

‘THIS TOO SHALL PASS’

Not the parish pew sheet

A miscellany of matter serious and not so serious

Issue number 58: Easter V (Rogation Sunday)

A song to celebrate May, by the sixteenth-century poet Richard Edwards:

When May is in his prime, then may each heart rejoice:
When May bedecks each branch with green, each bird strains forth his voice.
The lively sap creeps up into the blooming thorn;
The flowers, which cold in prison kept, now laugh the frost to scorn.
All nature’s imps triumph whiles joyful May doth last;
When May is gone, of all the year the pleasant time is past.

A publication by the Plain English Campaign called Utter Drivel! provides some remarkable examples of fractured English, such as these instructions for assembling an unknown device:

- Jointer (1) with white-mark handhold (2) on firebowl (10) hold-screw the bearing lifter should be shown in front.
- then the legs (3) in jointer (2) insert with screw (4) fasten and fix
- after the ready-set of toolside (5) strike together the collecting dish (6) put in
- Please the handle of the blunt side of cricket chirps, and fasten the clinch and put in the complete cricket crips.
- in order not to shake the firebowl, the handle should be loosen.

There will be further extracts from this publication; you have been warned.

The Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemmann, in The Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy, draws attention to the relationship between faith and theology in early Christian writing:

Faith comes before theology, and only for that reason may we speak of theological development as the gradual acceptance, discovery, and refinement of faith, which has been complete from the start . . . the first attempts at this discovery were incomplete, even heretical. It was difficult to find words to express the faith, and centuries would be required to remake thought itself in the spirit of Christianity.

A few more words of wisdom from Mr Schulz:

There’s a lot more to life than not watching TV.

When you’re depressed, it helps to lean your head on your arm and stare into space. If you’re unusually depressed, you may have to change arms.

I’m always sure about things that are a matter of opinion.

Ten minutes before you go to a party is no time to be learning to dance.

The once popular writer A. C. Benson made these prescient remarks in a volume of essays called From a College Window in 1906:

Perhaps there is nothing that reflects our anthropomorphic ideas of God more strongly than the fact that no revelation of prophets has ever conceived of the Supreme Deity as other than masculine . . . and yet the conception of God as masculine is in itself a limitation of His infinite perfection.

The Scottish poet Elma Mitchell (1919–2000) warns us of the perils involved in reading poetry:

Even the simplest poem
May destroy your immunity to human emotions.
All poems must carry a Government warning.
 Words
Can seriously affect your heart.

Balancing that, here is the novelist Jeanette Winterson in her ‘Afterword’ to Nan Shepherd’s The Living Mountain, on the benefits of reading in general:

To cross the threshold of a book is to make a journey in total time. I don’t think of reading as leisure time and especially not as downtime. The total time of a book is more like uptime than downtime, in the way that salmon swim upstream to get home . . . Reading calms me and it clears my head. In the company of a book my mind expands and I find myself less anxious and more aware.

Simon Reynolds’s book about Choral Evensong, Lighten our Darkness, published on Thursday, has this to say about music in worship:

One of the ways music works its mysterious power in worship is to insist that reality is much more than what we may know or understand at this moment. Not only can it invite us to ponder the essential truth about our place in this vast and complex universe; it also opens a window through which we can glimpse the endless possibilities of eternity.

And finally: What sits at the bottom of the ocean quivering? A nervous wreck

Readings

For this Sunday (Easter V, Rogation Sunday) Isaiah 55: 1–11; Acts 10: 44–48; I John 5: 1–6; John 15: 9–17 Psalm 98

For next Sunday (Sunday after Ascension) Ezekiel 36: 24–28; Acts 1: 15–17, 21–26; I John 5: 9–13; John 17: 6–19 Psalm 1

O Lord, from whom all good things do come: grant unto us thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

Collect for the Fifth Sunday after Easter

[Please read on for a bonus item]

It would be improper for me to commit the sin of sonitus tubaemeae, otherwise known as blowing my own trumpet, but I thought I might share with you the following metrical tribute which I received recently:

Not the Pew Sheet Editor,
Working for us all,
Jokes and things more serious
Holding us in thrall;
Keep your labours going,
Harvest all your wit;
You don't irk – just work, don't shirk
To keep our spirits lit!
Thank you, Pew Sheet Editor,
Never known to bore;
Keep us entertained with
Foibles by the score.

You may like to amuse yourself by working out the tune to which this might be sung. I have made it easier by amending the last line in order to correct the syllable count . . .