



Anglican Catholic Church



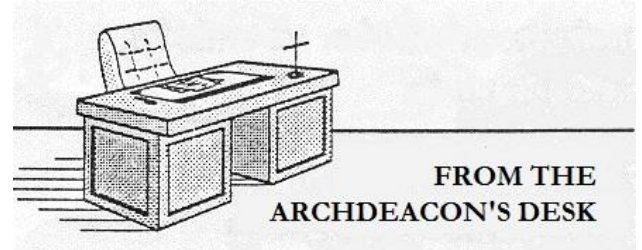
Diocese of the United Kingdom

Catholic Faith † Orthodox Worship † Apostolic Order

December 2017

My dear friends and colleagues,

There are many legends of the Birth of Christ – the Nativity – and of flowers and animals connected with that event. One of the most beautiful tells of when doves cooed a lullaby, and the ox and the ass made the air warm with their breath. The little glow-worm wanted to do something too, but there seemed nothing that it could do or offer. Then it found a tiny leaf, all shiny and green, and thought the Babe might like to see it. So, slowly and carefully, it made its way with the leaf to the Child, who stretched out His hand, and touched both insect and leaf. The glow-worm crept back to its corner, but did not know that it carried with it some of the glory of Christ, and glow-worms have had that radiance ever since. So declares one legend.



And in most of these old stories, there is an element that appeals strongly to us. For it is so true to life. We have all known men and women, very, very ordinary folk, who have been touched by Christ, and transfigured. So it was in the days when he walked the earth. One woman broke a vase of ointment and anointed Him and, ever since, her simple act of love has been held out as a memorial of Him. Another poor old lady dropped two of the smallest coins of the realm into the offering at the synagogue – all that she could afford – yet He remarked on it, and her simple action has been an inspiration.

Ordinary people, yes, but with a great love in their hearts that made them quite extraordinary. And the astonishing truth in that old legend of the Nativity can happen again this Christmas, in your life and mine. This troubled world needs to hear, answer the door, and let Him in.



*Yet with the woes of sin and strife
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angel strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not
The love song which they bring;
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing.*

– E. H. Sears

Wishing you a happy Christmas and a blessed new year

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The New Year

As 2018 begins it is only natural to look back on the old year with a mixture of emotions and memories. Whether you have just experienced the best year ever and are looking forward to an even greater one to come, or you have spent the last twelve months coping with one deep struggle after another, the fresh calendar year brings to us all hope for things to be better, with an ache for any still-fresh wounds to slowly begin their process of healing. So whether you have just enjoyed the greatest year of your life, or are incredibly glad to see this one finally over, one truth still rings clear amidst it all. You are not alone. Never. Our God is with us. Just a week after the celebration of the birth of our King, that reminder has the power to carry us right into a fresh new start – a new calendar year. He is Emmanuel, God with us.

As we step out into the new year, let us take each day as it comes, and use it in the best way we know, living each day fully, and making sure that we are living, and not merely earning a living. Some people stress the earning so much, that they never really do the living. When they've earned what they consider is enough, they are too tired, or too ill, or too old, to do the living and enjoy it. Appreciate what is dear to you and cherish it while you may.

Of course the past can still have a huge impact on people. But we have to try not to let it cast its shadow over the future. This is often easier said than done, as I know only too well. We should gather the fruits, or the goodness, or the lessons of the past – and our past has taught us all something, good or bad. Even if we must face certain consequences due to past mistakes, do let us remember that our relationships with God can always be restored. God will never pick up a past sin, which He has once forgiven, and throw it in our faces again. Our sins are “behind His back” says Isaiah 38:17. Let them stay there. Don't dig up bad things in your (or anyone else's) past, and hang on to them. Try to draw a line at the end of 2017, and start again. Let's make each day a new beginning and make sure that we do not make today the yesterday we shall regret tomorrow. And remember that though things and people and circumstances around us shift and change, our God never changes.



Thank you for all the kind thoughts, messages and prayers following our tragic loss. The family and I appreciate it so much.

