God's absence. Yet, Matthew makes it clear that the wilderness was not an accident, a detour, or a punishment. It was a divinely appointed destination. It was the Holy Spirit that led Jesus into the wilderness.

In the verses immediately preceding this passage, Jesus is baptized, the heavens open, and the Spirit descends like a dove. The voice of God affirms Jesus as His beloved Son. Then, the very same Spirit that anointed Him for ministry "drives" or "leads" Him into the desert.

This truth provides us with something to consider because it reveals what might seem to us to be a startling truth, which is that the Holy Spirit does not only lead us toward green pastures and still waters (Psalm 23). There are times when the Spirit also leads us into occasions of struggle, turmoil and discernment.

For Jesus, the wilderness was the testing ground for His identity. In reading this passage carefully, we can identify the tempter's primary weapon used against Jesus. It was the word *If*. "*If* you are the Son of

God" then turn these stones into bread, throw yourself from the pinnacle of the Temple, and all the kingdoms of the world shall be given to You *If* You will worship me.

The Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness for a significant purpose. It was to prove that His obedience was not based on comfort or convenience, but on an unwavering trust in the Father's word and providence. Jesus did not enter the desert to find His strength, but to demonstrate that His strength was more than sufficient because it was entirely dependent on God the Father.

In the midst of our present lives, we can often find ourselves in "wilderness" experiences. We have all had them, times of grief, spiritual dryness, or intense moral pressure. Our natural instinct is to pray for an immediate exit or deliverance from these experiences. We ask the Spirit to lead us *out*, forgetting that the Spirit may have led us *in*.

During Lent, we are invited to stop running from the desert. If we believe the Spirit is our Comforter and Guide, we must trust Him even when the path leads toward things we would rather avoid. The "wilderness" is where the noise of the world is silenced long enough for us to hear the whispers of our own hunger and the deceptive promises of the tempter. It is the place where our "idols," which are the things we use to numb our pain or provide a false sense of security, are exposed.

This powerful passage from St. Matthew tells us that Jesus fasted for forty days and forty nights and "afterwards He was famished." It is in this state of physical vulnerability that the temptation reaches its peak.

However, we must notice that Jesus does not fight the tempter through sheer willpower. He fights with and through the power of the Word of God, which the Apostle St. Paul later calls the "Sword of the



Spirit." (*Ephesians 6:17*)

This helps us to learn that Lent is not about showing God how strong we are. It is about realizing, as Jesus demonstrated, that we "do not live on bread alone." It is about acknowledging our reliance on God, and not our own resilience.

Just as the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness, the Spirit also provided the internal fortitude to resist the temptations which were presented. And so when we feel overwhelmed by our own temptations, the urge to take shortcuts, the desire for power, or the need for instant gratification, we must lean on the same Spirit that empowered Christ. As was the case for Jesus, the Spirit's provision was enough. As we enter into the wilderness and navigate these forty days, we may want to consider shifting our prayer from "*Lord, get me through this*" to "*Spirit, what are you showing me here?*"

I believe that one of the great lessons to be learned from our yearly Lenten journey is that when the Spirit leads us into the wilderness, it is always for the purpose of spiritual refinement and discernment, not failure or destruction. The Spirit seeks to strip away our reliance on "bread" (materialism), "spectacle" (ego), and "kingdoms" (control) so that we can emerge, as Jesus did, ready for the mission ahead and with a better understanding of who we are called to be. The temptations contained within all of the "*ifs*" that may be laid out in front of us are really just opportunities to follow Jesus' example and fortify our reliance on God and find strength in His Word.

My prayer for you this Lent is that you will willingly follow the Spirit into the wilderness and emerge 40 days later as the Christian God knows you can be. May God give you a good Lent!

*Fr. Lance +*

**FEBRUARY 17th — SHROVE TUESDAY**



# Pancake Supper

**4:00 pm - 6:00pm**

**Pancakes, sausages  
and dessert**

**Free-will Offering  
cash & debit**



**February 18, 2026**

**Services will be held at  
10:00 am and 7:00 pm  
With imposition of ashes and  
Holy Communion at  
both services**

## **Lenten Music and Reflections**

During Lent, we will be welcoming the community into our midst for a series of Meditations and Lenten Music from a variety of Christian faith perspectives.

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24TH - 7:00PM**

Middle Eastern Music & Reflections

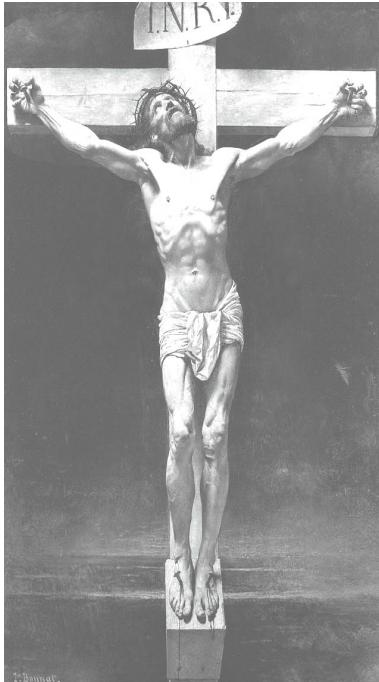
Guests: Fr. Chadi Kattan, St. Peter's Maronite Church

And Local Musicians playing the Oud, Nat, Raq and Organ

Also mark the following dates in your calendar, with musical guests and speakers to be announced soon ...

**TUESDAY, MARCH 10TH - 7:00 PM**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 24TH - 7:00 PM**



### **Rector's Lenten Study**

*The Seven Last Words from the Cross*

**Tuesdays @ 1:30 pm in the Parish Hall**

**Beginning February 24th**

# I opened the window... and Influenza

Forgive me for that old Music Hall joke but I couldn't resist it. So stop your sniggering because here comes the serious bit.

We don't really understand what viruses are all about. Science says they are not living creatures. All living things both great and small are linked by possessing their own brand of DNA, the incredible life-sustaining cell-producing matter that was isolated for forensic science in 1984 by English Professor Sir Alec Jeffreys. But viruses don't have any DNA. They cannot, left to their own devices, produce any likeness of their make-up. They have to attach themselves in a parasitic embrace to a living cell in an animal, vegetable or human body and then begin the speedy process of replication. And that's where the misery begins and brings to light the motive behind my dubious choice of subject matter.

It was five days before Christmas. I had just joined the choir at Ascension and after our final rehearsal was looking forward to playing my part in the Festival of Carols that was planned for December 21st. And that was when one of these grim-visaged monsters sought refuge in my musically dilated throat and began the process of wrecking the best laid plans of mice and men.

Ruthless, it was; ruthless and rapacious. Sneaking up in the night, it did its nefarious work silently and undiscovered until I

awoke with a start at something like four in the morning to find my throat on fire and all four of my limbs cramping, complaining and refusing to stop adding more misery to the incessant throbbing in my head.

Well, that's how it started. Needless to say that as an enjoyable family event, Christmas never really got started. And the ever-worsening discomfort seemed to be endless as night after night remorselessly followed day after day in a seemingly unending downward spiral that took me well into a New Year that consisted of endless waste-baskets full of damp tissues along with huge doses of pain-killing drugs. All to very little avail.

It's now close to two months since the first pangs of discomfort took hold of me, and all this despite the fact that both my wife Bonnie (a nurse of unparalleled capability) and I are fully up to date with the various vaccines that the government seems to think we should be fully up to date with.

My singing voice long ago started to sound like it belonged to somebody else and despite a half-hearted attempt at recovery about two weeks ago, I still find myself unable to rely on its performance in order to rejoin the choir at Ascension. After all, the songbirds I joined need a tenor, a baritone or a bass. There's no room for a puffed-out croaker.

But, enough of my complaining. I'm still on the right side of the grass, not that you can see much of it beneath the piles of snow

that have been shovelled onto lawns from cleared driveways. Perhaps I should have asked the Rector and Father Don to include me in the prayers for the sick that are read out each week. Come to think of it, I haven't really lost the chance, have I?

D.H.

**SATURDAY  
FEBRUARY 28TH**

**9:00am—3:00pm**



**BOOKS & RECORDS SALE**

**In the Ascension Parish Hall**



**Please speak with Terry Fink if  
you are able to volunteer in  
preparation for this event.**

# No doubt attached to this Thomas

“By all the saints,” said my grandmother, following-up with a stern admonishment that sometimes included a gentle threat or two. “You kids will be the death of me,”

This minced oath was about as strong as her language ever got and although she died at 88 years when I was aged just 13, I don’t think I had anything to do with it; in fact, I’m sure I didn’t. I missed her then and I miss her now but her quaint expression has stayed with me down the years and I have often wondered why it is that so many people tend to appeal to one or two favourite saints in times of trouble whereas Grandma felt she could seek help from all of them whenever she was astonished at the behaviour of others.



I don’t know about you, but I have always found it difficult to nail my colours to the mast of any of the long-ago saints whose strange, angular shapes and unsmiling visages adorn the stained glass of so many churches and cathedrals, including our own Church of the Ascension.

But I do have a favourite and I’m sure that even as I sit writing this story, he is still finding ways to be usefully employed even though he passed on nearly 500 years ago having left us the Book

of Common Prayer to guide us along the straight and narrow ways.

Yes, you’ve got it; my favourite saint is Thomas Cranmer, (pictured) Archbishop of Canterbury at the time of the Reformation and victim of the excesses of Henry VIII’s

vengeful daughter, Mary Tudor, otherwise known as Bloody Mary, but not for her predilection for tomato juice and vodka.

You see, Mary, a devout Roman Catholic, inherited the Throne of England when her Reformist brother Edward VI died in 1553. Edward, a sickly teenager, had inherited when his father Henry VIII died in 1547, the same Henry who had earned the ire of the Pope when he famously broke with the Holy Roman See in 1534.

It's a long, convoluted story of how Cranmer steered the Reformed Church of England through its early years earning the admiration of both Henry and Edward but on Edward's demise, Mary, who still adhered to the old faith, immediately set about the business of punishing all those who had helped her father with the Reformation and Cranmer, at the top of her hit-list, found himself accused of heresy and treason.

And so this sage scholar whose wisdom had produced the Book of Common Prayer, still popular to this day, was imprisoned for two years whilst Mary, determined to bring him down, used all her powers of persuasion to convince everyone in positions of authority that he must die.

On our recent trip to England, my wife Bonnie and I walked in Cranmer's footsteps as we continued our pilgrimage around the famous churches of England. In Oxford University's St. Mary the Virgin Church, we discovered (pictured) the site of Cranmer's trial and conviction. Later, In Broad Street, Oxford, we found the very spot

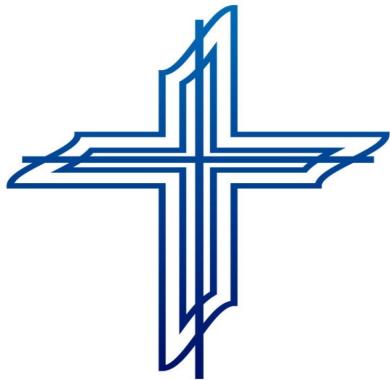




marked with a cobblestone cross (pictured) where he was burnt at the stake, thrusting his right hand into the fire and repudiating the recantations he had earlier signed. He kept his hand in the flames until it was burned off, condemning it for having betrayed his beliefs.

It's hard to imagine anyone having this kind of committed faith in this day and age. But if there are still such people in our tragically secular world, which seems to grow further away from such example by each recurring day, my hope is that they can somehow try to match the

courage and conviction of Thomas Cranmer, whose feast day is celebrated on the anniversary of his great sacrifice, March 21st, which falls on a Sunday in 2027 and thereby, I believe, qualifies for celebration at church services. **D.H.**



**Friday, March 6th, 2026**  
WORLD DAY OF  
**PRAYER**

**Prayer Services to be held at 1:30 pm on Friday, March 6th,  
at the following locations**

<b>Salvation Army</b>	<b>Anglican Parish of</b>
<b>South Windsor Citadel</b>	<b>St. John the Evangelist</b>
<b>1201 Grand Marias West</b>	<b>60 Erie St., Leamington</b>
<b>Windsor</b>	

The World Day of Prayer traces its roots to the 19th century when Christian women of Canada and the United States became involved in missions at home and worldwide. Since 1812, women have encouraged one another to engage in personal prayer and lead communal prayer within their mission groups. The World Day of Prayer is traditionally celebrated on the first Friday of March. A different participating country writes the service each year, and we look forward to this year's theme "I will give you rest:Come", prepared by the WDP Committee of Nigeria.

Read more about the World Day of Prayer at the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada's website:

<https://wdpcanada.ca/world-day-of-prayer/what-is-wdp/#wdpcan>



# Souper Bowl

## XXXI

SUNDAY, MARCH 1st, 2026

Get out your recipes.

It can be an old family favourite or something new that you've created. To enter your special soup call the church office by February 24th.

The winner will have their name added to the Souper Bowl trophy.



Cost: Free-will offering

Benefit: Delicious Lunch,  
Fellowship and bowls of Fun

Reigning 2025 champion  
Arlene MacDonald

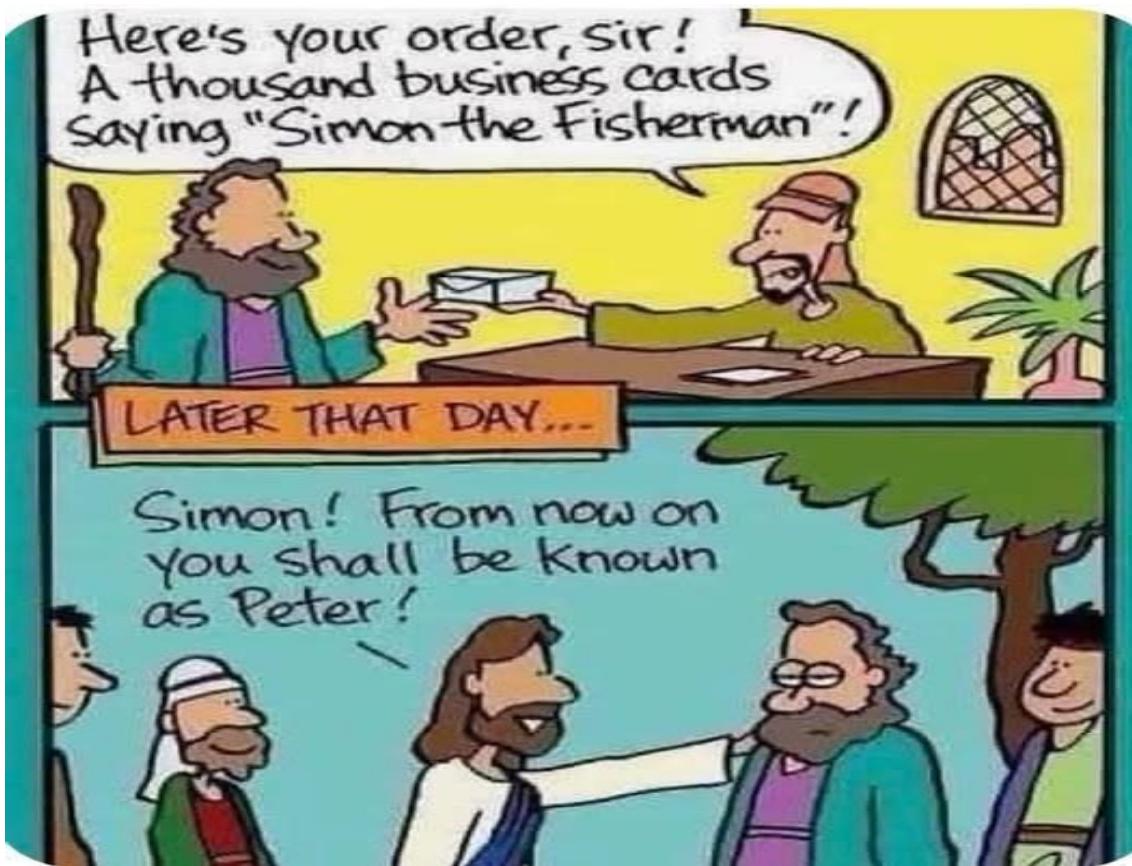
# Christian Humour

## The Apostolic Recipe for Episcopal Lime Jellied Salad is imparted to the faithful. CIRCA 1670



Mix together:  
Lime gelatin,  
crushed pineapple,  
cottage cheese and Cool Whip.  
Pour mixture into mould and  
put in cold room to set.

Omit cherries during Lent!



## A face from the past to test your guessing skills...

These little teasers are beginning to catch on.



Here's the latest offering from an anonymous source. The only clue I'll offer is that the current owner of this face is rather well-known amongst Ascensioners who, as before, will no doubt kick themselves if they fail to come up with the answer.

### Correction:

In a recent edition of The Vox Pop I included an item about the Windsor Masonic Temple and mentioned that the Scottish Rite, one of the assets of the Masons, devotes many hours in helping autistic children and adults overcome this problem. In fact, they offer their services to "properly recommended children" only and the disability they assist with is dyslexia. I'm happy to correct this error and extend my apologies to my informant Jim Laughton.. D.H.

## From the Parish Office

**2026 OFFERING ENVELOPES** If you are not currently using collection envelopes for your church offering and would like to do so this year, you may take a set from the back table and record your name and address on the sheet provided, or contact Gillian in the church office at your earliest convenience.



**THANK-YOU** from the Downtown Mission's Sanctuary Programme. We were able to deliver two trunk-loads of blankets, towels, shower & hygiene products, and hats, gloves & socks collected from our Giving Tree Programme. With this winter's severe cold, the Mission is experiencing an increased number of people seeking refuge at night. Your donations were greatly appreciated.

**Alongside Hope Update:** A donation of \$1,200.00 has been sent to the Episcopal Church in Cuba. Your generous financial support will be matched by another donor and two generators will be purchased for use in Cuban medical clinics.

## **WORDS OF WISDOM**

HAVEN'T YOU SHOULDERED THAT GUILT LONG ENOUGH?

LET GRACE HAPPEN, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE! Max Lucado

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CHRIST HAS NO BODY NOW, BUT YOURS. No hands, no feet on earth, but yours. Yours are the eyes through which Christ looks compassion into the world. Yours are the feet with which Christ walks to do good. Yours are the hands with which Christ blesses the world. Saint Teresa of Avila

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### **The Lenten Collect**

Almighty and everlasting God,  
who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the  
sins of all them that are penitent:

Create and make in us new and contrite hearts,  
that we worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our  
wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy,  
perfect remission and forgiveness;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Book of Common Prayer