

Ring a bell? You can for a sound wage and a flat

IT sounds like an odd job but a bell-ringer is being sought to man a popular tourism landmark in Cork for a handsome wage.

And whoever tolls the Shandon bells will not only get a sound salary, they will also be get a rent-free apartment in Cork city as part of an attractive remuneration package.

However, given that in high season the chosen campanologist will have to work seven days a week, he or she may end up feeling like Quasimodo.

That said, it is a quasi-flexible role and the candidate won't get the hump from the seven-day demands for too long, as the workload eases in off season.

Plus, there is the bonus of free lodgings for the successful candidate. But it's not just a

By **Brian Looney**

campanology role that will have to be performed as new Shandon rector Reverend Sarah Marry is looking for a tower manager to boost the number of tourists visiting the venue and to heighten the profile of the historic site.

She said: 'We are looking for an enthusiastic tower manager to manage and promote this iconic tourist attraction overlooking Cork city.'

The Anglican church, officially known as St Anne's, offers free admittance but there is a modest charge for those who want to visit the 60-metre tower and ring the internationally famed bells.

The iconic landmark has been providing a 360 degree view overlooking the city since 1722.

its bells rang out for the first time 30 years later and they have rarely stopped since.

The tower, one of Ireland's instantly recognised tourist attractions, is also known for its four-faced clock.

It is popularly known as the Four Liars because historically the faces rarely tell the same time.

Above the copper-domed bell tower is the world-renowned two-metre gilded weathervane in the shape of a salmon.

Reporting to the Shandon Tower Trust Committee, the new executive will have to draw up and direct a marketing plan for the venue, provide visitors with information about the Shandon bells and ensure health and safety policy is implemented.

Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

A moment of clarity that has brightened my world forever

SOMETIMES, just when you least expect it, you encounter something that changes everything. It could be a movie, a song or a painting. It could be a sunrise or a sunset, a flower or the sweet scent of summer.

On such occasions we are, as they say, 'blown away'. Somehow, we see the world differently, and our attitude towards it is never the same again. It is what Buddhists call a moment of enlightenment.

The movie ends and you sit in silence as the credits roll. You feel the pull of reality but you refuse to budge. Inwardly, you have been transformed by something so powerful and true.

You stand only to realise that reality itself has been transformed. Things to which you were once oblivious shine with a new radiance. You see the people surrounding you as though for the first time.

Books have served that purpose in my own life. Strangely, I have never sought them out. At various times, they have simply fallen into my life by chance.

I have discovered them while rooting for something else, on the shelves of my friends or when I mistakenly clicked on an obscure website. Most people would call this coincidence. I call it providence.

I say that because those books that came to me by the strangest of routes have had the greatest impact on how I live. They shaped my perspective so fundamentally that, after reading them, I felt like a different person. I closed the book, sat in silence and realised that I had experienced a bolt of enlightenment.

Recently, I was searching on the internet for something when I happened upon on a man named Frank Rogers. He is a professor of spiritual formation in California who has written a novel and a couple of other books. One of those is a small volume on compassion, a book so rich and beautiful it could have descended straight from paradise.

Many people have written about compassion, but very few have taught us how to practise it. If there is one feature of our humanity that sets us apart it is compassion. Yet in the midst of life's demands it is often hard to find our 'compassionate core'.

How do we love when we are feeling low? How can we heal and help others when we ourselves are in pain? We know that compassion is the key to peace and joy, but what if we have been so crushed by life that our hearts no longer beat with it?

Frank Rogers has written a remarkable book that tells you exactly how

to restore compassion to a weeping heart. I read it very quickly and, as I reached the last line, I knew that everything had changed. All my life I have struggled to understand the secret of genuinely compassionate action. Finally I had found it and in a way I could never have predicted.

I shut the book knowing that in order to walk the pathway of love we must first take an internal detour. 'First take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye'. And there it was in a line I had read a million times, but had never truly understood until now.

If we have problems with the world and with others, that is our problem not theirs. As Rogers writes: 'Our responses to the world do not depend upon what other people do to us even when they treat us in harmful and provocative ways.' By getting our own emotions in order, we have the power to change our circumstances and our relationships.

How often have we blamed others or the world for our anger, grief or pain? We reason that 'if only he would stop irritating me, I would never become angry'. However, if we turn inwards and attend first to the plank in our own eye, we inevitably find that we have fears, longings and wounds that are the true source of our anger.

GENUINE compassion begs that we first heal and soothe our own wounds before tending to those of others. Only by extending compassion 'to the cries of suffering clamouring within our own souls' can we learn how to extend compassion to those who cry elsewhere.

As I read, I came to understand that compassion is the work of a lifetime. Still, in those eloquent and powerful pages I learned more about myself than I have in countless years. I learned that tending to the plank in my own eye is the only way to see clearly why others ache and act as they do.

I closed the book and knew that everything had changed. I had been given an opportunity to start over, an opportunity to practise compassion in a way that truly matters. Once again, enlightenment had struck without warning and caught me off guard.

As if by chance, something fell into my life that altered the way I see things. Now the world seems kinder, people seem gentler and I am less inclined to look for the cause of distress outside myself.

You see, the beauty of enlightenment is that you don't need to look for it. When you are open, and when you are ready, it will somehow find you.

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6.3 Million Children Died Last Year Before their 5th Birthday

5	Falls asleep in Mum's arms... Dies	Falls asleep in Mum's arms... Wakes up feeling better
4	Contracts Malaria	Catches a Cold
3	Walks 8 Hours for Water	First day of playschool
2	Hunger Pains	Birthday Cake
1	Dirty Water	Clean Water
0	Born in a mud hut	Born in a hospital

Sarah (Sierra Leone) | **Emma (Ireland)**

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