

# UPON THIS **rock**

FREE

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**INSIDE:** HOW YOU CAN HELP



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE  
21 SEPTEMBER 2019



# Do you look in the

**T**he Pope gave this advice during a homily at morning Mass in the Casa Santa Marta one morning, as he pointed out that God’s judgment is distinguished from ours by “mercy,” not “omnipotence.”

Because judgment belongs only to God, the Pope explained, “If we do not want to be judged, we should not judge others.” Drawing inspiration from the day’s Gospel, the Pope said, “All of us want the Lord to look upon us with kindness” on Judgment Day and hope He “will forget the many bad things we have done in life.” **Time to Look in Mirror** Therefore, if “you judge others constantly,” he warned, “with the same measure you shall be judged.” The Lord, he said, therefore asks us to look in the mirror: “Look in the mirror, but not to put on makeup to hide the

wrinkles. No, no, no, that’s not the advice! Look in the mirror to look at yourself as you are. ‘Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye and do not notice the log that is in your own eye?’ Or, how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ while the log is still in your eye? And how does the Lord look at us then, when we do this? One word: ‘hypocrite.’ First take the log out of your eye, and then you shall see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.’”

### **Don’t Judge Others, Pray for Them**

The Holy Father observed that here, “We see that the Lord gets ‘a little angry,’” for He calls us ‘hypocrites’ when we try to put ourselves in His place, like Adam and Eve did. The serpent persuaded Adam and Eve to defy God, saying, ‘If you eat this, you’ll be like Him,’ Francis recalled.

“For this reason,” Pope Francis underscored, “being judgmental is very ugly. Judgment belongs only to God, to Him alone!” the Pope exclaimed. It is for us to “love,” to “understand, to pray for others when we see things that are not good” said the Pope, inviting us to talk kindly to others so that they may learn from their mistakes: “But never judge. Never. And this is hypocrisy, if we judge.”

### **Only God Can Judge**

The Pope warned that if we judge others, we “are putting ourselves in the place of God” with our “poor” and “never true judgment.” Our judgment, Francis explained, cannot be like God’s “because our judgment is lacking mercy, but when God judges, He judges with mercy.”

“Let us think today about what the Lord says to us: Do not judge, lest you be judged; the measure... by which we judge

## “Look in the mirror before judging others.”

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# mirror before judging others?



will be the same that will be used for us; and, third, let us look in the mirror before judging. 'But this fellow does this ... that fellow does that...' 'But, wait a minute ...' I look in the mirror and then think. On the contrary, I'll be a hypocrite if I put myself in the place of God and, also, my judgement is poor judgment." Noting that human judgement lacks the mercy of the Lord's judgment, Francis concluded, praying, "May the Lord make us understand these things." *Vatican Radio report 2016.*

## A NOTE ON THE ARTWORK

The 'Arnolfini Wedding' is believed to depict the Italian merchant Giovanni Arnolfini and his wife in their home in the Flemish city of Bruges. It is a 1434 oil painting on oak panel by the Early Netherlandish painter Jan van Eyck. The small medallions set into the frame of the convex mirror at the back of the room show tiny scenes from the Passion of Christ and representing God's promise of salvation for the figures reflected on the mirror's convex surface.

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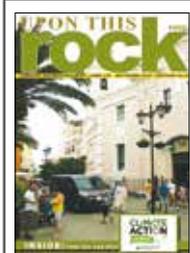
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 Cover: Cathedral of St. Mary the Crowned with 'Phoenix canariensis' tree. Photo © A. Sargent

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Forthcoming Events

# Rosary Round the Rock

On the feast of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary

Monday October 7th @ 4pm



**Prayer Posts**

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Frontier</li> <li>2. End of Eastern Beach by the Airport</li> <li>3. Start of Eastern Beach</li> <li>4. Top of the car park in Catalan Bay (By the reclamation)</li> <li>5. Catalan Bay below Caleta Palace</li> <li>6. Caleta Palace south side</li> <li>7. Media Luna - between Caleta Palace and Sandy Bay</li> <li>8. Start of Sandy Bay (top)</li> <li>9. End of Sandy Bay (top)</li> <li>10. Just before the tunnel</li> <li>11. At the end of the tunnel</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Area on top of Gorbam's Cave</li> <li>13. Down the roundabout</li> <li>14. By the Lighthouse</li> <li>15. University East entrance</li> <li>16. University West entrance - by the Shrine</li> <li>17. Bleak House - by the sea front</li> <li>18. Little Bay - entrance</li> <li>19. Rosia Bay - South entrance</li> <li>20. Rosia Bay - North entrance</li> <li>21. Camp Bay - open area at the bottom</li> <li>22. Entrance to Dockyard opposite Police Station</li> <li>23. Middle entrance to New Harbours on Rosia Rd</li> <li>24. At the start of 'La Bateria' - near Jumpers Building</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>25. At the end of 'La Bateria' - near Picadilly Gardens</li> <li>26. Middle of Queensway Quay Marina</li> <li>27. Entrance to the Small Boats Marina - by the Yacht Club</li> <li>28. Beginning of West View Park</li> <li>29. End of West View Park</li> <li>30. North Mole Entrance</li> <li>31. The back of Wateport Terraces - by the sea</li> <li>32. The start of Ocean Village pontoon by - behind Papa Luigi</li> <li>33. End of Ocean Village - by The Casino</li> <li>34. Outside the Tercentenary Hall</li> <li>35. Western Beach</li> </ol> |
|--|--|--|

## Rosary Round The Rock

4pm, Oct 7th, 2019

**T**hirty five Prayer Posts are shown on the photograph of Gibraltar above, representing the beads of the rosary.

To join in, just find your nearest Prayer Post, go there at 4pm on the 7th of October to recite the rosary on the spot, together with the others that arrive.

We are hoping for at least 10 people to pray at each Prayer Post. Look out for more information in your parish church. Monday 7th October is The Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, formerly known as 'Our Lady of Victory and Feast of the Holy Rosary'.



### TRIDUUM IN HONOUR OF OUR LADY OF SORROWS (CATALAN BAY)

Friday 13th & Saturday 14th September  
Crown rosary & homily at 7.30p.m.

**Sunday 15th September  
Solemn Mass at 9:30am**

Sunday 15th September at 8.30p.m.  
Crown rosary followed by procession,  
blessing of sea and benediction in church.



**Gibraltar Dyslexia Support Group**  
In association with the GFSB

PRESENTS

## Diversity & Inclusion

The positive impact of dyslexia in the workplace seminar

**Tuesday 24th September 2019 @ 9am**  
at the John Mackintosh Hall Theatre



**Friday 6th September 6.00pm**  
**Boat Procession**  
**From Coaling Island to South Mole**  
 For further information contact the Rector at the Shrine of our Lady of Europe on email: [rector@ourladyofeurope.net](mailto:rector@ourladyofeurope.net)



## Origin of the title 'Our Lady of Europe'

Mauritanian born warrior, Tarik Ibn Zayid successfully led his troops across the narrow Straits of Gibraltar to the Continent of Europe in AD 710.

The Catholic Monarchs of Spain were acutely aware that the 'Reconquista' of Catholic

Spain could never be fully achieved so long as 'Calpe', as the Rock was then known, remained in Moslem hands. The Rock formed a bridgehead onto the European continent facilitating a steady flow of Moslem troops into Spain.

In 1309 the Spanish King Ferdinand IV finally succeeded in capturing Gibraltar and in so doing expelled the Moslem population from the Rock.

Following his victory, the King gave thanks to the Almighty and, as legend tells us, he dedicated the Continent of Europe to the Mother of Christ, giving her the title of Our Lady of Europe. At the same time, he converted the ancient mosque at the southernmost tip of the Rock into a Christian Shrine and it is believed that a statue of Our Lady, sculptured in limestone, was venerated there.

The Moslems recaptured Gibraltar in 1333, and the

Christian population left the Rock, carrying whatever they owned, including the limestone statue of Our Lady of Europe.

When Spanish King Henry IV, grandson of Ferdinand IV, recaptured Gibraltar in 1462 he restored the devotion to Our Lady of Europe initiated by Ferdinand, and once again transformed the ancient mosque into a Christian Shrine. The devotion to Our Lady of Europe spread throughout the Mediterranean.

When Gibraltar was captured by Anglo-Dutch forces in 1704, during the War of Spanish Succession. The Shrine was again plundered by the invading troops and it remained in military hands until 17th October 1961. The building was in a desperate state of disrepair, but with time and effort, the Shrine became fully worthy of prayer services. On the eve of his departure to attend the Second Vatican Council in Rome, Bishop Healy, Bishop of Gibraltar at the time, celebrated

the Holy Eucharist there. This Mass, celebrated on 28th September 1962, was the first one to be held there for two hundred and fifty eight years.

Bishop Rapallo, who succeeded Bishop Healy, consecrated the Shrine on 5th October 1980. He successfully petitioned Rome to establish Our Lady of Europe as Principal Patroness of Gibraltar, and later to have the feast day of Our Lady of Europe on the 5th May, the same day as the annual Europe Day.

In 1994, the Government of Gibraltar obtained European funding and partly financed the expansion and refurbishment of the Shrine.

Once works were completed, Bishop Bernard Devlin organised the Enthronement of Our Lady of Europe in her newly embellished Shrine. The Papal Envoy Cardinal Josef Tomko, presided over the outdoor concelebrated Mass and Enthronement ceremony, held on May 10, 1997.

In 2006, Bishop Charles Caruana, who succeeded Bishop Devlin, accepted a proposal

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# Devotion to Our Lady of EUROPE central to National Celebrations

that the Shrine of Our Lady of Europe be included in the European Marian Network.

In May 2009 during the 700th Anniversary Jubilee celebrations, Pope Benedict XVI presented the Shrine with the Golden Rose award.

In September 2010, the Shrine of Our Lady of Europe hosted the 2010 Annual Conference of the European Marian Network.

The World Youth Day Cross & Icon were taken in procession to the Shrine in April 2011, during its 3-day stay in Gibraltar.

A Confraternity of Our Lady of Europe was established in the sixteenth century with the objective of disseminating the devotion, raising funds and organising spiritual and social events around the celebrations of Our Lady. The Confraternity played a vital role in restoring the Shrine and the badly mutilated statue of Our Lady of Europe following plundering of the Shrine in the year 1540.

One of the last wishes of the late Bishop Charles Caruana was to see the Confraternity re-established, in line with other National Marian Shrines. The Confraternity was re-launched in December 2010, by the Shrine's Rector, Mgr. Charles Azzopardi, on the eve of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

**The main aims of the Confraternity are:**

**- to promote true devo-**



- tion to Our Lady (under the title of Our Lady of Europe)**
- to pray for the Continent of Europe**
- to pray for the work of the Shrine and to support the activities at the Shrine**
- to assist financially with the upkeep of the Shrine and its Marian apostolate.**

Members of the Confraternity are encouraged to deepen their devotion to Our Lady by joining their daily prayers with those of other members, and to support with their prayers the life and witness of the Shrine. They will be able to share in the weekly Mass at the Shrine and in special Masses offered for members and their families. Holy Mass is offered for deceased members on the last Saturday of the each month.

Members receive a Confraternity insignia and a prayer book. A Register of Members is kept at the Shrine. There is no fixed membership fee but

## Monday 9th September 6:30pm National Day Thanksgiving Mass Shrine of Our Lady of Europe

a yearly financial donation is welcome.

Non-residents are welcome to become members of the Confraternity and enjoy the spiritual benefits.

Priests and Religious may also become members (no financial donation required) and are encouraged to offer Masses

and prayers for the aims of the Confraternity.

**Interested?**

**Please apply to join the Confraternity of Our Lady of Europe online at <http://www.ourladyofeurope.net/page10.html> or contact [rector@ourladyofeurope.net](mailto:rector@ourladyofeurope.net)**



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# Sick forced from their beds as 21 hospitals and clinics forced to close



## Eritrean regime seizes all Catholic-run health services

**T**housands of sick people across Eritrea are being deprived of vital medical care after the government seized three hospitals, two health centres and 16 clinics.

Government soldiers forced patients from their beds and out of the clinics, and seized religious houses as they confiscated the 21 health

institutes run by the Catholic Church, serving at least 170,000 people every year. Sources close to the Catholic Church told Aid to the Church in Need that – unless the services were quickly resumed – people could die, with some walking up to 16 miles (25km) to access some of the clinics. With the last of the week-long confiscations taking place on Tuesday (18th June), Eritrea's four bishops condemned the action in a letter to Eritrea minister of health Amna Nurhusein.

The letter vows to refuse to cooperate with the confiscation programme – which in a stroke has closed down all the Catholic Church's health service premises, some of them dating back more than 70 years. Calling the move “deeply unjust”, the letter states: “To

deprive the church of these ... institutions is to undermine its very existence, and to expose its workers, men and women religious and lay people to persecution...”

The letter, a copy of which was sent to Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need, goes on: “We declare that we will not hand over our institutions of our own free will and nothing in terms of their equipment.” A source close to the Church said: “The staff at some of the clinics refused to hand over the keys so the soldiers broke into them.”

The ACN contact added: “Our message to the government is simple – leave us alone. “It is the duty of the Church to take care of the sick, the poor and the dying – nobody, not even the government, can tell the Church not to do its job.

**“Our medical facilities were faithfully following the directives of the ministry of health and most of the time the ministry supervisors appreciated them very much.”**

The Catholic source said that the government wanted to be the sole provider of medical care but that most people preferred Catholic-run institutes as state ones generally have poor equipment and a shortage of staff, with many seeking asylum abroad. The contact said: “In providing these services, the Church is not competing with the government but is simply complementing what the government is doing.” It is not clear if the regime

intends to re-open the institutes later – the ACN contact said the Catholic health institutes the regime seized two years ago remained closed. He appealed to the international community, including the UK government, to call on President Isaias Afewerki’s government to follow the path of reconciliation. Amid growing popular unrest in Eritrea and groups within the diaspora pushing for political change, reports have suggested the closure of the health institutes could trigger further protests, possibly leading to violence. Other reports have described how the health institutes’ closure coincided with the arrests of five Eritrean Orthodox priests from a monastery in the country’s Northern Red Sea Region, who were detained for allegedly protesting against government interference.

*Photos: left, people at clinic; right, poverty-stricken families collecting water in Eritrea. Images © Aid to the Church in Need*



**You can make a difference now**

The world is largely silent in the face of Christian persecution. The scale of the problem is so great, silence is no longer acceptable. Persecuted Christians need YOU - and all of us! Together our prayers and actions can make a difference.

You can **PLEDGE YOUR SOLIDARITY** by:

- Praying ACN’s Prayer found in leaflets in your local Church, or your own prayers for Persecuted Christians in danger.
- Sharing this article and Christian Persecution facts with others so that all understand the need.

Eritrea’s suffering faithful desperately need ACN’s help to survive. The charity is also committed to supporting Eritrean refugees in neighbouring countries.

**PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS NEED YOU**

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Bishop Carmel Zammit Lenten Appeal for- ‘Aid to the Church in Need’, Gibraltar International Bank, Account Name: ‘Trustees RCC/CAN’ Account Number: 00812022, Sort Code: 60-83-14.

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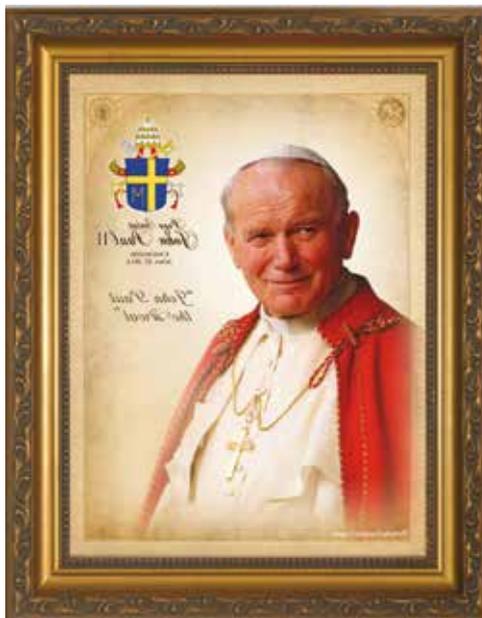


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# Miracles

## Part Two: Understanding and validating miracles

**Miracles are events beyond our experience, our knowledge, our understanding, If we could understand how they occur they would no longer be miracles! So how can we understand them? The following analogy may help you to understand:**

**S**tart by comparing our universe to a church organ.

An organ is an instrument that has three parts. The most visible part is that of the various keyboards. At the heart of the organ is the bellows that provide

the necessary wind, without which it would be impossible to produce sound. And finally, an organ has various stops or switches, each one of which changes the sound the organ makes.

Now think of God as the

bellows. The breath, the wind he produces, is the wind necessary to make the music of nature. If he were to stop blowing, the music would stop, and we would cease to exist, as God holds us all, the whole of nature, in being. We only exist because God wishes us to. Now, the breath of God enables the keyboard, nature itself, to produce a simple melodious sound, which we can call the beauty of nature itself following creation. Over time these first simple stops were added to as evolution made the Universe richer, acquiring new sounds as God added new stops. The Universe evolved until there was life and mankind, gaining yet more stops. God made the organ, provided the breath, and added the stops.

Let us think now of the theme of the miracle. Why can't we think of a miracle not as something that acts against nature, but as an enabling of the Universe? In a given moment God gives to nature a strength that goes beyond what it is ordinarily capable of, and for this reason it is able to do more than it ordinarily can. This is the miracle, rather like a glimpse of what our resurrected Universe will be like in its final stage, when it will continuously have more and more stops open, sounding much more melodious, a reality much more spectacular.

### Why do miracles occur?

"Their essential purpose is to indicate that the human person is destined and called to the kingdom of God. These signs therefore confirm in different ages and in the most varied circumstances the truth of the Gospel, and demonstrate the saving power of Christ who does not cease to call people (through the Church) on the path of faith."

Pope Saint John Paul II, General Audience, January 13, 1988 - Miracles are supernatural signs that occur in the natural world. God's miracles teach us about what is beyond creation. Some people invoke science in opposition to miracles. Yet, science allows us to know what is natural so that we can also know what is supernatural. Miracles communicate a specific message: they are signs of God's



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**The Christian Mission Trust** provides local Christians with donations for evangelistic initiatives and outreaches.

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We invite applications for funding from anyone who wishes to launch an evangelistic initiative or who needs support for an existing Christian missionary activity.

Please write to: The Chairman, Christian Mission Trust, 4 South Pavilion Road, Gibraltar.



For Christians this should not be difficult to accept. With the discovery of the process of evolution in the Universe, demonstrated clearly by fossilised remains, the Church came to realise that instead of one single act of Creation by God, as had been previously thought, God created a Universe in evolution, a Universe that is becoming more perfect. Evolution shows

us that our cosmos not only continues transforming, but also continues to grow in being, in existence, and that it now has a greater level of being than in its beginnings. Our Trinitarian God put into place the laws of nature that would govern this evolution, and still creates as He individually ensouls and

thus creates each and every one of us. God, as the source of all being, empowers and perfects our world in order to lead it to its fullness. Understanding that God created the laws of nature enables us to accept that God has power over these laws, and as such has the ability to change these laws if He wills and perform miracles. Finally, we must remember that only God can perform miracles. A Saint as we have seen can intercede for us by asking God to perform a miracle, but the saint himself cannot perform one. Only God, who is the source of everything, is capable of making a natural cause do more than it can possibly do on its own and can thus alter the laws of nature out of love for a human being.

*Photos, left to right; Pope John Paul II; the pipe organ in the Church of St. Francis of Assisi, Triq Melita, Valletta, Malta ©Frank Vincentz; the universe from earth © Tsvetoslav Hristov; ultrasound of 8 week and 1 day old baby, 167mm long from crown to rump shown by a white dotted line the actual size in the womb seen as a dark bubble © Ragesoss*

glory and His loving plan of salvation. Miracles are a call to faith, appealing to our reason so that our faith may grow. So, how does the Church recognise a Miracle? What is needed for it to do so? The church always looks for three essential elements or dimensions:

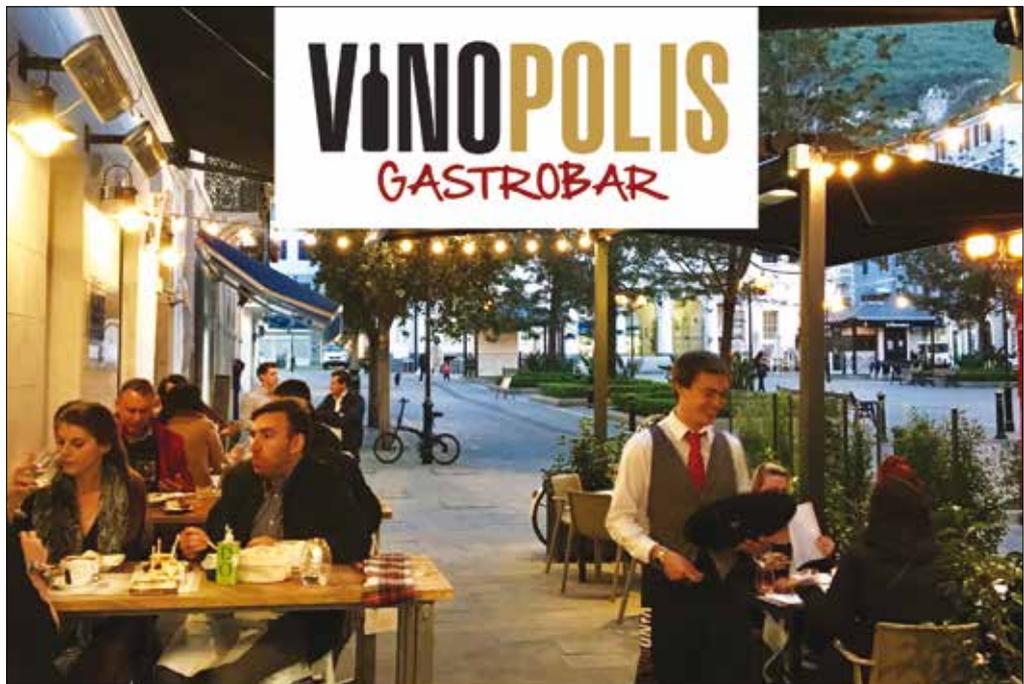
**1. The first of these is called the “psychological” dimension.**

In nature extraordinary things do occur, things that surprise us, but this does not mean that they are miracles. A miracle has to be something that greatly surprises, that leaves us with our mouths open, that astounds us, that we find impossible to understand or to rationalise. Why? Because a miracle does not fit in with our understanding of nature, of what we consider to be natural. If our understanding of nature can explain what has happened, then this cannot be a miracle.

**2. The second dimension of a miracle is the dimension of “significance”.** A miracle is not just a sign of the strength of God, of his power, but ultimately it is a sign of the love of God for us, a demonstration of his mercy as directed towards one person in particular. Miracles always seek to help us believe that Jesus of Nazareth is God.

**3. The third dimension of a miracle is the ontological one.** Ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of being, of becoming, of existence, of

reality. This dimension of a miracle tends to be the one that is most often questioned, and often rejected. In order to accept this aspect of a miracle we need first to accept that it is possible to go beyond what we know nature to be capable of, that nature is in fact able to go beyond what we understand to be natural.



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# September

## Anne Mesilio asks, did you know that in ancient times September was celebrated as the beginning of the new year?

**T**hinking about it, even these days September has echoes of this.

This month is the start of another academic year for those starting school, those going on to university, maybe the workplace. For others who have been fortunate to enjoy the lazy hazy days of Summer this is about to come to an end and routine is calling.

September 21st is International Day of Peace. Since 1982 this day has started with the ringing of the Peace Bell at the UN in New York. World peace is a

desired ambitio, it is outside the scope of us as individuals but on the home front we can do our bit. “Do not wait for leaders; do it alone, person to person.” Mother Theresa was a great advocate of peace, so greet each other with a smile, it is infectious, make an effort not to have family arguments for this one day, that can be infectious too! If you can, escape to a favourite place and enjoy an hour or so of peace and quiet. We Spring clean so why not de clutter both physically and emotionally as we gather our spirits to spend long Winter days at home.

Autumn shadows are lurking behind the golden stubble of harvested fields, fallen apples spice the air and breezes carry the gentle chill that reminds us of change in the natural world. “By all these lovely tokens September days are here” and indeed it is time to make an effort to bring something new to our lives. Why not? The long days are winding down so perhaps it is a good time to take a new fresh look at your life and see if you are satisfied with where it is and where you are going. It really is a good time to make changes, small personal ones without the

fanfare of fireworks, confetti and champagne. As gently as the falling leaf this is a golden opportunity to turn over a new one in our lives. There is more to September than blackberry picking, mouth watering as these fruits can be! The first day of the month is Letter Writing Day. Remember when it was a joy and excitement to receive a hand written letter in the post with all the news of family and friends? In these days of technological advances, mobile phones, text messages, email, twitter and facebook, the art of letter writing has become outdated. Yes, I said

## Is KonMarie for Catholics?

**Kevin Aldrich comes clean, admitting to finding Marie Kondo’s method a great help in re-organising his home.**

**A**t last count, the book, ‘The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up – The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing’, has sold six million copies.

**But is it for Catholics?**

One thing that will seem weird and off-putting to Catholics is, I think, due to Marie being a pagan. I mean pagan in the

best possible way. Marie Kondo seems to be an animist. Not only does she think there are many gods, everything seems to be alive to her. She advocates saying thank you to the things you discard for their service to you. She says you should greet your house when you come home. She says you should try to make your material goods comfortable.

**‘In Culture’ KonMari!**

However, we can apply the Catholic principle of inculturation to KonMari so that we can use it confidently and fruitfully. What is inculturation? When the Faith comes to a new land, it is the missionary’s job to help this new culture and to be helped by it. The missionary does this by recognizing what is



already good, rejecting what is downright evil, and correcting anything correctable.

We can apply this to the KonMari method. **The virtues of orderliness and gratitude that Marie Kondo teaches are certainly goods.** The KonMari method fosters those two virtues in a way that can help us all.

On the other hand, while it does not make sense for us to talk to our things—since they are, in fact, inanimate objects—we can express gratitude to God that we have them and that they have been of use to us.

We can also express gratitude to God for the other persons who made it possible for us to have them. We can ask God to bless those persons.

Other people made your once

beautiful useful couch and chairs that gave you so much use. You were able to buy them because you were part of a worldwide community of persons engaged in mutually beneficial commerce. You can ask God’s blessings on all those people. In a sense, the prayer the priest says during the Offertory at Mass applies to all our material goods: “Which earth has given and human hands have made.”

**Life Transforming?**

Marie Kondo claims that decluttering your home and then organizing your things will transform your life.

*Condensed from a Catholic Stand article by Kevin Aldrich see full text here [www.catholicstand.com/is-konmari-for-catholics/](http://www.catholicstand.com/is-konmari-for-catholics/)*

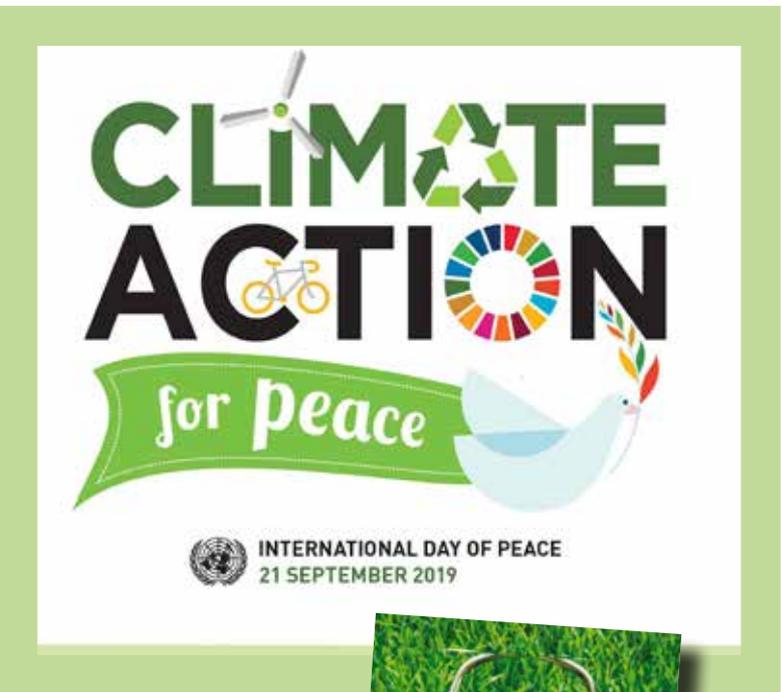


art, because when you think about this “ancient” means of communication it was to gather the tools necessary for this. Selecting the paper, pen and ink, the fingers holding the pen which touches the paper as you communicate your most personal thoughts on the stationary which is like a canvas onto which you pour your soul. Get the idea? Then off it goes to some overjoyed receiver who will treasure the words and hold them dear. History has given us famous love letters, like Napoleon to Josephine, even as far back as the Song of Solomon: “Behold, you are beautiful my love, behold you are beautiful, your eyes are doves”. Ah, the days before internet when hand written words captured hearts with their sense of intimacy.

September days give way to Autumn and all over the Northern Hemisphere mountainsides, groves, forests of trees, bushes bracken and leaves turn every shade of old gold, fiery glowing scarlet, mandarin orange, lemon yellow, lime green, in a riotous play of colour in, as Wordsworth tells us

“the pensive beauty Autumn shows”. This blaze of yearly colour is a spectacular frenzy of leaf changing as birds get ready to migrate and the earth prepares for its Winter sleep, as indeed so too do the trees. Cherish the trees.

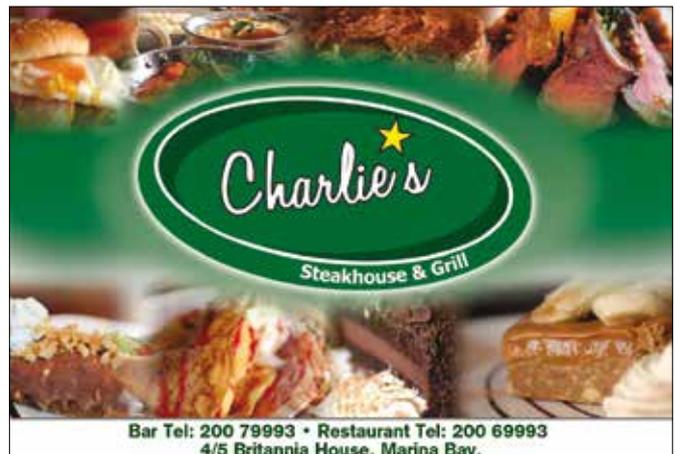
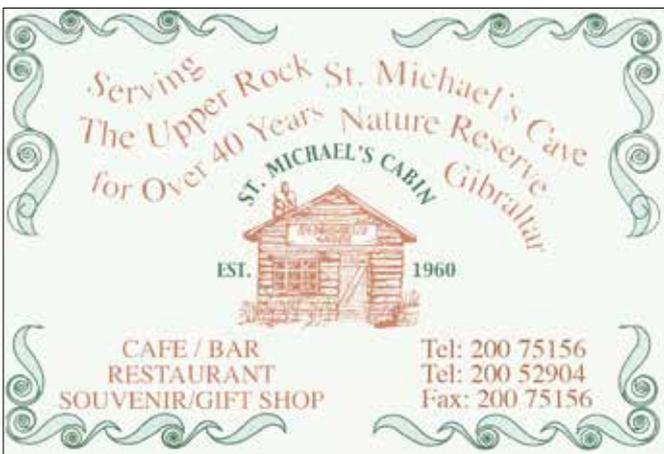
We have been warned! We have 12 years to limit climate change catastrophe! I’ll say it again, we have 12 years to act on climate change before the world as we know it is lost! The clock is ticking, fast, time does not stand still. Neither must we. Trees help fight climate change by removing carbon dioxide from the air, and releasing oxygen into the air. This is putting it simply but it is what we must take cognisance of. They provide an ecosystem for animals, birds, insects, they protect the future. In autumn they produce nuts and fruits, aspirin and quinine come from the tree bark. They provide wood of course and are ruthlessly cut down to make way for industry. Look around you this season of Autumn and learn to cherish the trees. Scientists (the Swiss federal institute of technology in Zurich) tell us by far and away



the cheapest climate change solution is to plant trees, and it is also the most effective. We need them, the planet needs them to survive. Encourage the planting of trees, cherish them as never before, they are our friends. Poet Joyce Kilmer; “I think that I shall never see a poem lovely as a tree”. If we go on destroying our trees and our environment we are only hurting one another and those who will come after us. September is the doorway to change, but it cannot happen unless we make it, so,

**“The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.”**  
– Chinese proverb

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# SAMUEL

## - God's Special Gift

This is the story of Samuel, a child with a mental disability and his encounter with Jesus, who became his very special friend.

### Chapter 6

*After Samuel helped Jesus on the hillside at Bethsaida Julias, he and his sister returned home...*

All through the spring and summer of that year, Samuel and his family had frequent sightings and news of Jesus, as he and his disciples travelled extensively throughout the whole of Galilee, preaching and healing, and followed

constantly by the usual large crowds of people. Then with the advent of autumn, they learnt that he had gone to Judaea and was later reported as staying with friends at Bethany, just outside Jerusalem, for the Feast of Lights. It was shortly after this that Samuel, in one of his frequent escapades to the lakeside, caught a chill and became quite ill. His worried father brought along the very best doctors available, but despite all the latest kind of treatments and remedies, these appeared to be

of little avail.

In the meantime, his sister, Rachel, would hardly move from his side and she would gaze sadly as he lay despondently and exhausted in his bed. She would try to coax him to eat some of the delicious titbits that she had so lovingly prepared for him, but he appeared to have lost his usual healthy appetite and soon became quite pale and thin. The only time that his eyes would glisten, was when she sung to him or told him stories of Jesus and of his many miracles.

As spring arrived and Samuel's health improved slightly, his father, Jacob, decided that his family would travel with him to Jerusalem for the Passover. He would thus be able to grant his daughter's wish to visit the Temple for the great Feast and also take the opportunity to have Samuel examined by a really good physician.

The distance from Magdala to Jerusalem was over eighty miles and it would take them about four days, travelling by caravan along the dusty winding roads, to reach their destination. Before long, the expected day arrived and they joined the many other pilgrims and travellers on the main highway heading south in the direction of Jerusalem.

Samuel, who was still quite weak, had been placed on a mule, with his sister seated in front, on top of layers of sleeping mattresses and thick blankets. Suddenly, he turned around to her and exclaimed, "I bet we will be attacked by jackals or bandits!" Rachel tousled his short, curly hair and

replied, "Heaven forbid! You must stay still and rest a while and before too long we shall have reached Jerusalem safe and sound."

The journey, in fact, progressed without incident and by the evening of the third day they had reached Jericho, the renowned city of palms. There they found the whole place buzzing with the incredible news that Jesus, who had only left the city that very morning, had healed a blind beggar called Bartimeus. There were also wild rumours that some weeks before, the miracle-worker had raised his friend Lazarus from the dead, after he had been in the tomb for four days.

"These are truly wonderful news!" Jacob told his daughter, once they had settled down for the night in the inn where they were staying. "God has come to save his people!"

"Yes, Father," replied Rachel. "I am more than ever convinced now that Jesus is the Messiah who has at long last appeared among us. Maybe, within the next few days, we shall see his glory as he manifests himself to

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everybody.”

“I agree, my dear,” he said, “These are indeed exciting times; but now we must get some rest, for we still have a very long trek ahead of us tomorrow and we have to get up very early. Who knows, we might even get the chance to meet the Master again, which would certainly cheer up little Samuel.”

The following day, being Friday, the caravan set off before sunrise on the last leg of their journey to Jerusalem, as it was necessary for them to reach the city before sundown, when the Sabbath would commence. Jacob had friends living in Bethpage, a small village situated just outside Jerusalem and he had already made arrangements to spend their first night there with his family and share the Sabbath meal with his friends.

As the day progressed, there arose a growing feeling of expectancy amongst the travellers as they realised that they were coming to the end of their journey and were nearing the Holy City. Suddenly, as they came up the brow of the hill by the Mount of Olives, there before them in all its glory, appeared the wonderful panorama of Jerusalem, the fabled city of their forefathers. Above the high ramparts with its many watchtowers and massive gates, they could see the rooftops and terraces of the newly whitewashed houses. But, what literally took their breath away was the shimmering Temple of white marble and gold which seemed to float in the brilliant blue sky like a snowy cloud over the city. Their hearts swelled

with pride and joy, and, very soon the air was filled with resounding voices praising God, accompanied by the beating of drums and the clanging of cymbals.

Shortly after, on reaching the village of Bethpage, Jacob and his family bid farewell to their fellow-travellers and soon afterwards, were being welcomed by the jovial, fat Mathias and his equally plump wife, Esther.

Mathias was a silversmith, who had his shop and adjacent workshops in one of the commercial suburbs of Jerusalem, near the Gennath Gate. He and his wife, who were childless, had opted to

have their home away from the bustle and noise of the city, but still within a relatively short distance to make it a practical choice.

No sooner had the visitors entered the household than they were being offered all sorts of refreshments and comfort and Samuel, who could never remain silent for long, approached Esther and said, “You do have a nice smile, and I do like your fat cheeks. Can I give you a kiss?”

The woman was taken aback

for a moment, but then she picked him up and planted a large kiss on his forehead, “I think you look a bit thin and need to eat some of my good cooking, little boy. Before long we’ll have you looking as fat as Mathias!” They all burst out laughing, but Samuel interrupted then, “Well, I won’t have time to eat very much because quite soon I will be going away with my friend, Jesus.”

*To be continued...*



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