

# Recipes for the Soul ...

**Hermit Bars** (makes 2 dozen squares)

I loved visiting my grandmother as a kid, but it was never because I looked forward to her cooking. That dear woman ruined everything she tried to make; every fried egg she ever cooked was black and lacy on the bottom and uncooked and runny on the top. The good news, however, is that what she lacked in basic cooking skills she made up for with her knowledge of bakeries in Southeastern Massachusetts. Both the mincemeat and squash pies we had each Thanksgiving were amazing, but my absolute favorites were the hermit bars. Hermits have been a staple New England cookie since at least the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and each homemaker or baker had his or her own recipe. Thick, thin, chewy, or crispy, they were all spicy and delicious.

A few months ago, I went looking for a recipe that came close to the hermits I knew as a kid. These aren't quite the same, but they are absolutely delicious and make a soft chewy bar.

**Ingredients:**

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1/2 cup (8 tablespoons) butter
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 3 cups unbleached All-Purpose Flour or 100% White Whole Wheat Flour
- 1/2 cup molasses
- 1 cup raisins, either dark or golden

**Instructions:**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F and lightly grease a 9x13 in. pan.
2. In a large bowl, beat together the sugar, shortening and butter until smooth. Beat in the spices, salt, and baking soda.
3. Slowly stir in the flour, then add the molasses and beat to combine. Stir in the raisins last.
4. Pat hermits into a lightly greased 9" x 13" pan; the mixture will be quite dry.
5. Bake the hermits for 25 to 30 minutes in a light-colored aluminum pan; 20 to 25 minutes in a darker pan. In either case, don't over-bake; they should barely be pulling away from the edge of the pan.
6. Remove from the oven and cool completely before cutting. Store, well wrapped, at room temperature for several days; freeze for longer storage.

This recipe makes flat, chewy hermits, rather than the cakey ones. If you use a half-sheet (13x18 in.) pan, these hermits make rather thin (1/4") bars.

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# CROSS LINKS

CONGREGATION OF HOLY CROSS, UNITED STATES PROVINCE OF PRIESTS AND BROTHERS  
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Dear friends of Holy Cross,

It is hard to believe, but we are already well into the Church's annual celebration of Lent. And, I haven't even finished my Christmas cards yet! Yet time marches on whether we are ready or not, I am afraid. The beauty of Lent is that it gives us enough time to slow down and focus our minds and hearts for the celebration of Easter. Any little commitment to a personal fast, extra prayers, or acts of charity and almsgiving helps to knock the barnacles off our souls and prepares us to renew our baptism in the waters of salvation come Easter morn.

I think we were all saddened by the news of the shooting deaths of seventeen high school students at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida on Ash Wednesday. Once again, senseless violence has torn apart young lives and brought trauma to the survivors. While we must strive to understand and address the issues in this country that foster these now regular shootings, perhaps this Lent is a time for us all to commit the fruits of this season's fasting, prayer, and abstinence to an end to this kind of violence. There are many things we can do. Think about praying the Stations of the Cross each week for the repose of the souls of those who have died and for the care and comfort of the injured and those who grieve. Give up your morning Starbucks and donate the money you save to victim relief efforts or your local crisis hotline. Or, fast every Friday and give the food savings to a local domestic abuse shelter. Let your prayer and fasting be informed by the news we read and trust that the fruits of prayer and self-denial are efficacious.

**EASTER PRAYER**

If there are specific individuals (living or dead) you would like us to remember during this Easter season, or specific intentions, jot them down on the enclosed prayer slip and send it back to us.

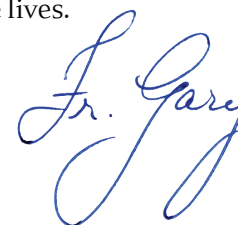
No offering is required, but any offering given will support the apostolic priorities of Holy Cross.

Since the first of the year, we in Holy Cross have laid two of our brothers to rest in Holy Cross Cemetery here on campus. **Fr. Thomas E. Chambers, C.S.C.** (January 5) grew up in Cleveland, Ohio and was ordained in 1961. Tom had a doctorate in education and served at Ursuline College in Cleveland for many years before taking on the presidency of Our Lady of Holy Cross College in New Orleans in 1987. In retirement, Tom became president of the Willwoods Community, a New Orleans-based non-profit that provides affordable housing for the elderly. **Fr. Leon Mertensotto, C.S.C.** (January 7) earned his doctorate at the Catholic University in Fribourg, Switzerland in 1961, returning to Notre Dame to spend the rest of his life teaching theology there; he retired in 2012. Generations of Notre Dame doctors got their first taste of medical ethics in his classroom. From New Ulm, Minnesota, Mert was ordained in 1956.

Prayers are requested for Carol Gromski, longtime employee of the Association and friend of many of you. Carol took a tumble last week and badly injured her shoulder. She is on the mend after extensive surgery, but a few prayers for her speedy recovery would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for all you do to support the mission of Holy Cross around the world. Your efforts help us to spread the Gospel and to change lives.

Peace,



# OUR CHRISTIAN GENEALOGY

Like many Americans, I have always been fascinated by my heritage and longed to know more about my genealogy. I was pretty sure that I was descended from a long line of farmers and factory workers, but I still wanted to know more about who the Chamberlands and Reagans were and where they came from. Long weekend duty nights as the rector (residence hall director) of Zahm Hall at Notre Dame finally gave me opportunity to start exploring my family history.

I always knew that I was Irish on both sides of my family and that my father's father was French - in New England, that means French Canadian. I knew that my mother's maternal lineage had some English and German in it and that the family was probably Protestant just a few generations ago. But other than that, I only knew that the people who might be able to help me most were dying or had already passed on. All that remained were vague references to Carrington Avenue in Woonsocket, Rhode Island where my father lived as a child and the Lee Hall Apartments in Portsmouth, Virginia where my mother's family resided for a few years when she was in high school.

I signed up for Ancestry.com with some reservation, yet moments after typing in some information about my parents and grandparents, whole generations of family connections appeared before my eyes. It seems that there are lot of church and government records out there and much of it has been digitized and already coordinated by other genealogists. Sites like Ancestry are giant data bases of information that connect one with government records, census records, Church baptismal records, and the vital statistics of most states, while also assisting the searcher to access the personal research that others have chosen to share. The bureaucratic needs of the powers of Europe meant that their colonies in North America kept fairly meticulous records, while the sacramental records kept by the Jesuits in the smaller French settlements were quite detailed and complete. So far, I have over 3,000 people listed in my extended family tree. It really is too much.

And what have I learned? The first Chambrelan to come to New France was Simon who arrived from Normandy in 1669. He immediately married a young widow and they had eight children over the next nineteen years. Some of them eventually married into families that had come even earlier. Within a generation, the 'e' and the 'r'

in the name had switched places and our branch of the family added the 'd'. It is possible that some ancestor who couldn't write made an 'x' next to his name and it was taken as a 'd' by later readers.

I have also come to appreciate and be amused by the use of *dit* names among French Canadians. Though known in France, the usage of these aliases really took hold in the New World. Though most prevalent among those who were in the military, *dit* names allowed members of extended families who lived in close proximity to differentiate from one another. Thus, a family with the surname Lefebvre might take the *dit* name Boulanger, which is French for baker. Both were acceptable on legal documents where they appeared either singly or together. Over time, children often kept the *dit* name and it spread to the whole extended clan.

*Dit* names could be taken from locations in Canada or France, physical characteristics of a person, his occupation or some other such thing. My great-grandmother's family were the Maurices (pronounced Morris in the United States). According to her death certificate, she was born in Rhode Island, but there was no record of her or her family until they appeared on a census well after her birth. After months of looking for them, I noticed in an earlier census that a family that lived next door to some other relatives all had the same first names as my great-grandmother's family. Maurice proved to be their *dit* name, while their family name was Chaput. Maurice is the place they came from near Three Rivers in Quebec. When I then looked for Wilfrid and Caroline Chaput (my great-grandmother's parents), over two hundred years of genealogical connections opened up in seconds. It is fascinating to see digital images of three-hundred-year-old parish records that note the baptism of a child born the day before, the marriage of a distant ancestor who paddled canoes full of beaver skins down treacherous rivers for a living, or the burial of a young mother interred on the same day that she died.

I have learned that while the Irish on my father's side immigrated in the late nineteenth century, the Catholic Irish on my mother's side came with the first wave of Irish immigration in the 1840s. My mother's mother's family, however, are Old Virginia settlers who can be traced back to the settlement at Jamestown. The earliest were English and the latter Scotch-Irish. Some fought in the Revolutionary War and others would later wear

gray in the American Civil War. As a Northerner, it has been unsettling to see inventories that listed human persons as the property of my forebears and to read wills that broke up black families in the dispersal of assets upon the death of a white farmer. Slaves were owned by many in the South and even smalltime farmers like my family were responsible for and participated in their enslavement.



Europeans often laugh at the American obsession with finding our roots. Ever since *Roots* itself, the 1970s mini-series about the slave Kunta Kinte and his descendants, Americans have longed to "find out where we came from". Though our country is filled with the descendants of thrill-seekers, fortune hunters, runaways, slaves, and those desperate for a better life, many of us know little about where those brave men and women came from or even who they were. We are like adopted children who, though they love their adoptive families, long to know someone who shares their blood.

It may be that Europeans cannot understand because they often grow up not far from their ancestral homes, they know their people, they know who they are. The greatness of America lies in part in the fact that the daughters of Polish immigrants married the sons of Ireland, Italian girls married German boys, and increasingly the descendants of African slaves and Chinese laborers are marrying the descendants of Norwegian wheat farmers and Eastern European Jews. But in a country with a short history and little heritage, the children of the melting pot want to create ties to the past, to the old country (wherever it may be), and to the men and women upon whose shoulders they stand. They search the past to find out about the present and even the future. We want to know if the past has anything to say about who we are today; we long to know if it gives any hints to who we are becoming.



The season of Lent bears many similarities to a genealogical search. As we progress through the season, we tell our family history. We read of famine and slavery and lives lived under oppression. We hear the tales of trusting and faithful forebears who stand down the king of Egypt and march confidently into the unknown led only by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar

of fire by night. We read of a covenant, not unlike the commitment of marriage, made between God and his people, a covenant that is renewed time and again by our God as he strives to pull his chosen ever closer into a relationship of love. We hear of his Son, who endures temptation, and eventually suffering and death for our sake, but who, in turn, shows us the way of fidelity, love and hope.

As we delve into the depths of the past, we do so knowing that it is all about who we are today. Can we find ourselves in the story? Do we see the unbroken succession of relationships from Noah to Abraham to Moses to David to Jesus to the apostles to us today? Are we able to identify with the assertion of Paul that those who believe are adopted children of God, or with the evangelist John that we are now the true children of God? Neither denies our human origins but speak to the spiritual relationship we now have through Christ with our heavenly Father. Here, spiritual does not refer to something vague and ethereal, but rather to something deeper, more authentic, and more real.

If a typical genealogical search is about bloodlines and DNA, the Lenten search is about the essential and fundamental ties created through baptism. Our Lenten journey should highlight to us all once again that "water is actually thicker than blood". We come more deeply to understand that we are called to identify with those who share our baptism.

What does this knowledge of our history say about our future? If we stand on the shoulders of our ancestors in faith and if we are children of God and brothers and sisters of Jesus, then we know who we are called to be. If the family of Jesus is empowered by his Spirit and fills this world as his Church, we must be his abiding presence in this world. We must speak truth to power, demand release for captives, and call for dignity for the oppressed, while never failing to speak his word of hope to both captive and captor, oppressed and oppressor alike. All must come to know the love of the Father through us, for we now partake in and are responsible for our Brother's mission.

The more we come to know and accept the details of our divine heritage, the better we understand who we are in God, and who we are called to be in our world.