*All aboard!*

No. 33, Autumn, 2023

*All us Catholics on board together*

A quarterly Newsletter of encouragement for all Catholics in the parish of St. Pius X, Heidelberg West.

**Mary, Untier of Knots**

or **Mary, Undoer of** **Knots** is the name of both a [Marian devotion](https://everipedia.org/wiki/Marian_devotions/) and a [Baroque](https://everipedia.org/wiki/Baroque/) painting ( [German](https://everipedia.org/wiki/German_language/) : *Wallfahrtsbild* or *Gnadenbild* ) which represents that devotion. The painting by [Johann Georg Melchior Schmidtner](https://everipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Georg_Melchior_Schmidtner/) , of around 1700, is in the [Catholic](https://everipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic/) [pilgrimage church](https://everipedia.org/wiki/Pilgrimage_church/) of [St. Peter am Perlach](https://everipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter_am_Perlach/) , otherwise known as the Perlach church, in [Augsburg](https://everipedia.org/wiki/Augsburg/) , [Bavaria](https://everipedia.org/wiki/Bavaria/) , Germany. [**Pope Francis**](https://everipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Francis/) saw the image while in Germany as a student and promoted her veneration in Latin America.

(Details are taken from the net)

The story is told that Wolfgang Langenmantel (1586-1637) was on the verge of the separation from his wife Sophia Rentz (1590-1649) and therefore sought help from Jakob Rem, the [Jesuit](https://everipedia.org/wiki/Society_of_Jesus/) priest in Ingolstadt. Father Rem prayed to the Blessed Virgin Mary and said: " *In diesem religiösen Akt erhebe ich das Band der Ehe, löse alle Knoten und glätte es* [In this religious act, I raise the bonds of matrimony, to untie all knots and smoothen them]". Immediately peace was restored between the husband and wife, and the separation did not happen. In the memory of this event, their grandson commissioned the painting of the "Untier of Knots".

**Do I need any help with some knots that I am having trouble with?**

Do you remember asking your Mom to untie your shoelaces? Do you remember how frustrated you were as you struggled with knots you created yourself but then could not untie and loosen? Do you ever feel a similar frustration and even hopelessness with other “knots and tangles” you have created in your life?

You and I have many struggles and difficulties that can tie us up in knots each day. Perhaps a knot of illness or the sufferings of a loved one, perhaps an economic knot, or the knot of struggling with a child or grandchild who has left the church, or struggles with addiction or lack of direction in life. These knots, and so many others, can feel like a constant pain in your heart, a persistent thought in your mind.

 **In appreciation of *Appreciation Societies***

I know some people scorned the idea of a *“Cloud Appreciation Society”.* The founder and his supporters felt that clouds had an unrelenting bad press and their magnificence and variety were not only under-appreciated but worse -- went virtually un-noticed.

The same could be said of thumbs. There is no *Thumb Appreciation Society*, and this should surely be a matter of regret. In biology I believe our human thumb is referred to as an “opposing thumb”. With reasonable strength it can touch or press on one or more of the fingers in such a way that things can be grasped. Think for a moment of trying to hold, say, a saucepan with just the fingers, or attempting to extract a splinter. Try, too, to do up buttons with just the fingers.

So I think that thumbs should be celebrated. I have never heard anyone say a “Well done!” to a thumb! Now if there were a *Thumb Appreciation Society* there would be a newsletter and numerous articles singing the praises of the thumb; maybe a photographic section, even a letters section.

In the same category would be a *“Fingernail Appreciation Society”.*

Shakespeare has a line referring to Caesar *“spurning the base degrees by which he did ascend”.* We traipse through the “fresh food” section of a supermarket and do worse than spurning the soil from which these amazingly different and wonderful fruits and vegetables did ascend. Spurning implies some recognition of the existence of the thing spurned. But we don’t sneer at the dirt or the soil that nurtured these products that we so glibly choose. We give it absolutely no thought whatsoever.

And this is why dirt is crying out for an Appreciation Society. Well the dirt itself is not crying out for an Appreciation Society for itself. It’s too self-effacing for that! It’s the situation of total neglect of recognition for something so absolutely essential to life that demands formal and conscious and overt appreciation. And a *Soil Appreciation Society* would be an excellent way to redress this ageless neglect.

The opposite of appreciation is ingratitude. Shakespeare has someone say (or sing, I think):

*“Blow, blow thou Winter wind Thou art not so unkind As man’s ingratitude”* And it is to reverse this tide of ingratitude that *Appreciation Societies* are to be encouraged.

Christo, the Hungarian eccentric wrapper-upper of monuments once wrapped up Little Bay near La Perouse in Sydney. Before that hardly anyone had heard of Little Bay. Even the name is modest. But what Christo was able to do was to draw attention to Little Bay. The nature of his art is to lead the viewer to see things in a way they had never seen them before. The view of Little Bay wrapped in cloth and tied with rope was an amazing sight. People actually looked. Little Bay became famous. Even those who had walked over it, maybe on the way to the water’s edge to fish, now viewed it in a different light.

And that’s the role of Appreciation Societies. When learning for the first time of the existence of the *“Cloud Appreciation Society*” many are led to ask: What’s so special about clouds? What is there to appreciate? And, of course, on reflection, they will start to see clouds in a new way and realise their variety and beauty and wonder. They will become alert to their ever changing grandeur in the sky. They will begin to avoid the reprimand of the Psalmist: “Having eyes they see not”.

It has been remarked on before that many are astonished to find that there is a community hall in Dalby in southern Queensland dedicated to the happy memory of the *cactoblastis* moth. This little creature saved Queensland from being swallowed up by the epidemic spread of cactus. Hence the tribute in the form of a community hall. Around Sydney there are several monuments to animals. One, at the entrance to the botanical gardens, is an attractive bass relief of horses. The monument is a reminder of the indebtedness of our Australian troops to the tens of thousands of horses in their service during the First World War. The wonderful navigator and cartographer Matthew Flinders, who is credited with the creation of the name “Australia”, and whose journey around Australia in 1803-4 led to the publication of the first map of our fair land was comforted on board by the patient company of his cat, *Trim*. Behind a stately bronze statue of Flinders outside the Public Library of New South Wales is a small bronze of Trim as a tribute to his fidelity and friendship.

**Oh that we might be more grateful. Oh that *Appreciation Societies* might flourish. Then we might be wide-eyed and constantly alert to the people and things that we mindlessly take for granted.**

**Prayer at the shopping mall**

“Dear Lord, here I am shopping as you must surely have done with your dear Mother, Mary. Quite possibly Mary would have said the Hebrew or Aramaic equivalent of “Jesus, could you kindly nip down to the shops, pet? I’m clear out of salt!” to you occasionally.”

“I’m grateful that here in Australia we can find almost anything heart could desire. Our great staples are bread and milk, and the shelves are full of different varieties for all tastes and medical requirements. But on reflection I think of the farmers, bakers and other manufacturers who have brought these goods to our shelves. They have my thanks.“

“I sometimes look at the labels on different products, only to find some are made in Turkey, Italy, Malaysia, Thailand, Greece, etc. And people like me are shopping in those countries, too …in similar shopping malls, or at small shops or markets of different types. We form an international band of shoppers.”

“Please bless all those millions of fellow shoppers, and may they enjoy getting home, sorting out their purchases, and preparing meals for their enjoyment … either alone or with loved ones.”

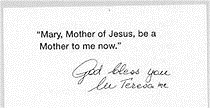
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Mother Teresa quotes

*“If you judge people, you have no time to love them.”*

*“Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.”*

***“Peace begins with a smile..”***

** “I am not sure exactly what heaven will be like, but I know that when we die and it comes time for God to judge us, he will not ask, 'How many good things have you done in your life?' rather he will ask, 'How much love did you put into what you did?”**

**“Every time you smile at someone, it is an action of love, a gift to that person, a beautiful thing.”**

**[The “God bless you … Teresa” is taken from a card Mother Teresa signed]**

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**SAINT ROCH AND HIS DOG**

This saint is also called “Rock” and “Rocco”, and in art is always shown with a dog. And many pictures and paintings show him pulling up his clothing to show his leg with a sore or sores on it.

At a time when the PLAGUE was sweeping Europe, this saint would visit the sick and treat their wounds and sometimes – it was said – would cure them. Then he himself got the plague and came out with sores on his body. And that’s where the dog comes in. The legend is that the dog would lick the sores and bring him loaves of bread. Over time the licking of the sores improved them and the sores healed.

What you believe of all of this is up to you. But if you look up the net you can learn all the legends. And the list of trades and professions that he is **PATRON SAINT** of is lengthy. Wikipedia lists: **bachelors, diseased cattle, dogs, falsely accused people, invalids, Istanbul, surgeons, tile-makers, gravediggers, second-hand dealers, pilgrims, apothecaries.** *[Some people say he is the PATRON SAINT OF DOGS!]*

How to test if a vision is **really** OUR LADY

**[WARNING:** These comments are the personal views of Brother Barry. Feel free to ask anyone else about visions of Our Lady.]

Sometimes you read that Mary has appeared to this one or that one … or to a group. And the question arises in people’s minds … is this fair dinkum or a fake? Is Mary really talking to these people?

Well my TOUCHSTONE for whether a vision might be true is to read what Mary is said to have said. Often it is a message that says that there is a lot of wickedness in the world and that everyone must pray and make sacrifices so that the evil can be overcome.

But I reckon that if Mary took the opportunity to speak to people in a vision she would **FIRSTLY have a message of encouragement and praise and blessing for all those doing generous and selfless things like caring for sick children or for elderly parents; or patiently bathing a handicapped spouse every day; or enduring suffering while working to put food on the table etc. etc.**

I cannot believe that her emphasis would be on the wickedness in the world; but she would surely comment on and strongly commend all the enormous goodness of millions of wonderful people of all religions (and none) throughout the world. If those telling us they are getting messages from visions of Mary and there is little or no mention of the tremendous goodness all around us … THEN I BELIEVE IT IS A FAKE!

*There you are! I’ve said it! I’m only guessing … but that’s how I imagine Our Lady to be … generous with her praise and encouragement of good, generous and honest living.*

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**Gardener’s prayer:**

**WONDER!!** Alice’s primary school has a garden for the children, and is always grateful for adult volunteers. It took Alice some time to decide to offer her services, but it’s now her favourite part of the week.

“There’s nothing like seeing the children’s faces as they watch the plants grow and produce fruit,” she smiled. “It really does remind me that life is full of marvels that most of us never notice. I just wish I’d started helping long ago.”

[From Francis Gay*, Friendship Book*, 2011]

*O Lord please listen to my prayer*

*As I sit upon my garden chair.*

*I’ve cut the hedge and mowed the lawn*

*And planted seeds from early morn.*

*So now I pray you, make them grow*

*Like the pictures on the packets show.*



**Another one of Father Anthony de Mello’s stories:**

****In the nineteenth century, a tourist from the United States visited the famous Polish Rabbi, Hofetz Chaim.

He was astonished to see that the Rabbi’s home was only a simple room filled with books. The only furniture was a table and a bench.

“Rabbi, where is your furniture?” asked the tourist.

“Where is yours?” said Hofetz.

“Mine? But I’m passing through. I’m only a visitor here.”

“So am I.”

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**Mass times**: **Saturday evening** Vigil – 7.00pm; **Sunday**: 9.00am & 11.00am

**Weekdays**: 9.00am Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday;

**Confessions and Rosary**: After 9.00am Mass Saturday mornings

**Church open for prayer**: 8.30am – 4.00pm on school days only

**Taize Prayer**: Last Friday of the Month, 6.00-7.00pm

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