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January 2022

The Trident



The Parish Magazine of



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A Prayer for January

Lord, we thank you for your grace and goodness. Please help us to hear your voice and give us strength to continue working for your kingdom in these challenging times. As we enter the new year, we ask for your healing hand upon all who are sick and suffering at this time. We pray for their families and friends.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen

Opinions expressed in this magazine are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Church, the Vicar, the editors or the PCC.

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From Father Robert

Dear Friends

On the first Sunday of Advent Fr. Adam reminded us that in the Church we have two New Years; Advent 1 and 1st January. Hence, in the life of the Church we are well under way having celebrated Christmas, and moving into Epiphany.

Epiphany means to reveal. Epiphany is the time when we focus on how God reveals himself to us, as a human being. This reality for us in the Church is summarised beautifully for us in two of my favourite bible verses from Revelation 21 verse 3 and Philippians 2 verses 6 and 7:

**'Behold the dwelling of God is among mortals', and,
'Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God,... emptied himself, ... being born in human likeness.'**

These verses are some of the most radical words ever to be spoken about God. To people brought up on tales of a Roman, Greek and Jewish view of God this divine being who, not only consorts with humans, but becomes human, must have been shocking. It is that vision, revealed at Epiphanytide, that has sustained me over the past year and into this new year.

During my cancer diagnosis, treatment and on-going interventions the idea of an all-powerful God, up there in the clouds, dispensing arbitrary benevolence seems very troubling. Such a God is distant and possibly even cruel, as others still suffer. However, the God who shows himself in the face of the Christ-child at this time reminds us that this is a different way of God sharing his life with us, and, importantly, us with him.

The God we celebrate at this time, is a God who comes. My prayer for us all is that we all welcome this divine gift.

Have a very happy new, *new* year.

Your friend and priest
Fr Robert

Hope means expectancy when things are otherwise hopeless.
GK Chesterton



From Father Adam

My Dear Friends!

There has been much to celebrate and rejoice in during the Christmas season. A big thank you to all who contributed in so many ways to the ministry of our church as together we declared the Good News of a Saviour's birth. There were so many wonderful worship opportunities, so many guests, so many parents and children. Christianity is about being involved, working together to establish the Kingdom of God into our community. Thank you to all who gave up your time to facilitate our Christmas services and outreach activities. The sacrificial contributions of so many people and in so many ways demonstrate the glory of a church fully alive, reaching out in love and service.

We are all on a journey of working out what it means to follow Jesus in our lives day by day as we make the call and cost of discipleship seriously, so we find ourselves desiring to bring every area of our lives into line with his will for us. This is what the Church is: a community of people committed to living life God's way and welcoming others to join us on our journey. At Christmas time, the Church proclaims that 'the Word became flesh and lived among us.' God in Christ comes into the world to proclaim God's love to all, to show that no one is beyond the reach of God's love and to call us to offer this same love to one another. For this is what it is to "love your neighbour as yourself", and this is what it is to live as citizens of God's Kingdom.

Saying goodbye to an old year and welcoming a new one isn't always easy. What lies ahead of us might seem somewhat overwhelming, especially in our day and age, and what's behind us might still linger on, leaving feelings of confusion, uncertainty, even resentment. It is natural, though, to worry about the unknown. But please remember, when the Angels sang: "Peace to God's people on earth" – they meant that Jesus was bringing new life to a struggling world; new hope to those whose lives were full of grief, and a sense of peace which can sustain and empower us all to work for a better future with His help and His presence. Aaron Lauritsen said: "There is a strange comfort in knowing that no matter what happens today, the Sun will rise again".

January is a time for assessing our lives – and some rashly make New Year Resolutions which are often broken before the end of the month. So, instead of making resolutions – rather pray and ask God that you might be transformed more closely into his image. Jesus was the human image of the unseen Father. Resolution is a matter of human will; prayer is a matter of

being open to the Spirit of God. St Paul said: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God." So, we must understand that being "comforted" can also mean receiving strength, encouragement, and hope to deal with our troubles.

But now, we can be thankful for the gift of each new day, the gift of faith and trust, the gift of our family, the gift of friendship, the gift of our health, the gift of our community, key workers and emergency services, the gift of food and the gift of a new year, 2022. Saint Ambrose said, "No duty is more urgent than that of returning thanks." So, thank you to all of you here for all that you are, all that you have shared, all that I have learned in the last year, and those who also were part of my journey when our paths crossed before.

Happy New Year with love and blessings,
Fr Adam



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Copy Dates!

Copy date for February will be Sunday 9th January
Copy date for March will be Sunday 13th February

Reflections for the feast of Epiphany based on Matthew 2:1-12

This is such an amazing story - and it is only recorded in Matthew's Gospel. But it seems that this is a beautiful parable of the journey of faith that we all go through as we move into a more profound experience of God as Christians.

In Matthew 2:1-12 we can find the story of the journey of the Wise Men. But what do we know about these Wise Men? In the very beginning, we have three misconceptions about the Wise Men: their total, title, and timing.

Nowhere in Scripture are we told that there were three Wise Men. The term used is plural, indicating more than one, but no specific number is given. Eastern tradition sets their number at twelve, but Western tradition puts it at three, based on the three gifts of Gold, Incense, and Myrrh. There could have been three, but virtually any other number is almost as likely.

Talking about their title, we know that nowhere in Scripture are they called kings. This legend was probably based initially on Isaiah 49:7, which speaks of kings bringing gifts to Israel's Redeemer.

Seven hundred years after the birth of Christ, these "three kings" are even given names, and one church claims to have their skulls. But Bible does not mention their names because their names do not matter, and what matters is what they did when they arrived in Bethlehem.

They are called "Wise Men" in Scripture, from which we get the term Magi. It can mean one who is trained in astrology and dream interpretation. These were astrologers because they came in response to a star they had seen. Astrology was a widely respected science in those times in the Roman world. Studies show that the astrologers of that day had tremendous knowledge of astronomy. These wise men came from the East. Most reputable Bible scholars believe they came from Mesopotamia and they were probably followers of Zoroaster.

And the last misconception – time. The visit of the Magi could have been as much as two years after the birth of Jesus. There are at least two reasons for this conclusion. First, verse 11 clearly states that Mary and the Child were in "the house." No shepherds are present, no baby in a manger. Second, Herod asks the Wise Men when they began to see the star and, based on that knowledge, all the male children killed were two years old or younger. The Magi told him that they had begun to see the star signalling

Christ's birth 1-2 years earlier.

So, Wise Men visited Jesus. In some countries, no one could approach a king without a gift. So, the wise men brought Jesus Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh. Gold is the metal of kings. [Frank]incense is a sweet-smelling gum imported from Arabia and was used by priests in a temple during worship. Myrrh is a fragrant gum used both medicinally and as a perfume, but as well was used to embalm the bodies of the dead.

Gold is very appropriate for a King. The Frankincense presents Jesus as Priest, and the Myrrh presents Jesus as our Propitiation, and it reminds us of why Jesus came into the world.

I believe that the Wise Men are examples for us in our journey of faith for a couple of reasons:

First, they study the facts. Their journey of faith begins with them asking questions.

Second, they know that the only way to get an answer is to set out on a journey. But that journey involves risk. They have to come to the court of the king and risk their lives to find out about Jesus. But their desire for truth is stronger than their fear.

Third, they come into the presence of Jesus, and they worship. And part of their worship is to offer gifts.

And finally, they make their way back home, back to their everyday lives, not leaving Jesus behind, but taking the experience of their encounter with them. And there's that lovely touch in verse 12, which says that they went back by another road, inspired by God in a dream. And it's true for all of us that once we meet with Jesus, we take another road; life is never the same again. And it's true, too, that it is under the guidance of God that our route is chosen for us. T.S. Eliot ended his poem imagining the thoughts of the magi: "We returned to our places... but no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation, with an alien people clutching their gods."

If we recognize our need to respond to Jesus as the Magi did, there are four things we should remember:

The first: God, this infant King, has come to transform all of human history, all peoples of all times. The Wise Men represented in today's gospel were not models of religious piety. They are the wrong race, the wrong denomination, the wrong religion. They don't know how to worship correctly. They were astronomers, star-gazers, fortune-tellers. The wise men should not be there: but Matthew wants to make it very clear that Jesus came for all people in this very broken world to heal us, save us, and teach us how to love.

.....Cont

The second: we must make our journey to find Jesus, to meet him personally, and make him a living reality in our lives.

The third: if we want to experience Jesus, then we must worship him and make sacrifices to put Him first in our lives. We must be willing to sacrifice our time, talents, and treasure as the Magi did.

The fourth: **Jesus does not make my life more comfortable; Jesus doesn't** help me fit in and succeed. We are no longer at ease in a world not committed to Jesus. A strange, unfamiliar road is now our path. But we are not alone on this path. Jesus walks with us, Jesus saves us, He is our hope, He always welcomes us and forgives us.

Fr Adam

My Country Childhood

As Gloucestershire boys, the games and rituals we played seemed to run through the natural order of the seasons. Most games we played seemed for our amusement only; rituals were traditional and sometimes earned us pocket money. At the start of the year we had 'first footing'- crossing a neighbour's threshold early in the morning and wishing them 'Good Luck and Happy New Year!' It was always best if you were the first to call; even better if you had black hair. A 'dark stranger' for some reason, was considered to be a symbol of good fortune; those of us with fair hair carried a lump of coal.

With the New Year past came the time of inexhaustible pleasures with the wintry landscapes wrapped up in snow and ice. The generosity of snow always seemed unbounded - you could eat it, drink it, throw it about, make caves or tunnels in it, cut it into slabs, build steps or walls or houses.

Country snow always seemed clean and white as paper, so that you could read things in it, track birds, badgers or even foxes, and the big hobnailed boots of your friends. As long as the hard winter lasted, our games were many- playing the xylophone on icicles hanging from the roofs, or licking the same like lollipops; and best of all, if the ice was strong enough, working up a slide across the village pond which, when perfectly polished, was a magic carpet that bore us in an effortless dream through the landscape.

Laurie Lee

Remembering Ralph Vaughan Williams

One hundred years ago, on 16th **January 1922**, **Ralph Vaughan Williams' A Pastoral Symphony** was performed for the first time, in London.

Later designated Symphony No. 3, it was said to be inspired by the composer hearing a bugler practising and is frequently thought of as a memorial for the fallen of the First World War, many of whom Vaughan Williams knew. He later said he saw music as an antidote to a war-torn world.

He had been born in 1872: his father was vicar at Down Ampney in Gloucestershire, but he died two years later. His mother, an evangelical Christian, was also the niece of Charles Darwin. This combination of events may have led to his uncertainty in questions of faith: his second wife Ursula **said he “drifted into a cheerful agnosticism, but he was never a professing Christian”**.

Nevertheless, Vaughan Williams frequently attended church, where he found musical inspiration. His first job after graduation was as a church organist, and he wrote many compositions for the Anglican Church, including well known hymn tunes. He edited *The English Hymnal* in 1904 and wrote an opera of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. **But he said there was “no reason why an atheist could not write a good Mass”**.

A Pastoral Symphony received some criticism at first but was later regarded as stunningly beautiful, combing the grace of the wildly popular *The Lark Ascending* with the deep sadness of war.

The New Year

If we put our hand in God's hand
As we enter this New Year
Not knowing what the future holds
But that our Friend is near

We shall not fear what lies ahead
If He is by our side,
Nor wander from the pathway
If He will be our guide.

The Sinless One from heaven came
To dwell with us on earth,
He sought and bought us with His
blood
And offered us new birth.

Now as we travel through this year
He knows the things He's planned,
So let us trust and know just this –
Our times are in His hands.



Don't cover over your garden

The TV presenter Monty Don has said that having pavement or tarmac on your property is one of the 'worst contributions' that homeowners can make to climate change.

The Gardeners' World presenter points out that hard surfaces prevent water from being absorbed into the ground, which is a growing problem because of increased flooding.

Instead, Don urges people to consider having as many absorbent surfaces in their gardens as possible. Writing in the BBC Gardeners' World Magazine, he explains: "We need for excess water to slowly work down into our underground aquifers and make its way gradually to our rivers and out to the sea."

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- Ella's Kitchen baby food & yogurt pouches
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Terracycle news

Last month the pet food programme closed so we will no longer be able to take these items, so can you please recycle them your self at the supermarkets. The pet food collection made us nearly £600

Then later in December the Tassimo programme was stopped and you are now asked to recycle your pods through the PODBACK scheme. As a thank you for taking part in the scheme and as compensation for it ending we have been given a percentage of what we would have earned had the programme continued. Our account has been credited with £500, bringing our total earned through the Tassimo recycling to over £2,500.

All this money has gone to the church to assist in the repairs of both the church and the hall

I am continuing collecting Crisp packets and Ellas kitchen baby food & yogurt pouches, and have now started collecting the plastic bags that dishwasher tablets and salt come in, and they smell a lot nicer than cat food

For more details of what can be accepted please see the terracycle website

<https://www.terracycle.com/en-GB/>

The programmes we collect for are :

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As we bring our needs to you, help us to lay down our problems at your feet. Help us to lay down all our tangled thoughts and restless emotions. Lord, we seek your peace and patience. Thank you for reassuring us that all your plans for us are good. Thank you for your word In Jesus, name we pray

Amen.



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From the Ealing Foodbank

Thank you for continuing to support the foodbank.
There are a variety of ways in which you can help.

- If you go to your local supermarket leave your donations there. Most have a Foodbank box on their premises
- If you order online it is possible to click the right button to make a donation for the Foodbank
- If neither option is available to you then you can continue to leave your donations in the boxes left in the church porches. But there will be some delay in transferring it to the Foodbank warehouse.
- Another alternative is to give cash or cheque (payable to Foodbank Trussell Trust) to Nicole who will pass it on regularly.

Ealing Foodbank has partnered with a food charity called Bankuet, which offers you another way to get donated food to them. More details can be found on the foodbank website, where you can also find the most up to date shopping list.

<https://ealing.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>

** please remember that our magazine is produced a month in advance, so we publish the shopping list available to us at the time of going to **press, So it's a good idea to check the most recent list on the website** (see above) or Twitter: @EalingFoodbank or Instagram: ealingfoodbank

THE DECEMBER SHOPPING LIST **

Tinned fruit, tinned rice pudding, ready made custard - tins/cartons, longlife fruit juice & squash, instant coffee, dried/powdered milk, savoury biscuits & crackers, ketchup & mayo, peanut butter/marmite/sandwich paste, cooking oil, laundry products (smaller sizes preferred)

Thank you, but the foodbank has plenty of pasta, meat & meat main meals, baked beans & soup at the moment.



From the Editors

As we write this, the prospects of a 'normal' Christmas seem less certain by the day. But we hope that you'll be able to celebrate with your loved ones. Please do come and see our pantomime. Everyone has been working so hard to produce a great show.

July 4 2024

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