

Predictions 2009

By **Dónal Thompson**



Every year since 2003 I have written a weekly letter predicting the year ahead. Over the years I have foreseen that *Arnold Schwarzenegger* would become a politician, that Bush would invade Iraq, that Blair would stand down and hand over to Gordon Brown and I even predicted the month of the death of John Paul II and the name his successor would choose. And last year I predicted the assassination of Benazir Bhutto only six weeks before it happened and predicted, when it was deemed unlikely, that Barack Obama would be the next president of the United States of America.

So I am getting out my crystal ball, shuffling my Tarot and blissfully tossing my I-Ching sticks to see what lies just beyond the horizon. Here are my predictions for 2009...

Robert Mugabe, Zimbabwe's heartless and incompetent leader, will be deposed and placed into the hands of the International Court of Justice in the Hague. He will be tried and convicted of crimes against humanity for letting his people die of starvation and cholera.

Israel, with the discrete backing of the USA, will launch strikes against Iran's nuclear factories and the Middle East will continue to be what it always has been. A deeply tragic conundrum.

There will be very big news about The Beatles but I cannot see what it is. It may not be a motive for joy.

Real Madrid Football Club will be torn apart by internecine fighting and will find its traditional position of superiority mightily challenged.

Athletic Bilbao will go down and Real Sociedad will go up.

Winter will end early taking the flowers by surprise and causing the birds to improvise. Every garden will look like a Picasso and every tree will sound like a jazz session.

Mothers and fathers will love their children and children will love them back as they have done since forever. Fear will continue to make the wolf seem bigger.

In Spain there will be better understanding between Muslims and Christians and between Gypsies and non-Travellers.

Lorenzo Mila of TVE news will receive an official honour from the King of Spain for his services to broadcasting.

Prince Charles of England will put his foot in it with some silly comment about science and there will be an enormous campaign to skip him and make his son the next King of England.

Ian Paisley, retired northern Irish demagogue, will go to a better place. Or a worse one.

And this Ship of Fools will continue on its voyage to God knows where.

In 2009 let's remember the old proverb: The best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago. The second best time is now.

Happy New Year.