

# THE GOOD NEWS



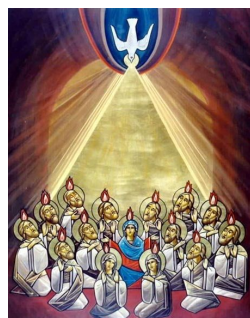
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The Lord appeared to us in the past saying: I have loved you with as everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving kindness

Jeremiah 31: 3



**Pentecost.** In the New Testament, the day that the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples of Jesus. **Pentecost** is the Greek name for Shavuot, the spring harvest festival of the Israelites, which was going on when the Holy Spirit came. The Holy Spirit bestowed these extraordinary spiritual gifts upon the disciples, often termed "charismatic gifts", the **word of wisdom**, the **word of knowledge**, increased **faith**, the gifts of **healing**, the gift of **miracles**, **prophecy**, the discernment of **spirits**, diverse kinds of **tongues**, interpretation of **tongues**.

## REFLECTION:

SUBMITTED BY FATHER JOHN STOPA



The woman's name was Jennifer. She was yet again complaining to me about how bad church was in a particular parish where we both worshipped. I wasn't ordained yet – I wasn't even on track for postulancy yet. Jennifer went on to list the problems she found with this church: the parish priest was awful, his preaching was irrelevant, the music at the church was okay... but not inspiring, the people of the church – well, "you know – they weren't that friendly". I wanted to ask her why she kept coming to this place if she was so dissatisfied... but instead, I felt moved to ask her this: "Do you pray for your church? I mean, do you pray for your parish?" She looked astonished! Pray for her

church? "Well," she said, "I pray for my children and my family, for their health, and my needs, and stuff like that, but I would never pray for my church." In short, she only prayed Jennifer astounded me.

I met many "Jennifer's" over the years much to my amazement. There is absolutely nothing wrong in praying for oneself and one's family and their needs. This is good and laudable. In prayer, however, we are invited by God to cast the net out far and deep, and praying for the Church is one way of doing that. On Sundays, and at formal Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer Offices (or Matins and Evensong), we offer our prayers for the Church. We pray for the wider Church, and we also pray for the local church, starting with the Bishop who is the uniting symbol that brings us in connection with the wider church, and with the historic church. We also pray for local parishes and diocesan ministries. This format of prayer for the Church universal has been with us for many centuries. This is our communal prayer, the prayer of the Church gathered together representing the

Body of Christ, with Jesus as the Head of the Body. But we also pray spontaneously. We pray more informally. We pray as individuals... and here we also believe that God hears our prayer and grants our requests as may be most expedient for us. Let me ask you the question I asked Jennifer those many decades ago: do you pray for your church? If you do, thank you. Please keep doing so. If you don't would you at least consider it? Your church needs your prayerful support, just like it needs your financial support.





"In the sight of God there is no life that is not valued, that is not worth living; for life itself is valued by God. The beggar, Lazarus, a leper, lay by the rich man's gate and the dogs licked his sores; he was devoid of any social usefulness; yet God held him to be worthy of eternal life. And where, if not in God, should lie the criterion for the ultimate value of a life? We cannot ignore the fact that the supposedly worthless life of the incurable evokes from the healthy the very highest measure of self-sacrifice and even genuine heroism; this devoted service which is rendered by sound life to sick life has given rise to real values which are of the highest utility to the community."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*



If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. [...] Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

John 14:15-17, 27

## A Fun Find: The Secret Website of Adrian Plass

SUBMITTED BY LORRAINE MADORE

I made a wonderful discovery on the Internet: One of my favourite authors has a blog! Adrian Plass (also known as Tunbridge Wells), the one who wrote *The Sacred Diary of Adrian Plass* and all the follow-ups, is on line and churning out great stuff. His website is [AdrianPlass.com](http://AdrianPlass.com)

Here is a delightful excerpt for your enjoyment:

Years ago, I tried to imagine what might have happened if Saint John of the Cross had been booked to speak at an afternoon Ladies Tea Club in the twentieth century. This stretch of the mind involved drawing on my fairly scant knowledge of the famous sixteenth century Spanish mystic, and my actual experience of rather unsuccessfully addressing a similar group in Sussex back in the early nineties. Recently I turned this conjecture into a sketch or dialogue.

All you have to picture is a somewhat uncomfortable almost truculent looking man in a long brown habit-like garment, and a slightly over-bright president of the organisation whose task it is to introduce this week's special guest. It begins as the organiser is offering her speaker a little advice before he begins his talk.

SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS

PRESIDENT: Err, word to the wise, Saint John - do I call you Saint John? Or just John? Or do you prefer - Mr Cross?

JOHN: Er, I don't mind. Saint John is fine..

P: Yes, so, if you could speak up nice and loud and cheerful and keep it to no more than fifteen minutes, that would be wonderful. And then we'll all have tea. (*giggles*) To be honest, our ladies look forward to the tea and cake more than the speaker - unless there's slides. (*brightly hopeful*) Are there slides?

J: Slides? No, I don't think so. No slides.

P: (*blankly disappointed*) Shame. They like slides. (*bright again*) Anyway, I'll introduce you now, shall I, and we'll get going? (*Taps on the end of the table*) Right Ladies, we'll make a start, shall we? Lovely to see so many of you here - twelve at a quick count, and that is very nearly thirteen. So, last time Mr Simmonds gave us a real treat with *Slides of West Brunton as it was*'. We enjoyed that, didn't we? (*notes nodding heads - whispers to Saint John*) They enjoyed that. The slides, you see.

J: Can we get on?

P: Yes. This month, ladies, we are very, very fortunate to have secured (*makes it sound very exciting*) Saint John of the Cross as our speaker! Saint John is a (*checks notes*) Saint John is a mytsic, and he is also -

J: (*taps her arm*) Mystic.

P: Beg pardon.

J: I am not a mytsic, I am a mystic - mystic. I'm not a mytsic. I am a mystic.

P: Saint John is a mystic, and - ooh, now, actually, ladies, that's like that Julian of Norwich who came the time before last and turned out to be a woman - did you ever! - and told us all's well that ends well. She was a mytsic.

J: Mystic! Mystic, mystic, mystic, mystic! She was a mystic. So am I. I am a mystic!

P: (*after a pause*) Saint John is a mystic, and he's going to address us on the subject of - let me just check my notes from the telephone call - yes, here we are, he is going to address us on the subject of (*with significance*) The Dark side of the Knoll. Over to you, Saint John! (*she joins in the patter of applause*)

J: No, sorry, that's not right, is it? That's not what I said. It's not the Dark side of the Knoll. Is it? That sounds like - the edge of some gloomy little hummock. It's actually the Dark night of the Soul - Dark night of the Soul.

P: (*unperturbed*) Sorry, silly me. Right. Saint John of the Cross speaking to us about the Dark Side of the Soul. Over to you -

J: No - no, that's still wrong, isn't it? It's not the Dark Side of the Soul. That wouldn't make sense. It's the Dark Night of the Soul. It's the Dark Night! The Dark Night! It's the Dark Night of the Soul!

P: (*wide eyed but in control, she has been an infant teacher*) Sorree, Mister Cross. Right, ladies. Our visitor is speaking about (*enunciates clearly*) the Dark Night of the Soul. Over to you, Saint John! (*joins in patter of applause once more*)

J: Yes, thank you. The first thing I would like to say is that the Dark Night of the Soul refers to the experiences of the soul on encountering two necessary purgations -

P: (*sotto voce*) Bit more cheerful?

J: It refers to the experiences of the soul on encountering two necessary purgations on the road to divine union. The first purgation is of the sensory or sensitive part of the soul, and the second is -

P: Sorry to interrupt when you're just getting into gear, Saint John, but (*points*) Mrs Wheeler's already got a question. (*leans forward*) Yes, dear? (*listens*) Right. Right. Mm. Mm. (*turns to Saint John*) So - are there slides? (*collusive smile*) I think we know the answer to that one, don't we?

J: (*a crescendo*) Right! Let's be quite clear about this. There are no slides. I do not do slides. Actually, I do not even know what a slide is. I am a contemplative and mytsic who has -

P: Mystic. Mystic.



## A SPECIAL THANKS

SUBMITTED BY LORRAINE MADORE

The last couple of months have been a challenge for many in our community and in our parish. A special thank you to everyone who has helped in some way: Sandbagging, making meals, pumping out homes and properties, laundry and more laundry, and most importantly, praying.

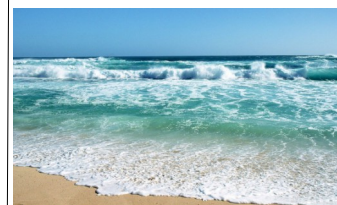
As the work and clean-up continues, please remember that there are resources available to help. Information is available at the Constance Bay Community Centre, although efforts are winding down and the facility is no longer open 24-hours a day. For those of you online, West Carleton Disaster Relief has

information on its Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/WCDRelief/>).



"But it is only, finally, by the Spirit coming into us that we can enter real community, whether this is a group of people who meet occasionally to pray or to share together, or people who live together. It is only when the Spirit changes our hearts that we can love all those of our community whatever their age and background and character, because Jesus has called us to be together, because the other person is the gift of God to me today. This is the beauty of people when they live together, love together, when they are beginning to grow and share and be open in the Spirit together. [...] This is the beauty of mankind, when the Spirit of God has taken hold of the hearts of brothers and sisters and transformed them from hearts of stone to hearts of flesh. And they live then in the unity of love and commitment."

Jean Vanier, *Be Not Afraid*



## BÈLOVED

BMITTED BY SHARLEEN A MCCORRISTER

My dear beloved,  
I have loved you before the world was made.  
Before all the firmament was set in place.  
I held you in the palm of my hand,  
A light so precious,  
I did not want to let you go.  
As you went away, I marked you  
With my love,  
So that where ever you went  
I would find you.  
You were always mine,  
I picked you as I would a  
Newly blossomed flower.  
Glistening with the early morning dew  
Scented with the fragrance of the earth.  
I kissed your petaled cheek  
And whispered sweetness into your depths.  
You glowed with an incandescence  
Of purity.  
Unafraid by my absence,  
Waiting patiently  
For the touch of your beloved



## Parish Picnic /BBQ

Submitted by Lorraine Madore



## Parish of Fitzroy Harbour

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And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.

Acts 2: 17-20

## The Parish of Fitzroy Harbour is a community inspired and strengthened by the Holy Spirit guided through spiritual discernment, to Support, Share and Serve in the World

St. George's and St. Thomas' are strong churches, beautifully warm sanctuaries brimming with history, love and devotion. The sacred religious traditions are carried out by Father John Stopa. The dedicated congregations, actively keep the church-going practices alive.

If you know of or have any pictures of events that you would like to have included in the next newsletter please send them to Cathy or Lorraine

## A Fun Find: The Secret Website of Adrian Plass (Cont'd)

Submitted by Lorraine Madore

J: I am a mystic who has been divinely vouchsafed insight into an extremely complex and profound phase in the development of the human soul. And I do not - repeat, I do *not* do slides! I have no idea what slides are, but whatever they are, I do not do them.

P: (*dispassionately, after a pause*) Shame. They do like slides.

Of course, I have no idea if the great man regularly went out giggling with his poetry and his philosophical notions, but if he did I do hope they went a bit better than this. I have to say, I would dearly love to spend an hour in a corner of the pub with him, just swapping stories and eating thrice-cooked chips. Perhaps in heaven.

## What's New in the Fitzroy Parish

Submitted by Lorraine Madore

(It has been a busy few months at Fitzroy Parish. Our church is being fed while also feeding and reaching out into the community, locally and beyond. Here is a reminder of just some of the activities in which we took part. May God bless us as we continue to carry out His work, led by the Holy Spirit.

Birth of Baby Nora

Countless hands reaching out to help the flood victims in the area. This went from sandbagging to making meals and doing laundry.

Annual Fashion Show



Evensong with the Cranmer Singers



Holy Week services and Easter (and Shrove Tuesday Pancakes!)

Healing services, pot lucks, craft group meetings, parish wide services, Bales for the North, Lectionary Bible Study, and countless other meetings and events.

## PRAYER

SUBMITTED BY FATHER JOHN STOPA

For Good Use of Leisure

O God, you rested the seventh day and are still at work; in the course of this busy life give us times of refreshment and peace; and grant that we may so use our leisure to rebuild our bodies and renew our minds, that our spirits may be opened to the goodness of your creation. **AMEN!**

Source: New Zealand Prayer Book