



Johannesburg Safe

Sir - I approach this letter with some trepidation, and the hope it will be taken in the spirit intended.

Whilst I appreciate the difficulties in Zimbabwe at present are very real, and in some cases life-threatening, I have, though, to disagree with the picture painted of the situation in South Africa. You report that the city of Johannesburg "is becoming more and more lawless and at the mercy of criminals" - this simply is not true. Recent figures, accepted by the United Nations, and, of course, loudly bruited within South Africa, show that crime in that city has fallen by 80%. This fall is, from what is to us here in Europe, admittedly a very high figure.

Nonetheless, there has been a significant improvement.

Like every other major city I have known in my travels as an international airline pilot, there are areas which it would not be very wise to visit, especially late at night, or the wee small hours of the morning. This applies to London, Birmingham, Manchester, New York, Los Angeles, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, to name but several. A typical example is Boston in the United States of America. Here there is what the locals euphemistically call the "Combat Zone": an area of the city where airlines insurance for their crew staying in the city does not apply due to the known poor level of civil security. I would not call visitors to Boston "heroic", nor, I am sure, would anyone else.

What the wise visitor does is to find out from his hotel concierge, or other local 'experts', where it is safe to go, and where not. In addition, following well-publicised advice, this same visitor does not carry expensive cameras or jewellery on ostentatious display, or openly study maps of the territory, and thus advertise unfamiliarity with their surroundings. Become 'street-wise', maintain an unobtrusive low profile, and you will be as safe as at home here in the UK. I have a large extended family in Johannesburg and the surrounding towns and visit them fairly often (at least twice a year).

My wife and I, as do everyone living there, drive all over, socialise and do business at all times of the day and night (just like the Catenian party led by Grand Vice-President Jim Kelly!) We have never had a problem. In fact the only time we have ever been burgled was last year, here in our sleepy English village, and that was whilst we were asleep in bed. Of course we know of people in Johannesburg who have been robbed, burgled and even of someone close to

one of our family who was murdered, but a glance at the newspapers shows that that happens here in the UK too.

We are lucky to have a holiday home near Cape Town where we usually stay over most of the UK winter. The security situation there is even better than Johannesburg. A friend has pointed out that most of the "fortress" homes (high walls and security fences) are owned by either foreigners (peace of mind when away for protracted periods), or folk originally from Johannesburg. Which brings me to an important point: in my experience Johannesburg people come from a high crime past and now like to "talk it up". My family and friends there are no exception to this phenomenon. Thus I would suggest that their descriptions of the security should be taken with a liberal dose of salt. South Africa is improving, and should be given praise where it is due. Although many of us who know and love that country may be a little apprehensive about the long-term future, at present it is a beautiful country with so much to offer the tourist and visitor. Do not let scaremongers put you off - go and see for yourself!

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PS: Barry Kirwan, Secretary of Aylesbury Circle and I, with help from anyone and everyone else (Jim Kelly, Hilary Sutton, or anyone from Johannesburg Circle!) hope to engender enough interest in the Cape Town area to start at least one 'Catenian Group' and I hope to meet with the Bishop's office in Cape Town, and with those in Somerset West (hopefully we will have a problem here: what to name the new Circle if successful!) who have expressed an interest.

Jumbulance Alternative?

Sir - I have read with interest Brother Hilary Sutton's "warm up" letter concerning an offer to help purchase a new Jumbulance.

From my own research such a vehicle will cost in the region of £300,000. The running costs for 20 trips a year to Lourdes, bearing in mind fuel, tolls, ferries, driver costs, insurance, servicing will be another £150,000 per year, (fuel and drivers alone costing £120,000). The vehicle will have a life expectancy of 15 years. Simple arithmetic shows the costs per passenger (25 per trip) to work out at £340 per passenger return to Lourdes. With modern medication virtually nobody nowadays cannot take the short flight to Lourdes, as is demonstrated so well by HCPT, The Hosanna House Trust and so many Diocesan pilgrimages, and at far

less a cost for transportation than that required for a Jumbulance. If our Association wishes to support transportation to Lourdes, may I suggest that it is often the helpers accompanying groups who need financial support, and our Association should look at an alternative to the Jumbulance, by setting up a fund for helpers to travel with HCPT, Diocesan pilgrimages and the worthy organisations. A much better and more effective use of our money.

John Tangney
Bromley Circle

God is love; 1 John 4:8.

God created man in the image of himself;
- Genesis 1:27.

Love is always patient and kind; love is never jealous; love is not boastful or conceited; it is never rude and never seeks its own advantage, it does not take offence or store up grievances. Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but finds its joy in the truth. It is always ready to make allowances, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes.

- 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

We can but try!

Ignatius

(Name and Circle Supplied)

Annual Conference 13-15 May, 2005 - Torquay

Torquay is the Queen of the Devon Coast,
Of that you can be sure it's true - no idle boast,
Reception on Friday, you're all welcome here,
Quite a start for the event of the year,
Up early on Saturday for a conference date,
Afterwards, explore - the area's all first rate,
You then need to get ready to eat and dance with pride,
Carnival or Jazz or Banquet - the choice is so wide.
Of course, if you don't book, you'll miss all the fun,
No doubt, if you haven't, you now need to run,
Find your forms, fill them out,
Ensure that you see what it's all about,
Relive your faith on Sunday, at Mass,
Essential brotherhood, you won't want to pass.
Now, don't delay, book today,
Come and join us, a decision you won't rue
Each and everyone down here is waiting to greet you!