



The Raphael Recorder

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Welcome

By Anon

(Prolific author)

Welcome to this fourth edition of the Raphael Recorder.

Our mission is to take the sick and disabled to Lourdes, to care for them in every way during the pilgrimage and with them to offer prayers for all those who suffer in any way. Despite restrictions being eased we continue to be disappointed and frustrated by the restrictions placed on travel due to the Corona virus.

Many thanks to the new contributors brave enough to offer something for publication. May many more follow a good example.

I travelled afar over land and the sea
Beautiful places I have journeyed to see
One little place, I never forget
Is Lourdes, the village of St Bernadette.
Ave, Ave, Ave, Ave, Maria

Down to the Grotto I followed in song
Pilgrims weary from journey so long
The rich, the poor, the weak and the lame
Thousands proclaiming Our Lady's name
Ave, Ave, Ave, Ave, Maria,

There like a dream this wonderful night
I gazed at the Grotto aglow in the light
A feeling divine swept over me
I fell on the knees and whispered my
prayer.

Ave, Ave, Ave, Ave, Maria

Now I am at home and happy to be
Thinking of places I had journeyed to see
One little place I will never forget
Is Lourdes, the village of St Bernadette.
Ave, Ave, Ave, Ave, Maria



From the Rector June 2020

Since 17th March, the date on which lockdown started in France, the priests, deacons and religious in the service of the Sanctuary have been at the Grotto of Massabielle, one after another, from morning to night, presenting our suffering world to Mary Immaculate. They have been offering to her the more than 130,000 prayer intentions that you have sent us in all languages and from all continents of the world. It was a splendid mission and a weighty responsibility for all of us. We lived through it in communion with you because we knew that, through televisions and social media networks, you were in communion with us. We prayed together. This continuous prayer ended with the Pope's meditation in front of the Lourdes Grotto in the Vatican gardens on Saturday 30th May at 5:30 p.m. Travel is possible once again in France and will be soon in Europe. The chaplains of Lourdes will of course continue to pray for all the intentions which they receive, especially on the 11th of each month and during the rosaries which continue to be broadcast every day in several languages.



But the Grotto is now open to pilgrims who can once again offer their prayers to Our Lady of Lourdes. A new phase is starting: a phase which will see the return of pilgrimages, and pilgrims. Lourdes needs them and they need Lourdes. [Come to the Grotto of Massabielle; you know that Mary's smile is waiting for you there.](#)



Sometimes we are told we wear of hearts on our sleeve. Just to be different, this Lourdes devotee proclaims Our Lady on her driveway and often in St Mary's carpark. Who, I wonder?



Urgent Missing Person Appeal



Police and Interpol have been alerted in the hunt for the missing fiancé of the jilted bride pictured above. Despite her best efforts, Mandy from Wolverhampton did not manage to drag her intended to the altar to complete her nuptials. Her husband to be was last seen heading in the opposite direction and is now suspected to be in hiding with lockdown helping his attempts not to be found.

Mandy, pictured above, at a press conference given at the Padoue Hotel in Lourdes, is distraught saying the wedding was going to be the happiest day of her life. Anyone with information is urged to contact the search team .

A substantial reward is offered for information leading to the discovery of the fugitive.

From Kate Howes, Pilgrim

**(right with her daughter,
Francesca.)**

Reflecting on my time during lock down a word that frequently comes to mind is "Appreciation". I appreciate the care and concern that my family are showing to me, personally, and to others. The kindness of neighbours. The relaxed way perfect strangers will greet me when I am out walking for my exercise. The dedication of the front-line workers during this Covid 19 Pandemic. The wonder of nature all around us, with, the burgeoning of plants, the activities of the birds and animals as they build their homes and produce their young. The priests, ministers and leaders keeping in touch in various ways with their communities.

I have had more time to watch the birds in my garden coming to the bird feeder containing peanuts and have been fascinated by the 'nuthatch' who frequently comes throughout the day. He always hangs upside down, works at pulling out a complete nut then immediately flies off with it, only to return and repeat the operation. Apparently a 'nuthatch' wedges the nut in the bark of a tree and cuts it with his hatchet beak.

I live close to the forest and to Highams Park Lake in Chingford, and my walks have been full of surprises.

I was waiting patiently for the pair of swans to produce their young as the female had, as usual at this time of the year, secreted herself on one of the islands while the male continued to glide majestically across the lake. Meantime, on one of my daily walks around the lake a pair of Canada geese and their four young goslings were waddling towards me. I, and one or two others, stood back while they fearlessly carried on past us, we were all duly charmed. Over the next couple of weeks the coots and the mallards produced their young, but no sign, as yet, of any young cygnets. I had seen a pair of Mandarin ducks on the lake that went missing for a while until one day I noticed them swimming along in the River Ching, which runs parallel with the lake, their young ducklings following them.



At last, to my delight, I saw both swans were gliding across the water. Eager to see the cygnets I hurried along to catch up with them. There was only one cygnet!! I was crestfallen!

However, I was treated to a lovely sight a few days later when I saw the swan carrying her cygnet on her back.

I had wondered what had happened to the heron during this time, when more people than usual had found their way to the lake, One day I stepped close to the water's edge between some shrubs to leave social distance from a family coming towards me. To my huge surprise I found myself standing an arm's length away from a heron! He/she was standing on one leg on a shrub branch just centimetres above the water. The heron did not move but just kept one eye on me. Such a large bird particularly when one is that close to it. After some considerable time I quietly slipped away.

During these unprecedented times when Covid 19 arrived in Britain with such tragic consequences for so many, I have become acutely aware of the love and kindness of people in a crisis and have learnt to appreciate so much more the goodness in society as well as the wonder of the natural world around us.



Catenian Prayer.

Heavenly Father as we find ourselves in this time of crisis, we ask for your divine intervention and mercy to be upon each of us. Father, we commend to You all those who have been afflicted with the coronavirus. Grant them Your healing grace, so that they may recover swiftly and return to a full and healthy life.

We remember those who have died. We pray to you to grant them eternal rest. We also pray that you will provide love and support to their families and friends in their distress.

We pray for the healthcare workers that are standing in the front line of this battle. We thank them for their service and for putting the needs of their patients and society before their own. We ask that You grant them strength and protection as they give of themselves in selfless service.

Guide the minds of those working to discover a treatment for the COVID-19 virus. We ask you to grant them wisdom, knowledge and clarity of vision as they seek to find a solution.

We pray for those living in isolation that they may find peace in mind and body to help them through this difficult time.

Eileen Walton Pilgrim



I was originally an Auxiliary nurse until I had to give up due to health issues.

I have a funny story. Whilst nursing we had an elderly lady on the ward who we were looking after and one day we couldn't find any of the spoons on the ward until we looked around her bed and found them all over and around her bed we did have a laugh as we had no idea really how they all got there.

I've been coming with Raphael for 20 years. I feel very happy when I am in Lourdes which is due in part to Paul and Mary and Rachel and Trevor and all the other helpers and friends I have made over the years. It really feels like a family when I'm there.

I love sharing a room with Philomena she is such a lovely lady.

I would from the bottom of my heart like to thank everyone involved with the pilgrimage because without them it would not be the same. It is the combination of kindred spirit, healing, spirituality and fun that make it so special and I will deeply miss that feeling this year but God willing we will be back next year to be together once again.



CATENIANS