

FDP HERALD

Fellowship of the Order of Dionysis and Paul Newsletter

I Corinthians 13 : 13

"...When I was a Child, I spake as a Child, I understood as a Child, I thought as a Child: but when I became a Man, I put away these childish things.

For now we see through Glass, Darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth Faith, Hope, Love, these three; but the greatest of these is Love."

An ancient parable informs us that many centuries ago a master asked his students 'why do we shout at each other when we are angry?' When none of his students came up with a suitable reply, he responded:

"When two people are angry at each other, their hearts are distant and to make up for that distance they must shout at each other. But when two people fall in love, they don't shout but talk softly because their hearts are close. When they love each other even more and become soul mates, they need not even whisper, because they only have to look at each other to understand each other."

[Meditation & Daily Office Link](#)



Dark Knights Ahead

One of the curious things about Parsifal 'The Naif Knight' in Arthurian mythology; and his quest for the Holy Grail, is that within a few lines of the beginning of his adventure he is presented with the Sacred Plate, which if he had recognised it for what it was it would have made for a very short story indeed. Alas for poor Percival he spends a great deal of time and effort including some very weird and wonderful experiences that eventually, through a highly circuitous route, bring him back to the Holy Grail being presented to him; at which point he recognises it, takes it back to Arthur, and all is restored in Camelot. One might think, If only he had seen it first time around he would have saved himself a whole lot of bother. Strangely his innocence and purity is what enables him to be the ideal Knight to acquire the Grail, yet those very qualities might be argued to be the very things that disabled his initial completion of the task. Throughout his adventures he gained lots experiences that 'opened his mind' and gave him the 'Eyes to See', yet still he managed to remain pure of Heart. One tends to view experiences in Life as removing veils of innocence, and in so doing we allow ourselves to be sullied by the world. As children we hopefully are shielded from much of the mundane world, and we remain blind until perhaps we wish to see. How one remains Pure of Heart as these veils of mystery are lifted one can only speculate... ABJ

Note from the Editor

Dear all,

Humble apologies for the lack of editions of the FDP Herald for the last 3 months. It has been a testing time as to whether to continue with this experimental newsletter. Fortunately thanks to words of wisdom (and a good kick up the backside) by our Sister Sophia this 'Arthurian Special' is presented before you.

The FDP Herald has been somewhat mercurial in its format over the last year, which has perhaps made it more difficult than it need be for other members to submit their much needed contributions.

If the FDP Herald is to continue, I perhaps need to clarify a few bits and bobs that have come up along the way.

The idea of this online 'thing' which we have chosen for the time being to label a newsletter was to create some kind of access point for the various members of the FDP across the globe to feel a little more connected as a community. Initially we had a variety of submissions, some of which were either way too long to be practical, or were not featured straightaway - which some took as meaning 'not wanted'. So submissions were reduced to being given by the same three members. As with any publication of this kind I have attempted to have some kind of theme or 'thread of coherence' running through each edition. If those submissions didn't happen to match that train of thought, they have been kept for a later date, when we get enough submissions on a similar thread to make something that seems connected and in sync with each other. If FDP members would like a different format, or like to suggest particular themes for each edition this would be most welcome, as to be honest it is a bit of a task coming up with ideas.

TTFN Ed.

Lectionary Readings

9 Nov	2 Thes 2 : 1 - 17	Luke 20 : 27 - 38
16 Nov	2 Thes 3 : 6 - 13	Luke 21 : 5 - 19
20 Nov	Col 1 : 11 - 20	Luke 23 : 33 - 43
27 Nov	Rom 13 : 11 - 14	Matt 24 : 36 - 44
4 Dec	Rom 15 : 4 - 13	Matt 3 : 1 - 12



King Arthur & The Chi-Ro

For some the symbol PX means Peace, as it represents the first and last letters of the Latin word "PaX". To many the shape of this symbol resembles a key, and perhaps the Keys to Heaven, held by St. Peter.

Phonetically Rho & Chi, produce the sound "Rock" or perhaps "ReX" - both of which have interesting connections. The first is that 'Peter', comes from the word 'Petrus/Petra' meaning 'Rock/Stone'. The second 'Rex' means 'King'. An interesting aside here is that Chi & Rho are the first two letters of the Greek word for 'Golden' - Chrysolos, as well as others.

Stretching our links a little further, the word 'Peter' sounds remarkably similar to the ancient Egyptian God 'Ptah' whose symbol was the 'Djed' which was reckoned to represent the Human spinal column, and represented stability.

One might also look at the symbol PX as perhaps a sword in a stone, or perhaps not. However there is an interesting story about a famous sword known as 'ZulFaquir' in Islamic mythology. The true spelling of the word and its origins are unclear. The commonly agreed meaning of it comes from 'Szul /Dhul' meaning 'Lord / Master' and the 'Faquar' meaning the 'backbone / spine'.

King Arthur's sword was named Excalibur, which some say comes from the abbreviation of the Latin words "Ex calce Liberatus" which means "Liberated from Stone".

If I can pull you into my world further still; 'Rho' has the equivalent in Hebrew 'Resh', which means 'Head of a Man'. Depending on the reference 'Chi' has its equivalent in Hebrew as either 'Quoph', meaning possibly monkey (the Head rises above the Monkey?). Or alternatively 'Chi' has its equivalent as 'Samech' meaning 'Fish'. However what is interesting about 'Samech', is that the ancient Phoenician symbol for 'fish' is almost identical to the 'Djed' spine of the Egyptian 'Ptah'...

Brj

Arthur: A Meditation

“It was a night in late March, nothing stirred, the land was completely silent and white with frost, the air was as clear as crystal, the moon was full, tinging the dark indigo sky with violet. I sat at the back of the old chapel contemplating the significance of that 'other' history. I dwelt upon the nature of the Grail, and reflected upon the multitude of explanations that various authors had given for it. My thoughts turned first to Joseph of Arimethea and the miraculous cup used by Our Lord to initiate the Eucharist on the eve of His crucifixion; then to the cauldron of ancient Celtic myth, the provider of plenty in both fortune and health, and wondered.

Thus, in the quiet stillness of my meditation the veil parted and I beheld from a great height, as if I were a falcon hovering in the sky, a multitude of torch lit processions, streaming like rivers of light across a great plain towards a common centre that since the beginning of time had been the spiritual heart of an ancient people. As I looked on I saw that it was a wonderful stone circle. Stonehenge it is called now, but long long ago in a time long forgotten, it was known, so my muse informed me, by another name.

My muse continued, the enormous stones of the Henge were once dressed by the finest masons of the day, truly did they express the apex of the mason's craft, and fittingly did they embody the character and aspirations of the Britons; for what few realise today is that these stones were but a mighty framework, a framework upon which were hung shields of skilfully wrought metals emblazoned with archaic symbols, symbols that represented the unique egrigores of the tribes that constituted the nation of the Britons.

These sacred devices were formed out of gold and silver won from mines which even then were hoary with age, and were decorated with enamel work for which this island was justifiably famed. Thus it was that at certain times of the year the people gathered within and about this sanctuary, awaiting the coming of the glorious light of the new-born sun, which, rising above the eastern horizon filled the Henge with every hue of its mystic light. This light, through the orientation of the emblazoned shields fell upon a golden cup full of purified water and charged it with its mystic essence. This cup is the Grail of the Britons that is sought still by so many, and Stonehenge is the Round Table.

That those symbols existed, and those mystic and archaic rites were performed, I knew without question to be true, but where those marvellous devices, those sacred treasures of the British people, are now concealed remains a mystery; for when the Roman legions came they were hidden in secret places and only partially revealed when they left.

Merlin was the key; he was the link between the ancient past and the time of Arthur's reign. Perhaps, if Arthur had survived awhile longer, long enough to placate the contending factions within his family, then things might have been different. However, I was not to know at that time, for my vision faded and I was left to reflect on the significance of this experience, and an understanding about the nature of Arthur emerged out of the depths of my heart.”

We all know the stories of Arthur, how he was conceived and born, how he was given to Merlin who brought him up according to the old ways; how he came to power during the chaos that followed the collapse of the Roman Empire. How he led the Romano British people in their struggle against the invading forces of the Saxons, the Irish and the Scots. How he formed the organisation we call the Knights of the Round Table and of their adventures in a fabulous world of enchantment, culminating in the grail quest.

Questions arise such as who was Merlin and what did he represent? He certainly was a key figure, without whose assistance Arthur would never have come to power. It is possible that the legendary figure of Merlin symbolised in a veiled manner the old pre-Roman administration that had re-asserted itself when the Roman legions left, combining out of necessity with the remnants of the Romano-British establishment to form a stable government and administration. In this context it is also possible that Merlin was a druid or something like that.

Although such questions are very interesting, they have, as far as I can see, obscured something very real and quite beautiful. In asking such questions we have created many Arthur's where there was once and indeed still is, only one. Without doubt, there is an historical and political Arthur, a king or warlord, who led the Britons in a successful campaign against the Saxon invaders. This Arthur played a full role in the politics of 6th century Europe – as legends testify.

However, there is another Arthur - the Mythical Arthur – a leader of a band of great knights that went a questing in the magical realm of enchantment. Furthermore, there is yet another Arthur – the Spiritual Arthur – who with his knights of the Round table focussed upon the great spiritual quest of the Holy Grail.

And there is yet another Arthur – the Cosmic Arthur – the Great Bear or Ursa Major, the defender of the great treasure that lay at the centre of the Universe, the egg (or indeed pearl of great price) protected by the great dragon Draco.

These are all one Arthur.

An Arthur that has been addressed piecemeal over the years. But my muse shows me a more complete and consistent Arthur who was a formal manifestation our ancestors' understanding of the role of symbolism in a culture that had little time for letters.

Br. Nonesuch

Submissions Please

Contributions for this newsletter are needed from members of the FDP. Short letters, pieces of news, queries relating to previous articles, relevant film & book reviews. Please send your submissions in PDF format or text document via email to: austinburnjones@hotmail.com