



The Raphaël Recorder

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ELEVENTH EDITION

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Welcome to Edition Eleven

Welcome to the Raphael Recorder which is now too late to be classified as a Christmas Edition. We have an article from Dr Malcolm Devereux admitting nervousness on his first pilgrimage to Lourdes. We also have an edited eulogy for Ted Tiernan who came with Raphael to Lourdes in 2009 and who died eleven years ago from the effects of Motor Neurone Disease. It is always a pity to learn about the best bits of a person once they have died. We know the Relic of Saint Bernadette will be coming to the UK in September. In this edition we are able to publish an extract on pages 5 & 6 from the provisional itinerary. The relic will also be visiting Wales and Scotland.

Most recently the French Government has announced it is relaxing the restrictions on entry to France. Most importantly we will not be required to quarantine nor do we need a compelling reason to visit the country. We may still need to show Covid passports but no doubt further easing and shuffling of restrictions will follow.

Christmas treat in Essex.

We three girls, that is Julie, Sarah (daughters) and myself, treated ourselves and went out for Christmas dinner. It was to a pub near us and it was wonderful the food was great dealing with all our dietary needs and the staff were amazing even down to a selection box for each of my grandchildren. I hadn't opened my little box of sweets and the staff noticed and I explained I was saving it for my little granddaughter. Our waitress replied, 'hang on a minute' and then she disappeared and returned with six selection boxes. How kind and thoughtful is that? It was just so nice to be normal and chill out together with no washing up!! We might go there next year!

Wenda & Julie

Why go to Lourdes?

This is an account of his first trip to Lourdes in 1982 of a Pilgrimage doctor, Malcolm Devereux. Please note some of the language has changed in the last forty years. We no longer refer to patients but to sick pilgrims. Nor do we refer to cures but to healing.

I went out of curiosity. I suppose most people do for the first time. It was an opportunity for my wife and I to have a few days on own, away from the children and visiting Lourdes we did not feel too guilty about asking grandparents to come down and look after our 'terrors'. My wife has always wanted to visit Lourdes since her schooldays. I was not long a convert to Catholicism and knew little of Lourdes, but a friend connected with the English National Pilgrimage stimulated an interest and perhaps subconsciously I was looking for inner peace after the turmoil of losing a son to leukaemia five years earlier.

First impressions of Lourdes as we entered the town by coach from the airport down the narrow streets, were of shock and horror at the extent of commercialisation. Row after row of shops selling souvenirs, from large plaster statues one could barely carry, though plastic grottoes with flashing lights to a vast array of medals. Most pilgrims trek round the shops though. Few go home empty handed, so with three million visitors annually, a flourishing industry has developed catering for a wide range in taste. We went home with medals for the girls and a wall plaque of the Madonna for Grandma for looking after them. (Grandpa had a bottle of Armagnac!).

Why go to Lourdes? cont

The Domain is a different world altogether. One is soon enveloped by a deep sense of peace and faith. The peace of the Grotto late at night, when the torchlight procession is over, is unbelievable. The strength of the faith of the thousands that parade in the Procession of the Blessed Sacrament and the Torchlight Procession leaves a strong impression on non Catholic bystanders, let alone the Catholics participating. For me it began our first night there where my wife and I stood in the square by the statue of the Crowned Virgin watching the torchlight procession.

What were all these people doing, singing hymns and thrusting their candlelit torches skyward? I suddenly became aware of a man about my own age, Dutch I think, standing beside me with his wife singing his 'Ave's with an obvious deep intensity and feeling. The only difference was that his wife was in a wheelchair. It brought a lump to my throat. Lourdes was beginning to embrace me.

Most expressive and spectacular are the International Masses concelebrated by up to ten Bishops and five hundred priests in the underground Pope Pius X Basilica, concrete and functional in design, yet very beautiful. A magnificent organ and superb acoustics provide a marvellous background for the sung Masses. This, along with the Procession of the Blessed Sacrament each afternoon and the torchlight procession each evening are impressive in their size and have an international flavour. They contrast with the smaller, more intimate individual pilgrimage groups. The small underground St Joseph's Chapel where Mass to open our pilgrimage was held, soon felt to me to be our parish church. The Mass for handicapped children was held there and what a joyful occasion that was. Central to the pilgrimage was the Mass for the Blessing of our sick, held outdoors in glorious sunshine at the Altar of St Bernadette. We were not so lucky with the weather, it rains a lot in Lourdes because of the mountains and there is always the background noise of the river which rushes in flood through the Domain.

I personally found the main churches in the Domains the Rosary Basilica particularly, less inspiring than those built later. The new Byzantine architecture and ornate decoration is a little overpowering.

Enough of events. What about the people, the sick, oh, so many sick. I had difficulty to begin with to come to terms with such a huge concentration of illness and suffering in one place.

But then you realise that there is not in Lourdes a great deal of suffering and I have never seen sick people looking so tranquil and happy, at peace with themselves. I saw none of the anguish and despair seen in hospital life at home. Despair is an emotion rarely found in Lourdes. Few have a chance of a miraculous cure and there are very strict criteria laid down by the Medical Bureau and International Medical Committee before presenting facts to the patient's Bishop for consideration that a cure be pronounced miraculous.

Nevertheless, everyone leaves Lourdes cured in some way however small, and for most people this seems to be a spiritual rather than a physical phenomenon. One receives grace and strength to face what is to come and cope with one's suffering. So it is open to everyone to receive a miraculous cure, however small it may appear later. I have yet to meet anyone who did not leave Lourdes feeling a sense of spiritual renewal.

I was amazed and immensely impressed by the selfless devotion of the dozens of helpers, the brancardiers (watch out for those with leather straps), the handmaidens, the nurses and doctors, many of whom have been coming to Lourdes for years. For the nurses and doctors it is certainly a 'busman's holiday' yet I am sure they all go home with a sense of fulfilment that cannot be matched in their work at home. Those on the fringe of the pilgrimage soon become involved as helpers, even if it is only trundling the sick around in the large bath chairs.



Malcolm Devereux BSC, MBBS, FRCS.

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We adopted an elderly lady from our own parish and pushed her walker to several of the functions.

Strange things happen in Lourdes, as well as miraculous cures. Various things happened to us that were too much of a coincidence. How strange that the only other British couple staying in our hotel had recently lost their son when we had lost ours some years earlier. I think we were able to help them, so we were the mechanics of their cure. Even more strange was to be joined in the torchlight procession by a nurse from Barts where our son died.

We recognised her badge. It turned out that not only was she working there at the time he was ill, but she was on his ward on night duty the night he died. To us that seemed unbelievable. As we had been going through a period of cynicism that day, it seemed like Lourdes was getting back at us with a mild rebuke. The odds of such a meeting occurring by chance must be millions to one.

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I began by asking ‘Why go to Lourdes?’ and said that this time it was out of curiosity. Next time, and there will be a next time, it is because Lourdes has a pull for me which is irresistible. There are more ways to be cured than just taking up your bed and walking!

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Ted Tiernan RIP

This is an edited account supplied by Keith Talbot

Early pilgrims may recall Ted Tiernan whose only pilgrimage to Lourdes was in 2009 with the Raphael. Ted was suffering with motor neurone disease which is particularly unpleasant because messages from the brain are not received by the intended targets. One’s lifespan on receiving the diagnosis is normally less than three years. Ted’s trip to Lourdes was facilitated by the Upminster Circle of Catenians.

Ted, aged 70, had borne his illness with great fortitude, courage and good humour. These characteristics were but some of the qualities which made him a much loved man, not only by his family and in his parish and in local communities.

Edward Brendan Tiernan was born on 15th February 1940 in Ballyshannon, the seventh of nine children, and, thereafter, he was simply known by family and friends as Ted. His spare time as a youth was often spent fishing and rowing with his father. At the age of 17, he came to the UK to find work which he subsequently did, successively, in Newark, Scotland, London and Brentwood. With a logical and mechanically inclined mind, no task was ever beyond his willingness to take such on, whether it was in the house, garden or dealing with family cars over the years. It was as a result of this disposition to matters mechanical that Ted acquired expertise in motor transmissions. Having been at Jaguar, he then joined Ford Motor Co where he was involved in Sales & Marketing until the time of his retirement in 1999 which brought to an end his 41 years in the motor industry.

During that time he met Josephine (Jo) Billingham and they married in 1966. Ted was, first and foremost, a family man and his pride in his four children and his subsequent twelve grandchildren was evident for all to see. He enjoyed his involvement with them all and was keenly interested not only in their pursuits but also in their general lives and careers. Nevertheless, it was Ted’s nature to be gregarious

and he always made time to be available to others. He was an immensely popular man and made so many contacts and enduring friendships throughout his life. In 1978, he was enrolled as a brother in the Catenians and participated fully in all its functions, both formal and informal.

Dinner dances and fancy dress parties invariably saw Ted and Jo, enthusiastically and wholeheartedly, playing their roles in the guise of various characters. Sadly Jo contracted cancer and despite all Ted's efforts to care for his wife she succumbed to the disease at the end of 2002.

Ted's Irish roots were instinctive in him and, over the years, attending Ceilidhs gave Ted the opportunity of evidencing his aptitude for Irish dancing. Ted's love of his native Ireland was constant and part of his very being. His other enthusiasm, that of rugby, was combined with his fervent support of the Irish national team and he so enjoyed being able to share his passion with others, either watching a match, live at Lansdowne Road, Croke Park or Twickenham or by viewing a TV screen based either in a local Irish pub or at home in the company of his sons and friends. His fervour for this sport also found him, over many years, on the touchline at the Champion School (Hornchurch) cheering on his sons/son in law and in later years his grandsons and their teammates. It was this background which made him an unofficial ambassador for the game and twice he was invited to accompany the school rugby tours abroad, eventually becoming Chairman of the Old Boys Rugby Club having been team manager of Brentwood swimming club for many years.

Ever young at heart, he tried out new sports such as sailing and learning to ski late in life. His generosity of heart invariably meant that he was first at the bar to buy a round of drinks and, as well as being a great listener, he was a great talker and would, by his considerate understanding of the problems of others, lift spirits by the injection of his inherent cheerfulness and quick-witted one-liners.

It appeared right and fitting therefore, that a man whose companionship brought so much comfort to others should himself then re-discover love when he met his second wife in 2006. Caravanning and cruising provided Ted and his new wife with much enjoyment together. Unfortunately, when Tina became ill, Ted, selflessly and naturally, took it upon himself to care for her.



After a year, their roles were reversed as Tina then cared for Ted in similar fashion when it was learned that he had MND. From the outset, Ted accepted God's will and never indulged in any self-pity.

He became a much respected figure at the St. Francis Hospice which he initially attended each Friday for over a year. Ted was regarded as such an exemplary figure that when the hospice magazine produced an article on the treatment of those suffering from that disease, he was the one they asked to comment on the care which he was receiving. In a typically selfless and understanding manner his full comment finished with these words: "There is no cure for this illness and it can be very lonely, even when you have close family and friends. The hospice is helping me to face this thing and, for that, I am eternally grateful". It was not surprising that the concelebrated Requiem Mass for Ted, presided over by his elder brother, Fr. Seamus Tiernan, on 11th January, resulted in Brentwood Cathedral being packed with so many people, from far and wide, being there to honour this much loved man who, in living his faith, was proud to be a Catholic.

May he rest in peace.



We are delighted to say the Sanctuary of Lourdes has agreed to allow the relic of St Bernadette to be brought to the UK and to be taken to and venerated in our different dioceses. It will be brought to the UK by Rev Fr Dennis Touw, parish priest of St Thomas of Canterbury. Fulham on 2nd September 2022.

The next day the relic will be transferred to Westminster Cathedral before being taken to other liturgical sites within the Westminster Archdiocese and beyond. The provisional programme of visits is published here. Where no venue is shown it means the Bishop has yet to decide which it might be although it is safe to assume the Cathedral would be chosen. The final visit will be to Aylesford Carmelite Priory on 28th October before returning to Lourdes.

St Bernadette died on 16th April 1879 at the Convent of St Gildard in Nevers. Her coffin was interred in the garden within a mausoleum which was destroyed by a stray Allied bomb in WWII. The target of the attack was the railhead at the bottom of the garden. A new mausoleum has been built but it remains empty.

As part of the canonisation process a part of the thigh bone was removed and the incorrupt body of Bernadette was transferred to the main Chapel of the Convent to a glass coffin where it can be venerated today.

Edited Programme of Visits

Date	Venue		
Archdiocese of Westminster			
Sat 3 9	St Thomas of Canterbury	60 Rylston Road, Fulham	SW6 7HW
Sat 3 9	St Thomas of Canterbury		
Sat 3 9	Westminster Cathedral	Cathedral of the the Most Precious	
Sun 4 9	Westminster Cathedral	Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ	
Sun 4 9	Westminster Cathedral	Ambrosden Avenue, Westminster	SW1P 1QW
Mon 5 9	Westminster Cathedral		
Mon 5 9	St Josephs Hospice	Mare Street, Hackney	E8 4SA
Mon 5 9	St Josephs Hospice		
Mon 5 9	Ealing Abbey	Charlbury Grove, Ealing	W5 2DY
Tue 6 9	Ealing Abbey		
Tue 6 9	St Mary's University Chaplaincy	St Mary's University	TW1 4SX
Tue 6 9	St Mary's University Chaplaincy	St Mary's University	
Tue 6 9	St John Fisher	Shepperton	TW17 0DH
Wed 7 9	St John Fisher	Shepperton	
Wed 7 9	Feltham Young Offernder Inst	HM Prison	TW13 4ND
Wed 7 9	Feltham Young Offernder Inst	HM Prison	
Archdiocese of Liverpool			
Thu 15 9	Liverpool Cathedral	Mount Pleasant	L3 5TQ
Fri 16 9			
Sat 17 9			
Sun 18 9			

Date			Venue	Programme of Visits continued	
			Diocese of Salford		
Tue	20	9	Salford Cathedral	250 Chapel Street	M3 5LE
Wed	21	9			
Thu	22	9			
			Diocese of Lancaster		
Fri	23	9	Lancaster Cathedral	Balmoral Road	LA1 3BT
Sat	24	9			
			Archdiocese of Birmingham		
Fri	7	10	Birmingham Cathedral	3540 St Chadds Queensway	B4 6EU
Sat	8	10	Birmingham Cathedral		
Sun	9	10			
Mon	10	10			
			Diocese of East Anglia		
Thu	13	10	Cambridge Uni Catholic Assn	Guildhall Street	CB2 3NH
Fri	14	10			
Fri	14	10	Norwich Cathedral	Unthank Road	NR2 2PA
Sat	15	10			
Sat	15	10	Ipswich Polish Mission	82 Wellesley Road	IP4 1PH
Sun	16	10			
			Diocese of Brentwood		
Sun	16	10	Brentwood Cathedral	Ingrave Road	CM15 8AT
Mon	17	10			
Tue	18	10	Our Lady of Lourdes	51 Cambridge Park	E11 2PR

Below is a picture of the Chapel at the Convent of St Gildard in Nevers. Bernadette joined the order of the Sisters of Charity of Nevers who transferred her to Nevers to avoid her being in the public gaze. The story is told that the journey by carriage took three days at the end of which Bernadette was exhausted. She arrived at night and was introduced to her new congregation the following morning. There were some three hundred sisters, professed and postulants, waiting in the refectory to see the visionary. When Bernadette entered the refectory there was a gasp followed by silence. The sisters had not been expecting a virtual invalid.

