

St James News: Thought for the day – Saturday 11 July, 2020

Pangur Ban – by Revd John Marshall

I was delighted by Jill's thought about pets. We are blessed by pets. I thought of a poem I learnt when I was at primary school. I didn't know the history of it then.

The poem is found in only one text, the Reichenau Primer. The primer appears to be a notebook of an Irish monk based in Richenauer Abbey. The contents of the primer are diverse. It was written in the 9th Century. Robin Flower has translated it from the Irish.

The Scholar and his cat Pangur Ban

I and Pangur Ban my cat,
'Tis a like task we are at:
Hunting mice is his delight
Hunting words I sit all night

Better far than praise of men
'Tis to sit with book and pen;
Pangur bears me no ill-will,
He too plies his simple skill.

'Tis a merry task to see
At our tasks how glad are we;
When at home we sit and find
Entertainment to our mind

Oftentimes a mouse will stray
In the hero Pangur's way
Oftentimes my keen thought set
Takes a meaning in its net

'Gainst the wall he sets his eye
Full and fierce and sharp and sly
'Gainst the wall of knowledge I
All my little wisdom try

When a mouse darts from its den,
O how glad is Pangur then
O what gladness do I prove
When I solve the doubts I love!

So in peace our task we ply;
Pangur then my cat and I;
In our arts we find our bliss
I have mine and he has his.

Practice every day has made
Pangur perfect in his trade;
I get wisdom day and night
Turning darkness into light.

I like to think of the scholar copying out the Bible accompanied by his cat.

Song: [Thy word is a lamp unto my feet by Amy Grant](#)

Prayer:

Be light, O Lord, to our eyes, music to our ears and contentment to our heart. Be sunlight in our day, food at our table and rest to us in the night. Let us rejoice to be about your business and let us live to your praise and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

John Cosin (1594-1672)

(picture below)

