

Christian Vegetarian Association UK

Working towards a violence-free world

Home of Veg4Lent



NEWSLETTER

Lenten - February 2007 - No.3



Our In-Flight Team

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Our Threefold Ministry

- 1. Of Environment and Health*
- 2. Of Animal Rights and Welfare*
- 3. Of Discipleship*

Our Threefold Mission

- 1. To support and encourage Christian Vegetarians in the United Kingdom.*
- 2. To share with non-vegetarian Christians how a vegetarian diet can add meaning to one's faith, aid one's spirituality, and enhance one's moral life.*
- 3. To show all those with eyes to see that a plant-based way of life represents good, responsible Christian stewardship for all of God's Creation.*

Our Website

www.christianvegetarian.co.uk

Our UK Chat-Group

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/christveg>

“Show me, Lord, your way so that I may walk in your truth”, *Psalm 85, v11.*

Photo: - See back page.

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Editorial...

Our Christian Religion matters. Christianity is about things that matter. Things matter to Christians. The things that God gives us make Life possible. Our Religion, and the things that we utilize in its practice, are about valuing our God and and caring about the Life He gives. Let us not be indifferent about any of it.

The sun is rising upon our homes and churches earlier each morning; its warmth and brightness increase. The most testing season of our Liturgical Year is now here. We may open our curtains, windows and doors a little wider. We may open our eyes, ears and minds a little wider. It's time to wake-up the world with the dawn.

Our God is true. He is straight, He is right, He is the full spectrum of light; golden and white. He is the love that we want to learn about. He is the knowledge that we love. He is our Teacher; His wisdom permeates the soil in the ground, and reigns from above.

Be resourceful this Lent, & good Easter!

CVAUK Newsletter Editor, Eleisha.

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Testimony...

CVAUK Chat Group Manager - Jerry Howse

I can't put my finger on an exact moment when I decided to become a Christian, or a vegetarian for that matter. Both things happened quite gradually over a period of time. I grew up in the small Cotswold market town of Stow-on-the-wold in a family that wasn't particularly religious. It was as a teenager attending Westwoods Grammer school in the nearby village of Northleach that I became involved with a scripture union group that met once a week during dinner time.

After a few weeks, I decided to go to my local parish church in Stow but unfortunately parish churches in rural areas are not a very exciting place for teenagers and after three or four weeks, I soon lost interest. Although for many years after that I didn't attend church, or consider myself a Christian, I realised that self-centred people who were driven by a desire to 'get on in life' were usually quite miserable and unfulfilled, while those with a genuine faith in God, who sacrificed themselves to serve others had a peace and joy in their lives which is seldom found in our society.

Like most people, I grew up eating what my parents put in front of me without giving it a second thought. But things started to change when channel four television first came on air. I think it would have been in 1984. On their first night of broadcasting, they showed a documentary called 'the animal film'. This was the first time I had seen footage of intensive factory farming or animals being slaughtered. It had a profound effect on me. I didn't become vegetarian there and then, but it definitely sowed the seeds which would eventually germinate some years later.

In 1987 my family moved to Cheltenham where I met my future wife Tina two years later. We were married in 1990 and had our daughter Jemma in 1992. After getting married I could choose what to eat instead of just eating what was put in front of me every night. So I began to eat less meat and more vegetarian meals. I found that Tina also felt the same way and by 1993 we had both become vegetarians.

When Jemma was about two years old, Tina started to take her to a mother and toddler group at our local church, where the vicar persuaded her to attend a service in the church hall every Friday morning, which was especially for parents with small children who couldn't make the usual Sunday services. As I was working night shifts at the time and had Fridays free, I went along as well and it wasn't long before we became Sunday regulars.

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CVAUK Newsletter - Code of Practice...

It is the intention of the CVAUK Team:

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How do you defend your Faith when you are told "...But Jesus ate meat!"?

CVAUK would like to compile a booklet of helpful responses to testing statements which assume justification in Scripture. Please help us in this task by submitting any arguments or interpretations which have helped you.

We would particularly like to receive contributions from members of the Clergy, or which are validated by the Church's/es' ordained or otherwise qualified Theologians, such as an imprimatur or other endorsement to say that what is written is recognized as being in accordance with the Christian Faith.

If you are not qualified, but you have a good and valid interpretation to share, your submission will still be considered.

Jerry Howse Testimony continued...

We found, however, that we were the only vegetarians in the church, and while most of the congregation saw us as harmless cranks, some were openly hostile towards our beliefs. Even the vicar made a few jokes about vegetarians in his sermons. After a few years, we stopped going to church for a while and when we did go again, we started going to a completely different church called New Life Church. It has since changed its name to Christian City Church, Cheltenham. It's a great church, but once again, we are the only vegetarians there, and one or two love to ridicule us for it. It got to a stage, a couple of years back, that when we were invited out to dinner by other church members, I actually ate the meat that they put in front of me because they had made me believe that Christianity and vegetarianism were opposed to one another and I would have to make my mind up between one or the other.

Thankfully, Tina and Jemma stuck by their principles and I vowed that I would never be bullied into compromising my beliefs again. Since then all three of us have become vegan and I am so glad to have found CVAUK. Its nice to know that we are not alone and that there are other Christians who believe that a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle is consistent with the Christian faith and we don't have to feel like outsiders anymore.

1. To produce a newsletter as frequently as is required in order to serve, encourage and equip you, our members, with the expertise, Theological back-up, and campaign advice that will best serve the objectives of our Threefold Mission and Ministry (see front cover).
2. To undertake the above through the material economies that we can make of our pooled resources.
3. To avoid confrontation, so far as is possible.
4. To obtain all appropriate permissions before distributing information, whether inside or outside of a church.
5. To encourage and support each other in the practice of our Christian Faith through sharing views in this Newsletter and in other suitable forms of communication, all in conformity with the Code of Practice (currently draft, but to be agreed and subsequently revised in future Annual General Meetings).
6. To ensure that any statements, letters and articles published in the name of CVAUK are in agreement with existing Animal Welfare and Environmental declarations by the recognized Ecclesiastical authorities, or any approved statements made by members of clergy or otherwise respected Theologians (see Appendix 1,2 &3 of the CVAUK Draft Code Of Practice; up-dated compilations for members' reference to be produced in due course.)
7. To restrict our public debate of Biblical subjects to those included in shared Canonical texts.
8. To avoid controversial and/or categorical statements that cannot be substantiated by Scripture, Historical Evidence or Scientific proofs in accordance with accepted methodologies.

The CVAUK Team currently comprises only five members, and so we would like to remind you, wherever you can, to be self-regulating in these matters. Your active contribution and feedback to this Newsletter (the Chat Group or direct to the Team members) is needed in order for it to fulfil its purpose. Members are also invited to join the In-Flight Team and become more involved in the day-to-day running of the Association, and to join campaigns. - such as 'Perceiving the Kingdom' for which a vegetarian Priest & secretary in each are required).

May We Suggest...

1 Timothy 4:1-5: Do not be discouraged if this text is quoted in support of Christians eating flesh.

Firstly, St Paul is not criticising believers who already know God. The Laws that Jesus gave His Church are to train children & save sinners still in need of conversion. By contrast, the rules of heretical sects and imposters are arbitrary, heedless of right and wrong, merely deifying their identifying practices.

If you are still worried about being a 'vegetarian' *instead of a 'Christian'*, scrutinize your personal faith.

The Apostles Creed is thought to be a sign of the secret password uttered by believing hearts, whenever the Gatekeeper of the Sheepfold asks "Friend or Foe?".

First formulated by the Apostles after Pentecost, and used at baptisms and other initiations since earliest times, it is a measure for true belief in the Holy Trinity.

It was learned off by heart, and not committed to paper for hundreds of years, until differences emerged and a shared version needed to be agreed (later followed by the Nicene Creed): it is a stamp of Christian identity.

Does its meaning shape your life and values, and can you say in truth the words that begin "**I believe...**"?

Testimony...

Fr Derek Reeve, CVAUK Patron, Roman Catholic Priest, retired from secular administration.

These are my own reasons for being a vegetarian and how it links up with my faith...

At first, I had little time for those who I thought were trying to *pretend* that Jesus was a vegetarian. I thought this contrary to the whole doctrine of the Incarnation which is basic to our Christian faith. We believe that in Jesus, God became truly human and so he would have been subject to the limitations of his time and culture. Those who might have abstained from eating meat would have been those who did so as some sort of penitential practice and this was not Jesus' style at all. We know that he enjoyed life, and especially banquets, and so he would, therefore, have eaten what his contemporaries ate.

Through the centuries abstinence from flesh-meat (though not fish) for penitential reasons, came to be recommended as part of an ascetic lifestyle and was recommended by the great monastic founders like Saint Benedict in his Rule. Saint Bernard too, recommended abstaining from flesh-meat but this was because he believed that the eating of meat 'inflamed the passions' so we can see where his thinking was going! Many religious orders, like the Dominicans, for example, followed this trend, but always as a penitential practice and never for any thought out theological reason.

As for myself, I was always disinclined to kill animals and so reluctant to eat them. Although, I thought for many years that I was being eccentric and abstaining was too unsociable to put into practice. However, with an increased interest in animal welfare and the abominable conditions in which animals due for slaughter were often kept, I became more and more anxious about eating meat and, as soon as I was free to do so (when my days as a curate ended and I became a parish priest with a kitchen of my own), I decided that I would no longer eat meat or fish. This was some forty years ago and it has, in fact, never been difficult (although it has become much easier over the years as foods have been progressively labelled as vegetarian-friendly). I have, in truth only eaten meat twice in those years and both times by mistake, which proves it isn't difficult!

I am not a vegetarian for health reasons, but I think, at 76+, I am a reasonably good advertisement for vegetarianism since I have had no major illnesses and am in good health generally.

My reasons, as a Christian and a priest, for being a vegetarian are, very simply, that I believe it is more in accordance with the principles of the Gospel which teach us that the way to fullness of life is the way of love. It seems very reasonable that that love should not be limited to our fellow human-beings but should be extended to all sentient creatures since, with the advances in our understanding of other creatures we know that they are capable of suffering as we ourselves are. (Would any of us eat our pet dog or cat?) I believe that most people would be much more reluctant to eat other sentient creatures if they had to kill them themselves though those who fish or hunt seem strangely able to put the feelings of their prey to one side. I think a visit to the abattoir or any battery farm would certainly convince most people. And I do believe that employing others to do our killing for us is to brutalize them and, for this, we are also responsible.

My reasons for my vegetarianism are very similar to those of committed Buddhists since, like them, I believe it wrong to inflict pain on any sentient creature and the way of compassion is equally applicable to other creatures as to our fellow human-beings.

As you will see, my arguments are not based on biblical texts or the like but, very simply on the fact that Jesus said that he came that we "should have life and have it to the full". I believe that he was not talking about some airy-fairy future life in heaven but the life of the kingdom here and now. I believe, very humbly, that not killing other creatures does help us to be more sensitive and so more fully human, (though I know I fail miserably to live up to the standards that Jesus sets).

There is a saying of George Fox (founder of the Quakers) that I cherish and often quote when talking about ideals. Fox was approached by a member of the Court who was interested in joining the Quaker movement but who felt that his wearing a sword, as part of his Court dress, would make it impossible for him to do so. Fox, who enjoined strictly pacifist principles, replied "wear it as long as you can!"

I believe that if we are truly open to the Spirit, then not only will we become convinced about the wrongness of violence in relationships both personal and between nations, but also we will see the wrongness of violence towards our fellow creatures.

Don't Exaggerate...

- Water is not a typical fluid, but it is simple, and essential for all living things. There is no other liquid that can replace it.
- It is formed of three commonplace atoms, two hydrogen and one oxygen, and its life-giving qualities depend upon the particular intensity of the relationship within and between these molecules.
- If the molecular bond were 2% weaker or stronger, H₂O would be either gaseous or crystallized. It would be part of the air, or part of the ground, and not flowing (which makes it so useful to living bodies).
- If gravity and warmth did not exist on our planet in the way they do, H₂O would not be a life-giving liquid.
- Even new stars cannot be born without the presence of water.

- Water exists in organisms within cells, and outside cells, its molecules being able to pass through cell membranes.
- It is our unit of measurement, one litre of water being the defining weight of one kilogram.
- The water requirements of each individual creature vary according to type, age, environmental conditions and activity.
- A human foetus is 90% water (the same as green grass). As the body ages and muscular tissues is replaced with fatty tissue, human water content decreases to 56% in males over 50 and 47% in women.
- For water management purposes, the World Health Organisation has calculated that adults between the ages of 19 and 50 need to drink between 2.9 litres (men) and 2.2 litres (women) per day. This takes into account about 710 ml of fluid which may be obtained from other sources.
- Pregnant women require 4.8 litres per day, lactating women 5.5 litres.
- Internal metabolism can make water in small quantities, depending upon type and amount of dry food consumed. This ability varies from species to species, and is most vital in hot, dry climates where water requirements are highest.
- Humans need a reasonable intake of fluid first thing in the morning; before, during and after exercise; in small quantities during the day so that thirst is not felt; and before going to bed in sufficient measure to supply the body's needs during sleep.
- The normal daily turnover of water in a human adult is 4% of total body weight.
- Dehydration in humans begins when 2% to 3% of body weight in fluids is lost. Symptoms include tiredness, headaches, and decreased alertness.
- When more than 10% of body weight is lost, collapse and death may be expected.
- Death by dehydration in humans may occur between 48 and 100 hours (2 to 4 days) without drink.
- By contrast, chickens may survive up to 6 days without water in cool temperatures.
- Pigs have much greater water requirements than humans; weaning piglets consume about 20 litres per day for each 100kg of body weight. As they reach market weight, their water needs decline to about 7 litres a day.
- Sows, who are not pregnant, require 5 litres of water daily, pregnant sows up to 8 litres, and lactating sows between 15 and 20 litres – per 100 kg body weight.
- All ruminants lose a high percentage of water through excretion. In hot climates they require considerably more water than in temperate climates.
- Sheep with very thick coats (such as Merino) are more insulated against water loss (provided that they are not sheared) than more natural and historic breeds.
- The water content in grass can be utilized by ruminants, but nutrients present in dry foods are also required, and these must be supplemented with drinking water.
- Ruminants are only slightly more effective than humans at converting food nutrients into water through metabolic processes.
- Lactating ewes consume between 100% and 164% more water than dry ewes.
- Ewes may need 2 litres of water to each kilogram of dry feed eaten per day in the first month of pregnancy, to 4.3 litres to each kilogram of dry feed in their fifth month. Ewes carrying twins may need twice as much.
- Grazing cattle, if provided with easy access to quality water, will choose to drink between 2 and 5 times each day. If there is a greater distance to travel to the source, or temperatures are very low, they will make do with less.
- In temperatures of 15 to 25 degrees Celsius, cattle bred for beef require between 3 to 5 litres of water for each kilogram of dry matter consumed per day.
- Young and lactating cattle require between 10% to 50% more than those which have passed their first birthday but are not pregnant. Cattle used for dairy need more water still, depending upon expected milk yields.
- Fish, marine mammals and other aquatic species need vast quantities of clean, rich mineral water to live in, breathe in, to drink, and be nourished by.
- The fishing industry is still largely unmonitored, but it has been recorded that in the year 2000, 94.8 million tonnes of fish were caught.
- The catches in the last decade are considered to be as high as possible, and yields are already significantly smaller due to lack of fish, and species once commonplace are now threatened with imminent extinction.
- There are 7,283 fishing vessels operating from the UK alone.
- Because fish take their nutrition from the water in which they swim, pollutants in the waters are absorbed like nutrients into their flesh. Scientists are identifying increasingly, and consistently, high levels of toxins in fish flesh, where it has been possible for them to carry out tests to monitor safety.
- It is now thought that all Salmon are contaminated with toxins above levels recommended for consumption.

- The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has just begun a 15 year recovery plan for blue tuna in the Mediterranean, where they are now depleted. In 1994, 39,000 tonnes were caught but by 2002 it was only possible to catch 22,000 tonnes. Surveillance and restrictions over shorter fishing seasons will now enable scientists to monitor practices and reduce wastefulness.
- It is estimated that 70% of the world's available drinking water is used for agriculture. Industry consumes 15%. Households use 15%, with much wastage for drinking, cooking, washing, sanitation and gardening.
- In the UK, water companies are only obliged to provide drinking water. With shortages, the necessity for greywater recycling, rainwater harvesting, domestic purification systems &c, with methods of returning clean water to aquifers, becomes increasingly clear.
- At the Water Convention in Geneva on 17-19 January 2007, the World Health Organisation spokesman stated that "Water is a renewable resource with a limited capacity to recover from unsustainable human activities".
- We all share the same water. In addition to the seas which unite our coastlands, Europe has several hundred cross-boundary water bodies (including rivers, lakes and ground waters). Nations depend upon their neighbours for anything up to 90% of their essential water requirements. This requires international cooperation.
- In Eastern Europe, 16% of the population still lacks drinking water at home. In 2006, there were 170,000 cases of serious water-related diseases reported in humans.
- In Central and Eastern Europe, more than half of all households lack a continuous supply of safe water and/or an adequate sanitation system. Most households have their own wells, but toilets are often located close by, on higher ground, and contaminate the wells.
- One hundred million Europeans lack access to safe water.
- Every day, 37 European children die of diarrhoea.
- Disposal of wastewater in European villages is a serious problem, and household waste is typically dumped on river banks or beside roads. Water available in poorer districts is now declining in quality, and may be drawn during just a few hours each day.
- England and Wales are not exceptional; poor communities in the UK also have poor environments, poorer air quality, are closer to industrial sites and pollution, and are exposed to greater flood risks.
- In England and Wales alone, 190 million tonnes of waste is produced every year from households, business and industry, of which the greater part is sent to landfill.
- Inefficient use of energy and water &c costs UK businesses about £36 billion per year.
- Ageing sewage systems, and other widespread pollution problems such as inadequate drainage and run-off from roads and fields, are in urgent need of huge investment and extensive work.
- The Church requires that pure water, as available to the local community in the place of celebration, be used for all of her Liturgy. Any water which has been blessed, and is surplus to requirements, should (ideally) be reverently returned to Creation through the earth where there is wild, open grassland. That these elements and conditions should exist for all communities is a most vital pastoral concern of the Church.
- It is because life is given to all creatures through pure water that we Christians consider pure water to be holy. It is because pure water is holy that we use it to administer God's love in our shared worship.

With thanks to the Environment Agency for providing information in support of this item.

Keep In Touch...

Between the beginning of Lent, and Pentecost, there are many important Saints days to be remembered. Amongst these are those of three of the Patron Saints of the British Isles:

St David, the 6th century strict vegetarian Bishop and Patron of Wales on Thursday 1st March 2007;

St Patrick, the 5th century father of the most austere Celtic church in Ireland, Bishop and Patron of Ireland on Saturday 17th March 2007;

St George, the 4th century soldier who is thought to have laid down his life in Palestine for Christ rather than take another's life in unjust war, Martyr, and Patron of England, Monday 23 April 2007 (also William Shakespeare's birthday); *(Despite attempts to retranslate him and keep the British Isles united, **The Feast of St Andrew**, Apostle and Patron of Scotland, is remembered on 30th November, the anniversary of his martyrdom. and always has been by the Church/es.)*

Other important days for soberly feasting ourselves on Christian teaching include:

The Chair of St Peter on Thursday 22nd February 2007, when the mandate of the first Bishop of Rome is contemplated.

The Solemnity of St Joseph, as Husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and Patron of the Universal Church, is on Monday 19th March 2007. Also remembered later in the season as '**St Joseph the worker**' on 1st May 2007.

The Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord is on Monday 26th March 2007, when we recall Gabriel's announcement; The Feast of the **Evangelist St Mark** is on Wednesday 25th April 2007.

The Feast of **St Matthias, Apostle**, on 14th May 2007.

The **Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord**, is on Sunday 20th May 2007, which is also **World Communications Day**, when we pray heightened conscientiousness & integrity in Journalism and other mass media services.



Keep In Touch... *Vegetarian Animals... Donkeys*

Big hairy ears, large soulful eyes, begging to be hugged. It is hard for anyone not to fall for the charms of the Delightful donkey.

We fall in love with them as children. Hard working beach donkeys are often the first introduction we have to a living, breathing Eyeore. Straight from the pages of Winnie the Pooh, our Christmas nativity scenes, Christmas cards and of course the Easter story.

The humble donkey is loved by millions of people.

One would hope that this love would ensure that this delightful creature, which is so entwined with our lives, would be cared for the world over. Sadly the truth is often much bleaker and many donkeys lead very difficult and sad lives, hence the need for the world-renowned Donkey sanctuary based in Devon. Its founder Dr. Elizabeth Svenson started this wonderful heaven on earth for donkeys. It is the fifth largest animal charity in England and does much needed work abroad, working in poor countries providing veterinary treatment and education to donkey owners that could not otherwise afford or even find it.

Donkeys are too often typecast as stubborn but I think that their so called stubbornness, is more often or not, an intelligent animal showing its reluctance at being asked to do something that it is not happy about i.e. carrying too heavy a load, be it a heavy person or supplies of some sort.

Donkeys are in fact, highly intelligent and they do love to work. However, that willingness must not be harnessed for our own needs to the detriment of the animal. Most average sized donkeys, for example, should never be forced to carry any person who weighs over 8 stone.

These animals can survive on less food than an equivalent pony or horse because their natural habitat is one that is arid and warm, desert-like. Due to this, their feet need regular trimming when they are kept on pasture, and a shelter is a must. A cold, wet donkey is a very unhappy one.

Most people don't realise that donkeys come in a range of different sizes. I was stunned the first time I came face to face with a Poitou donkey from France. Meeting a perfectly proportioned donkey that is the size of a large horse is just too weird! I felt like Alice in Wonderland, that I had shrunk. It just didn't seem right, and their longish hair simply added to the strangeness. Along with the American Mammoth donkey, they can reach a staggering 17 hands. Domestic donkeys stand between 10 to 14 hands.

Their very loud braying can be heard for up to 2 miles, this is an excellent way of helping a scattered herd to stay in touch. Mind you, you wouldn't want to be standing right next to one while they did it!

Their lifespan varies from an average, but still impressive, 40 years, to the odd one reaching 60! The range of colours is huge; black, brown, grey, broken colours and even tri-colours, with every shade of those imaginable. Of course, we mustn't forget one of the loveliest things about them, the marking of the cross on their backs, which is so beautiful on the solid colours.



Overall, the donkey is an intelligent, gentle, loving companion. They can be used for driving, showing, and working but most of all, as precious companions that will enjoy human company. They will cooperate with you, as long as you don't bully them or expect too much unfair hard work from them. It has been so typical of people to expect donkeys to carry such a burden, that we even got the expression 'donkey work' from them.

I think God gave us a beautiful creature in the donkey. Lets all give thanks to God for them this coming Easter season, and let's make a vow, that should we ever come across any maltreated ones, we will never turn a blind eye but report the crime to the RSPCA. **Happy Easter!**

Tracy and a New Forest donkey.

Tracy Gwillim

Thanksgiving Before Meals...

Bless us, O'Lord, And these, Thy gifts,
Which of Thy Bounty We Now Receive,
Through Christ, Our Lord, Amen.

May the souls of all who have died
For lack of food, for eating the wrong food,
Or for being turned into food,
Be sustained in Your merciful presence,
And may all the redeemed know joy
In Your peace and perpetual light,
Amen.

Thanksgiving After Meals...

Thank you, O'Lord, for sunshine, earth and water,
For growth and harvests, prudence and protection.
Thank you for all the living things who participate,
In the cycles and seasons, working with Creation,
And taking no more than is their need.

Bless your families, from earthworms and insects,
To all who farm, transport, package and sell,
Your cruelty-free and healthy products,
Fruits of Your deep justice and compassion,
Which help to ensure a future for this world.
Keep abstainers, vegetarians, vegans; pure & Christian
Safe and true in Your love and fold.
Amen.

Thanksgiving on Fast Days...

Bless with strength, good will and friendship,
Your pilgrim people, called to listen to Your voice
In sympathy with all Your creatures sorely tried.
May our hearts and minds with love be shot,
Let Your tears slice down and through us cut.
Model us anew, prepare us for more tender stew,
As living and pleasing sacrifices to You.
Still aching bowels and fill with praise,
Bequeath all Your creatures length of days,
Make fruits and crops our holy feasts,
Apportioned to the greatest creatures and the least.
Amen.

Thanksgiving for Easter...

With all the living and the dying
We thank You For Your Rising.
***You have surpassed the expectations of the disappointed.
Your loving acceptance overwhelms the rejected.
Those who ignored You will turn and recognize You.***
*Help us to mend Your lasting peace
Amongst all Your creatures,
So may Your Kingdom, freed from weapons, be secure.
May We Share in the Blessings of Your Beatitudes,
By keeping faithful witness to Your Love.*
Amen.

Veganizing Easter and Passover Celebrations

by Fr John M Ryder

Easter and Passover share many common threads. Each of the holidays connects people to their spiritual roots, brings families and friends together, and celebrates the occasion with foods that are part of a long tradition. Vegans, too, enjoy familiar holiday traditions but recognize that animals are sentient beings. Their celebrations are conducted in ways that do not cause pain, suffering, or death to other creatures.

EASTER CELEBRATION

Easter Sunday is a celebration of the resurrection of Christ and ends a 40-day period of fasting and penitence that commemorates Jesus' fasting in the wilderness. For Western Christians, Easter falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the vernal equinox about March 21.

There are many familiar traditions (apart from all the church-going) like presenting the children with *Easter baskets*, and watching them find their treasures during the customary *Easter egg hunt*.

Vegans practice the same traditions but the packaging takes on a different focus. For instance, the vegan Easter basket would not likely be filled with the typical candies made of refined white sugar whitened by refining the sugar over animal bones.

The *vegan Easter basket* might be filled with fruit juice sweetened whole grain cookies made without eggs.

Nuts in the shell may appear in the basket along with little wrapped packages containing simple gifts.

Though eggs may seem like a benign food that does not kill the chicken, confined chickens raised for egg production suffer a miserable, painful life. Instead of hunting for hidden Easter eggs, vegan children might search in the garden or the house for fresh carrots and little boxes of raisins that become a dinnertime carrot-raisin salad. Possibly the hunt may take on a special theme that appeals to children, like searching for little toy dinosaurs or other animals.

In many western homes, the Easter meal is centred on the time-honoured ham. However, in the vegan household we spare our friend, the highly intelligent pig, and choose a planet-friendly entrée instead. With vegetarian meat substitutes made from soy and wheat gluten, the main course can easily imitate the flavour of ham (if desired) without disturbing the real pig. Ground and grilled pumpkin seeds taste uncannily like pork crackling, and mix well with a little orange conserve for topping.

Because we aim for innovative food combinations, we plan our menu with lively flavours that blend together to offer extraordinary taste sensations. Our festive dinner then becomes a memorable event.

Suggested Christian Vegetarian Menu for the Season...

Shrove Tuesday...

Pancakes: An everyday batter-bread, varying according to region, cooked simply on a griddle or in a pan. Made special by the need for Christians to use up all dairy products and other foods not permitted through Lent, which begins with the **fasting and abstinence of Ash Wednesday**. Vegans can substitute for an egg, one tablespoon of ground linseed mixed with three tablespoons of water. Cornflour, or any other leftover binding agent, could be used. Baking powder can also be added, or self-raising flour for a fuller dough. The batter can be sweetened with apple juice. Skill and kitchen equipment available will determine what sort of pancake is made; Vegans may not have omelette pans. If you lack the griddle for wafer-thin French crepes and galettes, and the batter sticks, perhaps Yorkshire pudding cups baked in the oven are preferable. Failing that, shallow fried fruit fritters may suffice to mark the transition into the Lenten Season.

Rose Sunday (Laetare) and Mothering Sunday...

Simnel Cake: Known in England since medieval times, developed from a Roman custom, the name comes from the Latin for 'fine', referring to the flour used. Girls in service were allowed to go home on this day, taking with them a cake specially made to give to their mothers. If the family were poor, and the cake a rich, fruit one it could save for Easter Sunday. Recipes vary: try a light vegan sponge sandwich of best white organic flour, with a little chopped fruit and candied peel. When cool, fill with a layer and top with pure apricot spread and vegan almond paste or marzipan. Decorate with one large marzipan ball in the centre to represent Christ, and 11 small round the edges for the true disciples. Wrap the edge with a pink ribbon, present with a pot of roses, and eat on the day.

Palm Sunday...

Burnt eggs in the Jewish Passover meal represent potential life destroyed. A fitting meditation to begin Holy Week, considering the babes from whose mouths came praise for Our Lord Jesus, who were slain at His birth, who rejoiced with palms to welcome Him, and the millions whose lives are terminated, up to these times, even in the womb.

Devised fauxEggs with Green Leafy Veg: Buy a block of firm tofu, the size of at least one egg for each serving, and carefully bevel the edges so that they resemble half-eggs. Scoop out a large yolk-shaped semi-sphere on the top surface, and gently poach in brine until cooked then lightly grill. Crumble the tofu-off-cuts into a bowl and blend well with vegan mayonnaise, colour with saffron (boil in a little syrup, and crush in the yellow crystals when cool) and flavourings to taste (mustard powder, cayenne pepper, turmeric, rice vinegar, vegan worcestershire sauce &c). Make a leafy green veg bed of steamed spinach or savoy cabbage, or fresh salad leaves, tossed in a dressing of 3-citrus fruit juices and a little maple syrup, and rest the tofu egg-half on top. Fill the hollow with the yellow paste, and top with cherry tomatoes. Finely dice your favourite vegan Scheese to sprinkle on top, and decorate the table with glasses of celery sprig 'palms'.

Holy Thursday...

Seder Meal: It is becoming customary to begin the Triduum (The Three Days of the Easter Liturgy) with a Christian version of the Jewish Passover celebration - a Seder meal. It helps to enrich our understanding of our own Liturgy, and the new Passover Meal instituted by Jesus at the Last Supper (*see page 10*).

Good Friday...

Hot Cross Buns: The word 'bun' comes from the ancient word 'boun' for 'revered animal', and pagan Romans put crosses on small spiced loaves to represent the head of a sacred ox, on festivals associated with the quarters of the moon and seasons of the year. The first Christian missionaries adopted them as useful resources for Lenten teachings about the Cross. In England, Fr Thomas Rockcliffe, a monk of St Albans, gave them to the poor each Good Friday, and the tradition spread, until a Good Friday fast of hot cross buns and water became compulsory for all the Faithful. Too Roman Catholic for Queen Elizabeth I, she banned them. Purified of associated superstitions, now they're back, as though it were Lent every day. But recipes now add fruits, eggs and dairy, and sugary ice the cross. Traditionally, a spiced yeast-bread with a pastry cross, Vegans can replace each egg with a tablespoon of ground linseeds mixed with 3 tablespoons of water. Milk and butter can be replaced with soya milk and pure vegetable margarine, and the buns can be glazed with a dark molasses and water syrup. Nutmeg, cinnamon, other spices, sultanas and candied peel, can be added in moderation to the yeast dough. Flour and water pastry strips form the cross baked on the top.

Holy Saturday...

Rock Cakes: There is no tradition for these, but as we recall Our Lord dead in His tomb, having low energy, easy-to-make, cakes that look like rocks to break and bless and quickly feed on, may help fill the gap. Unlike Good Friday, Holy Saturday is not a compulsory Fasting and Abstinence day in the Universal Church, but it is consistent with right intention for a Friday fast to be maintained until after Sunday's worship & sending forth with the Good News. Made with 2 parts to 1, wholemeal self-raising flour to vegan margarine, these take only 15 minutes to bake on a moderate heat. Mix the flour with baking powder and mixed spice. Crumble the margarine and the flour with cold fingers. Mix in dried fruit of equivalent weight to the margarine, and some fruit juice sweetener. Stir in a small quantity of soya milk and ground linseed paste to form a wet dough. Mould into rock shapes and place on a greased baking tray. When cooked until hard on the surface, place on a rack to cool.

Easter Sunday...

(See page 8)

PASSOVER SEDER

Passover, or Pesach, is the festival of freedom. The Passover Seder revolves around foods that are symbolic of the events that led the Jews out of slavery when they made their exodus from Egypt thousands of years ago. Friends and family gather around the table to recreate the historic event with ritual foods, prayers, and songs.

Many consider the holiday a somewhat bittersweet occasion. On the one hand they remember the struggle their ancestors experienced living in a hostile land. On the sweet side is the joyous feeling the Jews expressed when they were finally free from the cruel Egyptian Pharaoh.

The Passover Seder is celebrated on the first and second nights of the eight-day holiday. On every Seder table is the ritual Seder plate. Traditionally a roasted lamb bone representing the Paschal lamb that the ancients sacrificed for this holiday has its place on the plate. Vegans, however, spare the lamb and roast a beet or a "Paschal yam." In place of the roasted egg that symbolizes life, they may use a roasted or boiled potato or a mushroom. Horseradish, a bitter herb, represents the bitter life of the Jews in Egypt, while Charoset, a sweet tasting mixture of grated apples, chopped walnuts, wine, and unrefined sugar represents the mortar the Jews used to build the pyramids.

Greens such as parsley, watercress, or lettuce are dipped in salt water and eaten to symbolize hope and renewal that the spring season brought to the Jews. Matzoh, the cracker-like bread eaten during the week of Passover, represents the unleavened bread the Jews took with them when they hurriedly left Egypt.

Wine, symbolic of redemption, is an important part of the Seder ritual with the cup refilled four times during the service. Sweet grape juice will suffice.

Especially appealing to the children is the hunt for the afikomen, a piece of matzoh that the head of the Passover service hides some time during the meal. After dinner, the hunt commences, sending children scurrying all over the house to see who can find it. The enticement is the competition of finding a hidden treasure plus a prize of money, usually a pound or two.

Fr John M Ryder

Books of the Jewish Passover have been prepared so that Christians may follow the ritual in their homes and parishes, and so better understand Jesus' words and life, and the birth of Christianity from the Jewish Religious Tradition, with Christ's rising from the dead. (e.g. H.J.Richards - The Passover Meal ISBN 0 85597 432 X.)

Vegetarian Christians...

Joseph Brotherton (1783 to 1857) was a Nonconformist Christian largely responsible for the formation of the **Vegetarian Society**. He could afford to retire in 1819 at the age of 36, having worked for, and then owned, the textiles company (Mill) that his father began. He was born in Whittington, Derbyshire, but moved to Salford, Manchester with his family, where he joined the Swedenborg Church, which under *Rev. William Cowherd's* ministrations, became the **Bible Christian Vegetarian Church in 1809**. Members, predominantly working people, swore an oath to 'abstain from fish, flesh and fowl for food'. Joseph's wife, *Martha Brotherton*, wrote "Vegetable Cooking", the first cookery book devoted to vegetarian recipes.

Joseph Brotherton was aware of under-representation in Parliament for this growing population centre, and he campaigned for a Parliamentary Reform Bill and Suffrage, with education for all the newly enfranchised. The region was broken down into 3 constituencies, and Joseph was elected as a Whig MP for Salford in 1832, a seat he then held for 25 years, sometimes unchallenged. Before being an MP, he served for 15 years as an un-paid minister at the Bible Christian Vegetarian Church, and he continued to serve in this capacity even after his election.

Joseph Brotherton had a vocation in politics; he was one of the first in Britain to speak out for the abolition of the death penalty, on the grounds that it was contrary to the values taught by Jesus Christ. He was in favour of Catholic Emancipation in Ireland, he opposed child labour, and in the face of the failures of the **25 March 1807 Whig 'Abolition of the Slave Trade Act'**, the bicentenary of which is celebrated this year, he supported the 'Slavery Abolition Act' (passed in 1833). (British slave ship captains persisting in the trade would throw captives overboard to avoid paying £100 per slave fines if British Navy vessels approached, who were responsible for policing it.) He opposed war, establishing peace groups instead.

Joseph wrote three books about his religious beliefs; 'Facts Authentic in Science and Religion' (1816), 'Letters on Religious Subjects' (1821), and 'On Abstinence from Intoxicating Liquors' (1821). He wrote the first Vegetarian Tract (1821). In 1847 there were food shortages in Manchester, and he set up vegetable soup kitchens for the hungry poor. This prompted the founding of the '**Vegetarian Society**' in Ramsgate during September of the same year, to influence the diet of the nation. He presided at the meeting, was the Society's first President, and penned many propaganda leaflets to promote the Society's aims: "*To induce habits of abstinence from the flesh of animals as food, and thus to secure, through the association, example and efforts of its members, the adoption of a principle which will tend essentially to true civilization, to universal brotherhood and to the increase of human happiness generally.*"

Continued on page 11.

Fledgling Flight...

New Political Party for the Animals...

Shaun Rutherford, who notified us in earlier Newsletters about the One Voice Party preparing to contest the Welsh Assembly elections on 3rd May 2007, is now the Vice-Chair of “**Animals Count**”, the new party for the Animals launched at the Animal Aid Cruelty Free Fair in London before Christmas last year.

Jasmijn de Boo, who has been involved in the Dutch Political Party for animals since 2003, and which won two seats late last November, is standing for election. They will not be entering candidates for the Scottish Parliamentary Elections, nor the English local government elections to be held on the same day. Nor for the Northern Ireland Assembly on 7th March 2007.

More information about them can be found on their website:

<http://www.animalscount.org>

They claim that ‘defending animals is about upholding the right to life’. Although, whilst wishing to promote acceptance of the sentience of non-human species, they are not challenging the accepted, and often obligatory practice, of killing animals in situations of suffering. However, on their manifesto is the aim to establish a health service for animals equivalent to the NHS for people.

Those of us who oppose Euthanasia in humans will need to support this measure and argue in favour of palliative care for animals too. It will one day be accepted, and the implications understood, that non-human species have imperishable souls, they are beloved by God, and created by Him. If we are not to continue to accept killing as a kindness to humans as well, we will need to accept that animals also obtain dignity and redemption through inevitable sufferings too.

News from Fellowship of Life...

FOL Newsletters have now been superseded by the ‘Announcements’ section of the website, and archive excerpts have been uploaded to the ‘articles’ section.

www.all-creatures.org/fol

Also, to clarify the CVAUK Advent Newsletter item, further copies of the new colour flyer should soon be available to print-out from the website. Batches may be requested, in return for donations which cover the cost of the leaflet production (17 pence each) from:

**Clare and Tom Harrell
43 Braichmelyn**

New Oxford College for the Animals...

CVA member, Professor Andrew Linzey, has launched a new centre for Animal Ethics, based in Oxford. It has been named after a Spanish Philosopher, who spoke out against bull-fighting when all of his compatriots were silent (Jose Ferrater Mora). The centre was launched on 27 November 2006, and more information can be found on its website **www.oxfordanimaethics.com**. Donations of books which are supportive of the aims (to put animals on the intellectual agenda) are invited.

One of the areas of research will be the relationship between animal abuse and violence to human beings. A world-famous writer, who has explored this link - Nobel Laureate in Literature, Professor J. M. Coetzee – has agreed to become the Centre’s first Honorary Fellow.

Other projects being pursued include an online course in animal ethics, a new monograph series, and a new Journal of Animal Ethics. 100 academics from 10 countries have agreed to be advisers. The centre has only just begun, but Professor Linzey is already swamped with work.

Professor Linzey is a member of the Faculty of Theology at Oxford University, and an Honorary Professor at Birmingham University. Let’s pray that he and his team are provided with healthy vegan breakfasts, dinners and lunch by their colleges, and find time to participate in Christian Liturgy and prayers.

Vegetarian Christians (continued)...

(Joseph was succeeded by his cousin William Harvey, a deacon of their Church who was later Mayor of Salford, and the first to hold a vegetarian/teetotal public banquet.)

For a long time, Joseph’s home served as an embryonic welfare state for Manchester. He campaigned for public parks and open spaces, being largely responsible for Peel Park (opened in 1846), possibly the first of its kind in the world. He was also instrumental in Salford being first to have its own Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery. He maintained his early interests in trade, starting a Chamber of Commerce, was instrumental in the foundation of an Institution for mechanics, and a local newspaper, being very concerned for the conditions of the poor and their terms of employment.

Persevering to the end, he died of a heart attack whilst travelling in an omnibus to a meeting in Manchester (1857). One of the first to be buried in Salford’s new Municipal Cemetery at Peel Park, the people of Salford commissioned a beautiful ecclesial-style statue to his memory, which is now a Grade II listed monument forming part of a city sculpture trail. He is just as highly esteemed for being a founder of the Vegetarian movement, as he is for his other achievements.

(With thanks to the Vegetarian Society for providing archival information.)

Joined Up Thinking...

As Christians, we can confuse the 'holy' with the 'hollo', in both the Religious and Secular aspects of our lives. How much more those who hold no belief in the Divine and the Sacred? During Lent we have the task of rendering ourselves more 'holy' through simplicity and edified purposefulness, whereas it has become the time for many to book and plan a period of summer extravagance and wasteful recklessness. To be holy is to walk gently through our environment, concerned for the fragile lives and relationships around us. To be 'hollo' is to be devoid of such concern, and to press a crater-sized footprint upon the places and lives which appeal to our pleasure-sense. Our English word 'holiday' has sprung up, and bifurcated to become both 'holy-days' and 'hollo-days'; the former stem needs to be carefully fed and trained, the latter branch needs to be radically pruned, if not completely cut back. According to the Office of National Statistics, British Residents spent £32.2 billion abroad in 2005, which is a fourfold increase since 1985. 13.8 million UK residents visited Spain that year, 11.1 visited France, and an increasing number visited America. In return, during the same 20 year period, holiday visitors to the UK doubled, and their spending in the UK peaked at £14.2 billion in 2005. Most of our visitors are French and German, with a smaller number of Irish and Spanish, and a small but significant number from America. To facilitate these fleeting movements, the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA), serves as an umbrella organisation which insures, arbitrates and rescues the customers when need be, of 6,000 member travel agents and 850 member tour operators based in the UK; still not the sum total of all such businesses here. (A pricey umbrella, but no good for the weather.) From the time when scientists became certain that climate change was a big problem (1970s) and the Churches acknowledged the threats, these contributing operations have accelerated. The medieval penance of pilgrimage has been supplanted by the modern play of permissiveness. Without respect for fine Italian protocol and Ecclesiastical focus, the phrase "When in Rome do as the Romans do" has become justification for collaborating in a multitude of sins in diverse places. For example, although Spaniards are increasingly admitting that bull-fighting is abhorrent to them, around 24,000 bulls are killed in front of audiences of 30 million people, mainly tourists, in the season between March and October; 'hollo-day' entertainment. And the veal calves, and the ponies, and the not-organically-reared lambs, that British Residents would not eat in the UK, are exported to help feed the foreign tastes of British make-believe visitors 'over there'. Do warn people if you can! Not that we wish to go back to the time before the railways in Britain, when the poor were captives within the political boundaries of their parishes. But we do need to permeate our interest in widening our circles of friends and experiences with a humility that befits Faith. We need to convert from 'hollo-days' to 'holy-days', and have more respect for ourselves and the people we visit. Eco-Tourism is a step on the way. The ability of Parish Churches to give hospitality to holy-daying guests is also becoming increasingly manifest. Ministry to migrants, a very urgent need, could evolve to become a ministry to all temporary guests from all faiths and lands in a more highly developed Ecumenism. And we must not underestimate the role in all of this of "Christian Vegetarianism"; our being able to offer food that does not offend.

Helena's Italian Holyday Home for Vegans/Veggies...

Via del Borgo 9, in Tavernelle, North West Tuscany, in the Apennine mountains. A 17th century granite house forming part of the preserved and unspoilt medieval historic centre of the town, which sleeps 6 comfortably. With public transport you can visit Florence, Lucca, Pisa; beautiful villages and churches can also be reached on foot. Currently available at £20 per person per night, with a discount for children and larger groups, all profits go to animal charities. Travel by air, train, or car. For further information, to check availability or to book...

Visit www.viadelborgo9.com

Telephone 02392 - 471977

Email: helena@viadelborgo9.com

Green and Gullible...

It was mentioned in the previous Newsletter that Green Tea is capable of reducing risk of alzheimers disease. The US Government deny that this has been proven. Surveillance has shown that people who drink many litres of carefully prepared Green Tea every day do have reduced incidence of various diseases, but this could be because they are more healthy than those who cannot spend so much time and money sipping the milk-less infusion. Scientists have identified types of molecules in the leaves of Green Tea (and other teas) which have very therapeutic properties. These molecules are also found in fruits, legumes, and many other vegetables and plants. A glass of fruit juice, such as of grape, each day would provide sufficient quantity of these molecules to make a significant difference. It is not known whether the molecules if extracted and formed into a tablet, would have the same beneficial effect as a healthy plant diet. Green Tea is often marketed as a healthy antioxidant. However, although the molecules concerned do reduce free radical oxygen molecules in the bloodstream, the greatest benefits may be due to other properties.

Fr John Ryder's Eco-Parish, for Christian Veggies...

Wish to travel overseas, remain in the UK, and have a low carbon footprint break? Like the idea of being in a church with other Christian Vegetarians who speak the same language? The Isle of Wight is not only home of our Spokesman, Fr John, at St Albans, Godshill, Ventnor. It also has a Green Tourist Network, and local sustainability movement. To explore the 'holy-day' possibilities...

Visit www.greenislandtourism.org

Isle of Wight, Hampshire, UK

The Vegan Organic Network can put you in touch with Vegan Organic Farms for working/experience holy-days.

Visit www.veganorganic.net

Vegan Views magazine has a classified section where interestingly Christian residences for Vegan breaks are often advertised. Visit www.veganviews.org.uk

Fledgling Flight...

CVAUK Chat Group...

The chat group seems to have been very successful. We have 16 Members and have had some really good discussions going. *Jerry Howse.*

www.wisdom4all.co.uk

The Wisdom Trust is a charity which seeks to raise awareness of global health and environmental issues. Through its fund-raising it also seeks to help sister charities. CVAUK is not yet one of their main charities, but as a member's choice we are doing quite well in their running league table, compared with the competition - some of whom use their funds for experimentation on human embryos, other creatures, and no doubt consume meat and dairy products.

Please make use of their educational resources, and keep on voting for CVAUK; let's try and make sure that the Wisdom Trust Fundraising cake is a Christian Vegetarian one!

Veg4Lent 2007 Campaign...

A new Veg4Lent letter/Questionnaire (enclosed) will be sent to all the Anglican Bishops during Lent 2007. The letter reminds the Bishops of their own rulings on the subject of pending catastrophe, made during the last 30 years.

We do however, urgently require Catholic members to note our approach and inform us of any similar statements/declarations from their own Bishops.

Anglican members are encouraged to send this letter to Anglican clergy during Lent and send any returned questionnaires to Don Gwillim.

Website...

The website is an important instrument in the service of our threefold Mission and Ministries. It is being continually up-dated with information and new links for our members, as well as for those who are presently just curious about who and what we are. Back copies of Newsletters are available in 'Archives', and we hope to use this reference facility as a virtual library for the studies of CVAUK members, with a variety of historical items too lengthy for re-publication in these pages - but still of interest to us today.

It is also available to assist overseas Christian Vegetarians who are not yet able to produce resources specific to their own Churches.

Correspondence & Outreach...

The Team have been receiving a variety of correspondence from all over the world.

Members Location Map and Contact List 2007.

Copy enclosed with this Newsletter.

What the Christian Papers Say...

All press compilations are uploaded to the CVAUK website under 'Christian Media'. Active members that do not have access to the Internet can receive a hard copy through the post, on request to Don Gwillim.

Moving in the Right Direction...

The Two-Track approach

Every step you can take along either track is a step in the right direction.

Do it for your health, for the sake of animals, for the sake of the poor, for the sake of the planet, and in obedience to God's revealed will.

Identify where you are, and work downwards.

Track One

Meat Eater

Abstain from animal flesh,
[still eat fish, eggs & dairy]

Become a Vegetarian

[still eat eggs & dairy]

Become a Lacto-Vegetarian

[still eat dairy]

Become a Vegan

[eat no animal products]

Become a Fruitarian

[no longer kill plants for food]

Track Two

- * Make sure any meat is freedom-farmed, and organic.
- * That eggs are from free-range hens
- * That cheese is not made from animal rennet
- * That you avoid products that have gelatine and other animal-derived products
- * Avoid products with non-free range eggs and animal rennet cheeses as ingredients.
- * Then avoid products with egg or milk as ingredients.

How to go about it.

Most cannot go 'Cold Turkey', especially if not all members of the household are in agreement!

Start by having the things higher up in the list less often, before eliminating them entirely.

Learn the substitutes that are unnoticeable. Sweetened soya milk, for example, is only noticeable when drunk neat. By the time everyone has had it on their cereal, in their tea etc. for a few months, they won't notice even when drunk neat.

For many things - mince, burgers, sausages, sliced 'ham' - there are straight swaps that can be made.

Look out for the many 'normal' foods that are vegetarian or vegan: macaroni cheese, as an example in the first category, hummous and peanut butter in the second.

Then start experimenting with the many things you can do with the more typically veggie foods, like tofu.

And remember any whole grain together with any pulse is a complete protein.

Finally start concentrating on what plants shed naturally: seeds & grains, fruit and leaves. (You will be astonished at how much of your diet already comes from these sources)

TIP: Don't just go to the expensive health/organic type shops, have a look at the stores where the 'ethnic minorities' shop, and in normal supermarkets.

Father John Ryder - Spokesman for CVAUK.

THE WAY OF THE CROSS

GRIEF

Jesus asks us to take up the Cross and follow Him. Meditating upon the Stations of the Cross each Lent can help us learn how to work through the many different losses we experience throughout the year.

We experience grief when we lose something, especially something loved. Grief is much like anger, but lapses into sadness. Our raw responses to it are shared with many different creatures, not just humans. Grief is so commonplace that it often goes unnoticed or is misunderstood. When a human we love dies, our period of grief is more often recognized, and has a special name 'bereavement', which means 'to be torn apart'. But only God can really understand our grief. We grieve to stitch ourselves back together again emotionally, to learn how to live with the loss practically, and to find new spiritual meaning in our lives. There is pain to bear if we are to recover again. But it is hard, not least because when we are grieving, our attention span is shortened, and we need constant reminders to attend to the most mundane tasks which are essential for life.

We need our daily bread...

I Jesus Is Condemned to Death

COMPREHENDING

The sorts of losses we first experienced in our lives, the circumstances and manner in which we learned about them, and the way significant people expected us to handle them, can set the pattern by which we then grieve throughout our lives. We are not prisoners to our conditioning though. As we get older, and are capable of understanding more truly, we may find it is necessary to break old patterns and discover new ways. It helps to understand our own reactions; those around us may not know what is typical of us, they will not know whether we are coping or out of our depth. If we can understand other people's, and other animals', reactions to death and loss, our sensitivity may help them understand too.

A field of golden wheat is beautiful, but once it is ripe it must be cut and harvested, so that it may fulfil the purposes for which it was planted...

John 18:37-40.

II Jesus Takes Up The Cross

SHOCK

We need to face the implications of a loss. Losing can feel like being given something much too big and heavy to carry. Loss can jolt the stomach, tighten the chest, bring a lump to one's throat, make the heart race, weaken the knees and stress our muscles. We may get pains in our head, joints and back, our senses bump to paranormal level, or we may feel drunk. We may never have noticed, nor been able to imagine, the extent of that which is gone. Acknowledgement may be a long road, of tiny steps, of daily shocks, as we discover another little burden to weigh up, another rip disconnecting us from something we had felt to be a part of us.

Wheat grains have done no harm, but they must be threshed to detach them from their parent plant, so that they may be food, and further harvests.

John 1:23, 29-31, 35-37.

III Jesus Falls the First Time

DENIAL

Denial is a common characteristic of Grief. But it is wrong to deny the Truth. As individuals we may not be strong enough to face the changes that loss brings. But even whole groups can suffer amnesia and collective depression where the loss affects us all. Denial can be a healthy reaction for coping. But we can also fail to come to terms with losses which we are responsible for, and continue to cause losses due to our denial. There is a tendency to hide losses. They may be forgotten, ignored, artficed and disguised, concealed, buried, or consumed. Very deep meaning needs to be plumbed and awake new interest if our whole community has lost all hope for life.

Some wheat grains are saved for replanting, but others are taken to a millstone and are pounded and ground into a fine flour.

John 12:37-46.

IV Jesus Meets His Blessed Mother

ADJUSTING

When we find loss hard to come to terms with, we need to seek out and spend time in the company of 'trustworthiness'. We may find ourselves searching for a face we have lost in a crowd, or we may wish to get in touch with family members and old friends, or find new friends, who have the qualities which we consider safe and reassuring. We may need the time and attention of a concerned professional to help us think clearly about troubling aspects of our lives which have become too confusing. We may just need to be in the presence of someone who cares. At other times, to be a recipient of a service, or to be in a place which provides evidence to the senses that people who believe and care still exist, may be sufficient. With this security, and confidence, we can begin to assess and adjust to those aspects of our world which have lost their centre of gravity and need to be anchored to new moorings. How can we sustain trust in God, and in humanity?

Drops of water, added to the broken wheat grains, can bind them into a strong dough.

Luke 8:19-21.

V Simon of Cyrene Helps Carry the Cross

ANGER

Anger gives strength, but we may still need help. We may value someone helping to lighten our load. Or we may need someone to tell us what to do with our strength; to channel it into good works. Because it can be hard to see why things are as they are, and what must be done, when we are angry. We need the contribution of others to help us to get the balance right.

A little yeasted sour dough, kept behind from last baking day, can be mixed with the new to make it rise. And then a little can be taken away again and put aside for tomorrow.

Luke 23:26.

VI Veronica Wipes the Face of Jesus

SADNESS

Sadness is a mysterious feeling; it is the result of experiencing losses that we cannot overcome, and feelings which we cannot appropriately express. If we cannot express our feelings, we cannot share them, and if we cannot share them, we feel isolated. Yet, every being is a member of a community of some kind in which members share some interdependence, mutual interest, interaction and reliance. One does for the others what they cannot do for themselves; carrying a cross, shedding a tear, wiping vile spittle away. Expressing what for others is inexpressible.

Cover the kneaded dough with a cloth and leave it for a while.

John 11:32-37.

VII Jesus Falls the Second Time

DENIAL

If the people of God deny the true identity and commandments of the God who made them, are they up and about and in the running, or lying flat on their face?

When the dough has been exposed, and kneaded again, the effect of its earlier rising may appear to be lost.

John 11:23-27.

VIII The Women of Jerusalem Weep for the Lord

CONFUSION

On an ultimate level, we are each one of us alone. Every soul must work through its own grief, for its own sake, and for the sake of those who remain subject to its mistakes (it's children). We cannot sympathise with another unless we know how we feel ourselves. We cannot actually shed another's grief, by crying our own tears.

If the dough is too dry, add a little extra water, but only as much as is needed - no more.

Luke 23:37-31.

IX Jesus Falls the Third Time

DENIAL

Betrayal is supposed to be the worst sort of denial. Betrayal is an uncharacteristic and unexpected denial, which jettisons the purpose of an agreed relationship, which is the foundation of trust. A community, or part of its membership, may be lost due to one or more of its members failing to give the expected support that they were relying upon. Betrayal is a denial of love; it is love used to power the instruments of loveless designs. How many creatures have seen love switched off, to stop life growing, for the sake of stealing of its remains?

Knead the dough a final time, but expect it to form a smaller loaf afterwards than the mixture would at first suggest.

John 18:15-27.

X Jesus Is Stripped of His Garments

VULNERABILITY

God is not vulnerable. God does not need clothes. God cannot be exposed, or deposed. He has nothing to be ashamed of or embarrassed about. Yet, does a lamb, or a calf, or a piglet, or a chick feel shame as it is vulnerable, stripped, deposed and exposed to the instrument of its death? Is a child in the womb embarrassed by its nakedness as its mother is prepared for its abortion? Such was the disposition of God.

Mould the dough into shape, brush off the surface, and leave to stand for a while.

Luke 20:9-17.

XI Jesus Is Nailed To The Cross

PAIN

It is necessary to be brave, and to feel the pain that surges through the soul rather than attempt to avoid it. The pain is a response to a truth which affects us intimately, and which we will not be able to know and accept unless we acknowledge it. It is a painless consciousness that we long for through an end to our affliction, not an absence of consciousness with unchanged situation. Suffering is necessary but not forever.

They disabled the feet which had enabled God to stand and walk as only a human can. They disabled the hands that had enabled God to make and do as only a human can. They disabled the heart that had enabled God to love and suffer as only a human can. God was hung on a cross, not as man, but due to man's ability to destroy as only a human can, as a creature indistinguishable from any other creature.

Put the loaf on a baking tray, and place in a pre-heated oven.

John 10:7-15.

XII Jesus Dies On The Cross

DEATH

Jesus may have looked insignificant to many who passed by. The tree upon which he hung did not appear to be the last tree left in the jungle. The bird that flew above his head did not appear to be the last one hatched from the final nest. The rodent that scampered amongst the bones beneath his feet did not appear to be the end in its genetic line. If we are quite certain that death is the beginning and not the end, at the height of our trial and in the depths of our distress, the cross is a good vantage point from which to look ahead and plan for the future and its consolation.

Bake the loaf until it sounds hollow when tapped, then remove from the oven.

John 8:28-29.

XIII Jesus Is Taken Down From The Cross

ACCEPTANCE

When the worst has happened, and is known, it needs to be accepted. It might take time to formulate the right words into the right sentences. But it needs to be put into words. We may need to describe it, and then try describing it differently, before we can plainly state it. We may need to hear our own voice saying it, we may need to explain it to others, and then we may need to hear it confirmed in someone else's voice. It is as though saying it over and over again makes it acceptable. Provided that what we are trying to accept is true. If it isn't, saying it over and over again just reminds you that it won't do. Something else must come of it, something will happen, something enormously good will be done. How can God be dead? Accept the Good News instead.

Put the loaf to the side, out of the way, and leave until cool.

John 12:23-33.

XIV Jesus Is Laid In The Tomb

RE-ORDERING

Living beings have a sense of purpose. Purpose provides reason for communicating, and reasons provide uses for property and objects. Every living being is at the centre of a network of relationships and belongings. When a living being is lost, a centre of gravity is removed, leaving a sense of abandonment and redundancy circulating about a vacuum. Death changes things. It is necessary to re-evaluate and discern the potential of what remains, to disconnect or reconnect along new lines of communication, and to find new purposes, owners and uses for property and objects. In the case of human death, three main parties are involved: the Undertaker; the next of kin or other executor of a will; and the Priest. Their painful work; proper treatment and disposal of the mortal remains; rearrangement of the abandoned household and estate; care of immortal souls, both passed on and remaining. As Christians, all of our losses can be a sharing in the Church's remorse for the death of Jesus Christ.

When the loaf is cool, wrap it in a cloth, and store in a dry, well-ventilated cupboard.

John 19:38-42.

XV The Resurrection Of The Lord

REMEMBERING

Our ability to work through our grief is a sign of our maturity, not of the extent of our misfortune. We can all mature perfectly well, simply by accepting the extent of Jesus' sacrifice for each one of us. But we all suffer many losses besides. Grief is not the action of gradually and finally closing a door on someone or something loved. It is an opportunity to learn new ways, see new truths, and open ourselves to experience new joys. Grieving serves to move our memories and imaginations, so that they become open doors, to let that which we have lost enter in.

Before the meal, offer the bread to the Priest, so that he may bless it and make it holy, and break it for all those in the house to share.

Luke 22:14-20.

ETERNITY

Our Father...

This Way of the Cross has been written by Eleisha C Newman, who would like to acknowledge with thanks the insights shared and training given by the Priesthood & Bereavement Support Team of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton.

Our Patrons...

Our Sister Organisation, whom CVAUK represents in the UK and who continue to mentor CVAUK:

Christian Vegetarian Association, USA

Our Founding Fathers, who invested in establishing the administration for CVAUK:

Anthony Neesham (Veg4Lent Founder, now based in the USA)

Don Gwillim (CVAUK Administrator) and family

Our Honorary Patrons and Mentors, whom we thank for making known their approval of CVAUK:

Pastor James Thompson (The "Animals' Padre" & Founder of 'Christians Against All Animal Abuse')

Fr Derek Reeve (Roman Catholic Priest, now retired from secular administration, Southsea, Hampshire)

Deborah Jones (General Secretary & Editor of "The Ark", Catholic Concern for Animals)

J.R.Hyland (Editor "Humane Religion", Evangelical Minister serving prisoners/migrant workers in USA)

Samantha Chandler (Correspondence Secretary, Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals)

Our Patron Members, all registered CVAUK members who donate funds, purchase items, participate in campaigns, or contribute to the ministry and mission of CVAUK in any way.

Our Patron Saint, still un-discerned and undecided; *preferences are invited*.

Birds of a Feather...

Premier... "To serve the Churches and the wider community of Greater London by conveying the significance of the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ - as recorded in scripture and expressed in the historic creeds of the Christian faith - through radio and other media" 24 hours a day. This is the mission statement of Premier, the online radio and television broadcasting company. All CVAUK members may be interested in keeping up-to-date with Premier's announcements and news on <www.premier.org.uk/billboard>, which also lists free Christian events/ gatherings, or with an admission charge not exceeding £5 - within the Greater London area. If you have any unusual Christian news you can share with Londoners, you can notify Premier by email:

<mynews@premier.org.uk>, or <newsdesk@premier.org.uk>.

Every March is Veggie Month for Animal Aid. You may find useful resources and information on their Website, especially in the 'Campaigns' section under 'Vegetarianism'. www.animalaid.org.uk

21 February 2007 - Ash Wednesday - Day of obligatory fasting & abstinence for Roman Catholics

18 March 2007 - Laetare/Rose/Simmel/Mothering Sunday. 25 March 2007 - BST Begins.

25 March 2007 - Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act. Please support any events being arranged near you. CARJ will be celebrating the occasion in London, and asks that we remember the significance of this Legislation for the people of Britain and the British colonies on this day.

Sunday 1st April 2007 - Palm Sunday, beginning of Holy Week. Friday 6th April 2007 - Good Friday, obligatory fasting & abstinence for Roman Catholics. Sunday 8th April 2007 - Easter Day.

In Formation...

+ Not just of interest to Catholics, much information about the Church and our Faith may be found on the website and associated links of <www.newadvent.org>. (Catholic Encyclopaedia, Scripture, Thomas Aquinas, and more).

+ Advice for those with food sensitivities and their families: "**Food Allergy Survival Guide**", by Vesanto Melina, Jo Stepaniak, Dina Aronson, Healthy Living Publications, 2004, ISBN 1-57067-163-X (or from Vegan Society).

+ Very good selection of Vegan recipes: "**The Vegan Cookbook**", Alan Wakeman & Gordon Baskerville, Faber and Faber, New edition 1996, ISBN 0-571-17804-9 (or from the Vegan Society).

Useful Websites:

www.all-creatures.org/fof

www.chistianveg.com

www.christianvegetarian.co.uk

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/christveg>

www.ivu.org

www.ivu.org/ku

www.ordergoldenage.co.uk

www.parrotspets.co.uk

www.pcrm.org

www.veg4lent.org

Fellowship of Life

CVA/USA/International

CVA UK

CVA UK Chat Group Site

International Vegetarian Union

Kindness Unlimited

Order of the Golden Age

Don Gwillim's Family

Physicians for Responsible Medicine

Veg4Lent

Stop Press..

Fr John Dear, SJ is scheduled to Speak at the Catholic Church of England & Wales' Justice & Peace Conference later this year.

Front Cover Picture: A Sussex Wildlife Trust sheep employed in Sussex downland conservation work near the Bible Earthworks, near Glynde, Lewes.
By Eleisha C Newman