

**THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
ECUMENICAL CHURCH OF OCCITANIE  
[www.ourchurch.fr](http://www.ourchurch.fr)**

**1st April—Poisson D’Avril !**

We have waited until after midday today to send out this edition of ECHO so that you can be certain that there are no false stories in this edition....

All over the world, there are traditions that April 1st is the date when it is considered acceptable to try to play jokes on or deceive friends, neighbours and colleagues.

In France, the April Fools connection is said to date back to 1564 when the King Charles IX decided on a reform of the calendar to regularise what would be considered the first day of the New Year. Prior to this date, in different areas, the New Year was considered to start on Christmas Day, or on Easter Day or on 25th March. Those who celebrated New Year on 25th March took part in festivities which lasted 6 days, meaning that the first working day of the New Year would be 1st April.

In his Edict of Roussillon, Charles determined that the New Year would begin on 1st January. This was subsequently adopted by Pope Gregory XIII who ruled that the same date would apply across the Catholic world.

In many areas, however, there was a reluctance to abandon the old date of 25 March, and people continued to follow the old tradition of celebrating the 1st April. Many people mocked this clinging to the old tradition and rather than giving real presents on 1st April, would give trick presents - which developed into giving a herring. This in turn developed into hanging a real herring on the back of someone for a joke, after which it evolved into hanging a paper fish on a victim’s back, as well as playing other jokes.

But because fish quickly begin to smell, jokers could only hang a fish on someone’s back until midday, after which it would smell too strongly. Which is why April Fool’s Day jokes are only considered valid until noon.

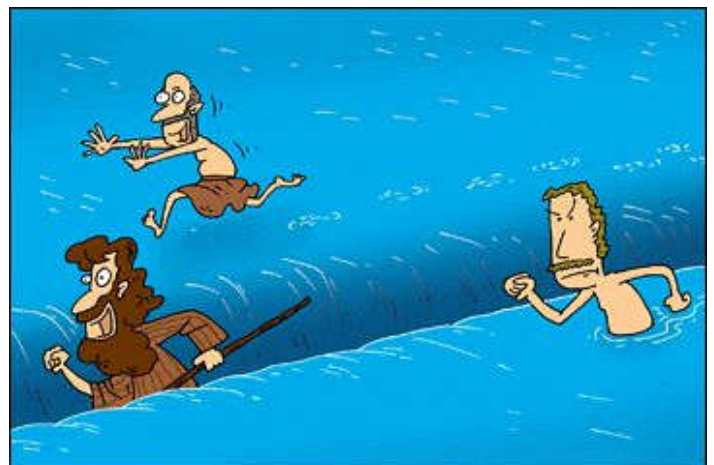
There have been a number of famous April Fool’s Day pranks through history. For British readers, perhaps the most famous one was broadcaster Richard Dimbleby’s



famous and completely poker-faced report in 1957 about a record crop of Spaghetti on the spaghetti trees of Ticino in Switzerland.

More recently, in 1969 arch-prankster Richard Branson faked the landing of a flying saucer in Surrey. When police arrived to investigate, they fled in terror as a figure in a silver space suit stepped out - Richard Branson in costume !

OK—it’s after midday now, so you are safe until 2023.....



**EZEKIEL’S HOPES FOR A GOLD IN THE TRIATHLON WERE DASHED WHEN HE REALISED THAT MOSES AND PETER HAD ALSO ENTERED.**

## ECO in Holy Week

Our plans for online worship are currently being finalised, but we would like to invite you to join us for some of all of our events:

### **Palm Sunday Morning Worship - 10:30am**

We will be holding a special service on Palm Sunday during which we will invite you to make your own cross palm (or paper) cross at home, and, as is traditional, to listen to the re-telling of the Easter Story.

### **Maundy Thursday Evening - 7:00pm**

As we think about events at the Last Supper, we will share bread and wine as the Disciples did that night so long ago

### **Good Friday - 2:00pm and 7:00pm**

We will be holding a 1-hour Zoom call during which we will be watching a play performed by members of the Riding Lights Theatre Company entitled "Breaking Day". Set as dawn breaks on Good Friday in Jerusalem, we watch as Pontius Pilate and his household try to come to terms with the momentous events unfolding around them.

*Owing to copyright restrictions, we regret that this service cannot be left online after it is finished, which is why it will be shown twice.*

### **Easter (Holy) Saturday - 7:00pm**

We will share a short worship service during which we will hear readings from the Holy Bible which tell the history of the development of Christianity and also listen to the singing of the famous Exsultet—the great proclamation of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, especially recorded for us by the Reverend Canon Susan Wallace, Director of Liturgy at the Transcendence worship charity.

### **Easter Sunday - 10:30am**

On Easter Morning we will come together to proclaim the Good News of the Resurrection and share Communion online.

*We hope that you will be able to join us during Holy Week*



### **Sunday 3rd April**

#### **The Feast Day of St Richard of Chichester**

St Richard of Chichester is revered by students of Canon Law and also church servers.

Richard was brought up as a farmer in the 1200's, but rather than marry and take over the farm, he chose to travel to the University of Bologna, the centre of study of Church Law.

After returning to England in 1235, Richard supported the Archbishop of Canterbury in preventing King Henry III from misusing Church funds.

Subsequently ordained as a Bishop himself, he is credited with the rule that Communion must be administered free of charge.

And why is he the patron saint of church servers ? Because it was said that he once dropped a chalice filled with Communion wine and not a single drop spilled ! For this reason Richard is often portrayed holding a chalice.

Many servers (including this Editor) pray to St Richard to watch over them when they are administering Communion to keep their grip firm on the chalice....

## Church Mice

Karl Zorowski

