

# Provincial Priory of London

## *Knightly Topics*



Issue 22

Autumn 2011

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### *Editorial*

*Bro Knights*

*I received the article starting on page 4 a long time ago but in view of restricted space I was unable to publish it. However on this occasion I am delighted to be able to include this very interesting, well researched document. The downside is that I have received very little other material for this issue. So please consider writing an article for the Province for our next one.*

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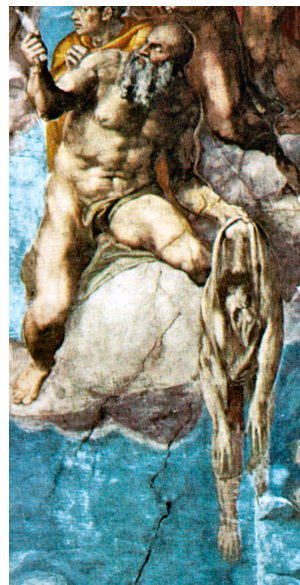
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## *The Knighthood of St. Paul*

*Rt. Em. Kt. Jack Dribbell, KCM, writes –*

**B**ecause the Chapter of Knights of St Paul is held in the adjacent Guard Room, while most of the Malta Knights remain in the Chapter House, many knights only observe the ceremony once; that is, just before they are admitted to the Chapter House to undergo the ceremony which culminates in the Accolade of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes and Malta.

The rubric specifies that the St Paul degree shall be conferred by the Eminent Prior, assisted by the



*Here St Bartholomew is displaying his own flayed skin whose face is Michelangelo's*

Chaplain and the Mareschal, who retire from the Chapter House to the Guard Room for this purpose. In practice, to facilitate the simultane-

ous transaction of other business in the Chapter House, surrogate officers are often chosen to administer the ceremony. In the Londinium Priory\* I have for some years acted

as Prior in the Guard Room and conferred the St Paul Degree during the annual Malta meeting we hold each June at 10 Duke Street St James's. It has been my good fortune that the acting Chaplain who accompanies me on these occasions is V. Em. Kt. Captain Richard Fogwill, RN,

PGtReg. To hear

the scriptural account of St Paul's sea journey to Malta read by a

brother of his immense maritime experience is at once authoritative and very moving. I prefer the (usually, Deputy) Mareschal to re-

\* Membership of the Londinium Preceptory and Priory is restricted to Knights of London preceptories who have been installed as Preceptors.  
– Ed.

tire to the Guard Room before we do, and to give the waiting candidate(s) a brief, informal preamble along the following lines: *“Bro. Candidates; the Degree of Knight of St John of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes and Malta is conferred in the Chapter House. The present apartment represents the Guard Room. Shortly the Eminent Prior, or his Deputy, accompanied by his Chaplain, will enter to confer on you the preliminary Degree of Knight of St Paul.”*

I permit myself another small variation to the rubric. On entering and taking my place at the Table I draw my sword and hold it at the carry whilst I declare the Chapter open; only then do I lay it down on the table. (I also hold the sword at the carry when closing the Chapter). To explain this I must take the reader on a brief digression about saints and their ‘attributes’. In Christian art we recognise the representations of the saints by what are known as their attributes. (*Jack is a member of the Association of Art Historians. – Ed.*) Let me give some examples. The adult St John the Baptist is depicted wearing animal skins. St Catherine is shown with a wheel. St Bartholomew was said to have been martyred by being flayed alive, so his attribute is a knife. Michelangelo painted St Bartholomew on the wall of the Sistine Chapel. He bears a knife and his own skin; the skull-less face is a gloomy self-portrait of the artist. Peter is represented as an old, weather-beaten man, frequently tonsured, carrying a pair of keys (the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. *Matt. XVI. 19*). Paul, on the other hand, is usually depicted as a powerfully-built man, often swarthy, in the prime of life. Paul’s attribute is a sword. Paul, writing to the Christians in Ephesus, declared that the “sword of the spirit” was the Word of God.

Some expressions in the scripture reading of the degree call for explanation. Euroclydon (pronounced you-rock-lid-on) is the grecale or levanter wind which in winter blows fiercely in the central and western Mediterranean; in the northern Adriatic it is known as the bora and is bitterly cold. One of the optional sections of the reading tells us that the passengers and crew of the ill-fated vessel amounted to no fewer than 276 people, so we are in the presence of a major marine disaster. Further on in the account, it is important to

include in the reading the soldiers’ counsel to kill the prisoners; this passage sheds important light on the significance of the passwords revealed to the candidate at the end of the ceremony.

Towards the conclusion two phrases are marked (g) and (h) in the ritual book; it makes more sense to deliver these in the sequence (h) then (g), to correspond with the later interrogation of the candidate at the door of the Chapter House.

It is, in my view, a mistake to regard the St Paul ceremony as a mere intermediate or passing degree of little consequence. The long extract from Holy Writ, as is so often the case, is susceptible of explanation at more than one level. At first reading it appears to be little more than a comprehensive reportage of a long and dangerous sea voyage which ends in the vessel and cargo being lost but the crew and passengers being miraculously saved and cast up upon an island where they are well received. In parenthesis I should explain the use of the word “barbarous” to describe the islanders. The New Testament was written in Greek; not the classical Greek of earlier centuries but a down-to-earth commercial *lingua franca* which facilitated trade and travel throughout the Mediterranean, particularly at the eastern end. To the Greeks anyone not of their race was a “barbarian”, just as the Jews described outsiders as Gentiles. So “barbarian” did not mean a savage or brute; it was simply a term for a non-Greek.

There is a higher, esoteric level on which the passage may be considered. Mysticism, I should caution the reader, is heady medicine; it should be taken in small doses. The mystics affirm that, after death, the soul has to cross a spiritual sea before finding a safe landing-place in the peaceful abodes of the Blessed. The Mediterranean (the ‘Sea between the Lands’) is transparently a metaphor for that journey.

It is only after the candidate has figuratively shared in the vicissitudes of Paul that he is permitted to approach the door of the Chapter House and seek admission to the crowning Degree of a Knight of St John of Jerusalem, Palestine, Rhodes and Malta.

*Jack Dribbell*

# ***Pardon of Jacques de Molay***

*An article extracted verbatim from a June issue of the Daily Telegraph*

**T**he heirs to the Knights Templar have demanded an apology from the Vatican for the murder of their last leader, who was burned at the stake in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Jacques de Molay, the last Grand Master of the warrior monks, who fought in the crusades, was executed in Paris in 1314 on charges of heresy, black magic and idolatry.

His death was part of concerted campaign to suppress the chivalric order by King Philip of France, who had grown suspicious of the Templars power and their wealth.

Although it was the French King who ordered de Molay put to death, the Templars have for centuries accused the Roman Catholic Church of complicity.

Pope Clement V initiated an inquest into the Knights Templar that led to many being subjected to heresy trials before the order disbanded.

The movement was reborn in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century as a charitable organisation and has branches around the world. The Italian chapter of the order has written to Pope Benedict XVI asking him to issue a pardon for de Molay and to acknowledge that he has been a victim of false accusations.

Walter Grandis, 64, the current head, or Grand Prior, of the Knights Templar in Italy, told the Daily Telegraph: "There was an enormous degree of complicity because Clement V, who was Pope at the time, was under huge pressure from King Philip. This was an appalling crime and a miscarriage of justice that the Church allowed to happen. We're asking for de Molay to be pardoned so that we can finally turn a page in history and work towards reconciliation" said Mr Grandis, who recently wrote a book on the order called *The Templars: The Real Secret*.

A document found in the Vatican Secret Archives a decade ago revealed that Clement V absolved some Templars of heresy, but the Church had never apologised for the order's persecution. (See article below - Editor)

The request for a pardon and apology was submitted to Dr Guzman Carriquiry Lecour, the under-secretary for the Pontifical Council for the Laity, a few weeks ago but will be discussed by the Templars at a special conference in Turin today (17 June) and tomorrow.

A Vatican spokesman said the request was under consideration.



## ***Knights Templar win reprieve after 700 years***

*This edited extract from yahoo news 2007 was previously published in the Autumn 2008 issue of Knightly Topics*

**T**he Knights Templar accused of heresy and sexual misconduct, will soon be partly rehabilitated when the Vatican publishes trial documents it has closely guarded for 700 years. A reproduction of the minutes of trials against the Templars is a massive work with a £4,125 price tag. The work comes in a soft leather case and includes reproductions of original parchments in Latin and replicas of wax seals used by 14<sup>th</sup> century inquisitors. The Vatican expects most copies of the work to be bought by leading medieval scholars and specialised libraries at top universities. At the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century the Templars were accused of heresy by Philip IV of France, their alleged offences included denying Christ and secretly worshipping idols. The Chino Parchment, or Chart, contains phrases in which Pope Clement V absolves the Templars of charges of heresy which had been the backbone of Philip's attempts to elimi-

nate them. The Parchment was "misplaced" in the Vatican archives until 2001 when Professor Barbara Frale, a medievalist at the Vatican's Secret Archives, stumbled upon it. Frale found that Pope Clement was convinced that while the Templars had committed some grave sins, such as abuses, violence and sinful acts within the Order they were not heretics.

Despite this conviction, in 1312 Pope Clement ordered the Templars to be disbanded for what Frale called "the good of the Church" following his repeated clashes with the French King. Frale depicted the trials against the Templars between 1307 and 1312 as a battle of political wills between Clement and Philip, and said the document means Clement's position has to be reappraised by historians. "This will allow anyone to see what is actually in the documents and deflate legends that are in vogue these days" she said.

# ***Ruminations on the Death and Resurrection of our Lord***

*All bible quotations are taken from a New King James Version*

## **Introduction**

**C**hristianity, as a religion, is counter intuitive. By which I mean that so much of Christ's life, tenets and teachings run contrary to what humankind expect from the natural order of behaviour. It starts with the wise men from the East travelling to worship Him who has been born King of the Jews. Quite naturally they go to a palace expecting to find the babe only to eventually locate him in a humble manger.

It continues through a childhood which involved surviving as a refugee before being brought up in a carpenter's household until, in his thirtieth year or thereabouts Christ's "time has come." There then commences a ministry which teaches that the first shall be last; that the meek shall inherit the earth; that the rich shall be sent empty away and, amongst much else, that we should love our enemies and do good to them that hate us!

Nothing is more counter intuitive than our salvation depending upon the agony, disgrace and humiliation of Christ's dying on the cross or more difficult to believe than the resurrection which followed. So counter intuitive, indeed, that even good Christians accept the events as an act of faith rather more than a judgement of the evidence that those events occurred.

The purpose of these ruminations is to set before the reader what I believe to be the overwhelming evidence that Christ did indeed die on the cross and was later resurrected. At this juncture I must confess to two major shortcomings. Firstly my legal training is both dated and limited. Secondly I cannot read the Gospels in their original Greek and am therefore indebted to Kenneth Bailey, John Blanchard, David Pawson and Victor Pearce amongst others for their scholarship in this matter.

It might be thought that, while doubters of Christ's divinity would have difficulty accepting the resurrection and ascension, his death on the cross would pass without challenge. Not so, for there are those who, in man's infinite capacity for perversity, advance the notion that Jesus somehow survived the cross based on the evidence that he was only nailed there for hours rather than days!

What follows will not be a file with concocted witness reports but I do invite the reader to imagine the depth and breadth of witness statements which could have been put together as a file, or report, on the events recorded.

## **Death**

Crucifixion was a method of punishment by which the Roman State enforced order throughout the empire. Cicero called it "a most cruel and terrible penalty". Indeed so terrible was it that Roman Law prevented any Roman Citizen having to undergo it, however heinous his or her crime. The Roman perfection, if that is the right term, of Crucifixion as a punishment involved the introduction of the cross-beam to the stake. A single stake required the wrists to be nailed together above the head. This speeded up suffocation and victims died more quickly. Using a crossbeam extended the agony. Readers can check this statement for themselves by standing upright and extending their arms above their heads, crossing their wrists as though nailed to an upright. Holding that position for a minute and then moving the arms down as though placing them on an imaginary crossbeam will demonstrate the easing of pressure on the lungs. Some poor unfortunates survived in this way nailed, or tied, to the cross for days.

That Christ died in hours should not come as too great a shock to those who remember what had gone before. We know from Luke 21 v. 37 that in the days before the Passover "He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet."

The night before his crucifixion was spent by Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane praying to his Father. Luke, the gentle physician, informs us that:-

"being in agony he prayed more earnestly and his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling on the ground" Luke 22 v.44

Unknown to medical science at that time is the medical condition known as haematidrosis, in which blood vessels rupture into the endocrine sweat gland, causing the patient to literally sweat blood. Christ's agony during this time, whether caused by frenzy or by fear, is beyond imagination. More and much worse was to follow but even before his betrayal Jesus must have been emotionally and physically drained.

During the course of that night there followed the betrayal, arrest, detention, examinations and a trial resulting in a sentence which included scourging before crucifixion; a scourging which has been described as follows:-

"The victim was stripped, bound to a post or pillar, and beaten by a number of torturers until the latter grew tired

*".....there are those who, in man's infinite capacity for adversity, advance the notion that Jesus somehow survived the cross....."*



and the flesh of the victim hung in bleeding shreds. The scourge or whips which were used were of leather thongs fitted with a spike or several pieces of bone or lead joined to form a chain. Prisoners frequently collapsed and died during this procedure.”

After the scourging Christ had to carry his crosspiece to Golgotha. He no longer had the strength to do so. Simon of Cyrene was prevailed upon to assist on his behalf. Whilst journeying to Golgotha and during his crucifixion Christ was mocked and pilloried by a substantial number of people. He was crucified, dying within hours of being nailed to the cross but just for good measure his still hanging corpse was speared by a Roman soldier causing what looked like blood and water to gush from his pierced side.

Medical science today knows that in cases of heart failure resulting from traumatic shock fluid can gather in the pericardial sac which, if pierced by a spear, would affect the outcome witnessed by John. Crucially, however, Christ would have had to be dead for that fluid to be present in the pericardial sac.

Tellers of tales and spinners of yarns ignore these facts and advance the hypothesis that Christ was drugged not dead, citing the gospels as recording that wine was offered to him on the cross. All four gospel writers do in fact mention that a sponge was filled with sour wine and offered to him but none report that Christ drank only that he “again cried out” or that he “gave up his spirit.” Interestingly Matthew records that Christ was offered wine on two occasions and that on the first occasion in 27 v.34 “they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink, but when He had tasted it He would not drink.”

Faking death may work as a literary device when used by a master of his craft such as Shakespeare but to those of us who have seen a corpse, or corpses, there is a distinctness about them which turns a human body into a lifeless husk the like of which is impossible to imitate. We can be assured that those soldiers on duty at Christ’s crucifixion serving, as they did, in a province addicted to turmoil, insurrection and, to the Roman mindset, terrorist outrages would have witnessed so much of death as to know it when they saw it.

Not all who witnessed these events were hostile to Christ. Luke 23 v.48 tells us “And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned.”

## Resurrection

Pilate released the corpse to Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea after receiving confirmation from his centurion that Christ was, in fact, dead. Joseph provided the tomb, Nicodemus supplied the embalming spices which generously

laced the burial cloths and, acting in some haste because the Sabbath commenced at sundown, the corpse was laid in a previously unused tomb which was secured with a stone large enough to prevent grave robbers gaining access.

The next day Pilate was approached by the chief priests and Pharisees who said to him:-

“Sir, we remember, while He was still alive how the deceiver said ‘ After three days I will arise.’ Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say to the people ‘He has risen from the dead.’ So the last deception will be worse than the first.”

“Pilate said to them, ‘you have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how.’”

So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.”

The wording in Matthews’ Gospel does not make clear whether a guard of Roman soldiers was to be provided or whether the temple authorities were to be allowed to deploy one of their own guards and given the authority from Pilate to seal or secure the tomb. I like to think that Pilate’s retort “ You have a guard “ was a barbed reference to the temple guard which, earlier in the week, had arrested Christ and, by doing so, caused so much trouble to Pilate.

Jewish records reveal that a guard consisted of 10 men and that 24 such guards were on duty at 24 locations around the temple. It was essentially a night duty and discipline was tight.

Any guard found sleeping by the Officer of the Watch would be beaten at the very least and may even have had his “raiment set on fire”.

On the early morning of the third day events of such awesome and fearful nature took place that the guard “shook for fear and became like dead men” and later reported back to the chief priests “all the things that had happened.” They would have, therefore, reported that:-

- \* An earthquake had occurred during the night.
- \* An Angel had descended from heaven and rolled back the stone which had been sealing the tomb.
- \* These events were also witnessed by two females.
- \* The Angel had spoken to the females advising them that Jesus had risen. He was not there.

Instead of punishing the guard the elders of the Temple bribed them with money and instructed them to give out the story that “his disciples came in the night and stole him away while we slept.” Had a Roman Guard deserted its post, or fallen asleep , the soldiers comprising it would have been put to death, such was discipline in the Roman Army. It is highly unlikely that a Roman Guard would have reported to a Temple authority and it certainly would not have been

allowed to mingle with the citizenry of Jerusalem telling them of a dereliction of duty.

The gospels of Matthew and Mark both record that the tomb was visited by Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James on that morning. Other gospels include Salome and Joanna amongst the womenfolk. The women found that the tomb was empty of Christ's corpse, a fact that Simon Peter and John were also to later witness. It is easy to overlook the significance of the empty tomb but if its emptiness were a lie it was a lie that the authorities could easily have disproved – and they did not do so. When, therefore, the followers of Jesus later preached in the streets of Jerusalem of his resurrection the authorities were unable to disprove the statement by showing the populace the tomb with the corpse in it – something they would dearly liked to have been able to do.

It is important to concentrate on the importance of there being no corpse in the tomb as this fact is vital to the evidence of the resurrection and the gospels, at this point, contain clusters of information which, if not exactly contradictory, are not necessarily complimentary. Whether or not an angel was present, as in Matthew, or a young man, as in Mark, or two men in shining garments, as in Luke, has little or no significance compared with the absence of a corpse.

The corpse was gone but the tomb was not empty; the burial cloths remained. Luke at 24:12 reports Peter "saw the linen cloths lying by themselves." John is even more enlightening on the subject at 20:6 he states "and he saw the linen cloths lying there and the handkerchief which had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself." I understand that the Greek words for lying there imply an orderliness whilst the reference to folded together implies "wrapped around itself". John Blanchard suggests that the grave cloths looked like an empty chrysalis with the body inside them gone. The sight of them had a profound effect upon John who wrote of himself that "he saw and believed."

The presence of the cloths also makes a nonsense of any suggestion that grave robbers were responsible for the absence of a corpse. We know that Christ's last and only possessions were his garments, which the Roman soldiers cast lots for. We know that the tomb was previously unused. So the only things of value in the tomb were the cloths and whatever traces of spices remained on them. Yet the cloths were still in the tomb! Nor is it remotely credible to suggest that grave robbers would have continued to risk their lives

by staying in the tomb a moment longer than was necessary in order to unwrap the cloths from the corpse, cloths which would have been stuck to a body so scourged that peeling them from it would have been both difficult and time consuming. They would have stolen the still wrapped corpse cloths and all. Quite what they would have then done with the corpse to effect financial advantage is difficult to imagine!

The corpse was gone but that was not all. Within the next 24 hours the resurrected Jesus appeared on a number of separate occasions. Firstly to Mary Magdalene and the group of women hurrying from the tomb, Matt 28:9; secondly to Cleopas and his companion on the road to Emmaus, Luke 24:15; and thirdly to the disciples at evening meal in Jerusalem, Luke 24:34. At which gathering the returnees from Emmaus are told "The Lord is risen indeed and has appeared to Simon!" Possibly four appearances to at least fifteen and perhaps as many as twenty individual witnesses able to testify to the fact of a risen Lord. Individual witnesses, moreover, many of whom had spent much of

the previous three years constantly in his company. Witnesses who would have been aware of those hard to fake personal attributes such as patterns of speech, hand gestures, table manners and the like.

Witness to a risen Lord did not end

after 24 hours. A week later Jesus again appeared to the disciples and released Thomas from his doubts, John 20 v.26; John also instructs us of a meeting with the disciples by the Sea of Tiberius; Matthew reports a meeting with all eleven apostles on a mountain in Galilee; Acts 1 refers to the risen Lord having appeared over a forty day period and that the number of those gathering together in the upper room had reached "about a hundred and twenty"; Corinthians reports Jesus appearing to more than 500 brothers and separately to James.

The massive amount of direct testimony which could be made available as evidence of the resurrection is supported by a large body of circumstantial evidence.

It accounts for the change in mood and morale of those closest to Jesus. Distraught and demoralised at the time of crucifixion but a few days later triumphant and victorious having witnessed the Resurrection. Those same male disciples who fled the scene at the time of Christ's betrayal were, post the resurrection, transformed into preachers in the streets of Jerusalem prepared to face persecution, arrest and punishment rather than deny what they knew to be true.

*... "the grave cloths  
looked like an empty  
chrysalis with the body  
inside them gone."*

Dear Doubting Thomas eventually set off to preach through Persia and brought Christianity to India. Indeed John is the only apostle not to have been martyred. He is believed to have died at a ripe old age in Ephesus. Those Apostles knew that Christ had risen.

It also accounts for the changes in religious practice which took place amongst those early worshippers of Christ most of whom came to the new faith as devout Jews. James, the half brother of Jesus, being not the least of them. The Sabbath (Saturday) was abandoned and the early Christians gathered together on Sunday, the first day of the week, to commemorate the day on which Jesus rose from the dead.

Baptism replaced Circumcision as the symbol of entry into God's family and the breaking of bread replaced the Feast of the Passover. Acts 2 vv 41&42 tell us that "those who gladly received his word were baptised" and "they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."

If not the religion of the counter intuitive, Christianity is certainly the religion of the Resurrection.

Even the improbabilities and inconsistencies in the gospels' retelling of events surrounding the resurrection add to the veracity of the evidence that it happened.

Four different accounts written by four different witnesses at four different times are bound to have inconsistencies within them. If they dovetailed perfectly it would give reason to suspect invention and falsehood.

Several other features of the apostles' retelling of events reinforce their truthfulness.

Firstly, no apostle includes a description of the resurrection. It was not witnessed. Yet if the story was invented, if there was a fabrication, surely it would have been irresistible to include a description of the resurrection?

Secondly, credibility is gained from Mary and the other women being the first witnesses to the resurrection. In the society of that time women counted for so very little that they could not bear witness in a court of law. An invention would most certainly have had a male as lead witness. Instead of which, interestingly, the first commands of the risen Lord are to the two Marys' "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me." Matt 28v.10. So the first words spoken by the risen Lord gave authority for women to speak on his behalf and tell, tell if you please, menfolk what they should do!

Thirdly, the resurrection is difficult enough to believe on its own without adding transfiguration on top of it. So the risen Lord was not at first recognised by people who had known him for years and he didn't just look different, his body was so atomically changed that it could pass through walls and

gain entrance into locked rooms. An inventor of the resurrection would surely make all else seem as plausible as possible instead of heaping improbability on top of improbability.

## Conclusion

The tomb was undeniably empty of a corpse despite its having been sealed by a stone and guarded by a detachment of soldiers. Other than the events recorded in the Gospels who or what could have brought that about?

For the reasons itemised earlier in these ruminations it was certainly not grave robbers. Nor was there any sense in the Roman authority arranging such a thing. Pilate had reluctantly acquiesced in the crucifixion of an innocent man to placate a Jerusalem mob. There was nothing to be gained and possibly a great deal to be lost by moving the body elsewhere. Herod, with his strong political links in Rome and ability to harm Pilate's career, would have been less than pleased with the possibility that the 'King of the Jews' had risen from the dead.

The religious authorities, of course, had every reason in the world to control the corpse which is precisely why they went to the trouble of sealing and guarding the tomb. If they could somehow have had control for even four days then the prophecy by Jesus that he would be "killed, and after three days rise again" became a lie and his followers deluded fools. The control that they wanted did not exist. Nor did they remove the corpse to a safer location. Had they done so they would have produced it, or at least directed citizenry to it, when the disciples started preaching about the resurrection. An empty grave was what they feared most.

Which leaves the followers of Jesus as the only other interested party which might have had a motive, and something to gain, from the removal of the corpse from the tomb. Their situation was a mirror image of that of the Temple authority in that they would have wanted the prophecy to become truth. The suggestion that the resurrection was some kind of early con trick does not bare scrutiny.

Firstly, it is difficult to imagine any human agency which could have conjured up the events reported by the guard to the high priests.

Secondly, when Jesus was arrested his followers "all forsook Him and fled" and the night of his execution was spent by them hiding in a locked room "for fear of the Jews." Quite where they would have got sufficient courage from to have left that locked room in the dead of night, ventured to the tomb in order to tackle head on an armed guard and risk whatever penalty was involved for seal breaking and body stealing is impossible to guess.

Thirdly, followers of Jesus would, simply by their close proximity to him in the previous three years, have developed a heightened moral sense and Mary, his mother, could not possibly have gone along with the desecration of his grave. Fourthly, the transformation of his followers from fearful to fearless would not have come about but for the reality of the resurrection. Within a matter of days the disciples were prepared to face down religious authority and preach of the risen Lord, defying injunctions to stop doing so and risking persecution, at least, and possibly execution at most. Nor did that courage last for hours and days but for the rest of their lives. Courage of such magnitude over such periods of time is never based on falsehood. Those apostles defied death precisely because they knew it had been overcome.

The evidence for the resurrection is overwhelming and greater minds than mine have found so;-

“There exists such overwhelming evidence, positive and negative, factual and circumstantial, that no intelligent jury could fail to bring in a verdict that the resurrection is true.”

Lord Darling, former Chief Justice of England.

Or to quote Sherlock Holmes:- “When you have eliminated the impossible whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.”

*Turnmudgeon*

### *Salutations by IT*

**A**t a meeting of Annus Mirabilis 206 recently salutations were about to be given but R.E. Kt Eddie Goodwin was absent, recovering from an operation. It was suggested by the Registrar that his salutation be given via the phone, this was done to the great surprise and pleasure of our Provincial Prior.

Is this the first salutation to be given in this way?

### *Provincial Golf*

**T**he Society held its second golf day in May at the Surrey National Club. The winner once again was John Bond and he was presented with the trophy by the Provincial Prior. The next golf day will be on 23 Sept at the RAC Club Epsom. Contact Roger Charter (phone 01580 765283) for details.

### *Diary Dates 2011*

Provincial Priory (Temple)	Thursday 29 September
Great Priory (Malta)	Tuesday 15 November
Provincial Carol Service	Monday 19 December
Londinium Preceptory	Wednesday 21 December

### *2012*

Provincial Priory (Malta)	Monday 30 January
Great Priory (Temple)	Wednesday 16 May

### *Contact List*

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