

Article for January's website

By the time you read this Christmas will be well and truly over and we will have seen the New Year in. It's time to say a big thank you for all who contributed to the 600 shoe boxes we collected. Thank you for the hundreds of pounds raised by Christingle for the Children's society that helps homeless teenagers. Thank you for the car loads of food sent to the food bank this Year. You are a very generous community.

You may not know this but the three Kings, who are often remembered at the centre of the Christmas celebrations, only arrived some weeks after the birth of Jesus and Not with the shepherds. All those Christmas card are pretty but wrong. Church has always known this and has a special season of the year called Epiphany to cover the event. What 'Epiphany' means is 'Christ is revealed'; it is about sudden revelation. When people talk about having an epiphany, it means they see something they have never seen before, something which changes everything for them.

As we begin our life together with a new government, it is worth remembering that the Kings, or wise people, came to pay tribute to Jesus, in other words to do Him homage. They were acknowledging more than He was a God and a sacrifice; they were acknowledging that He had the power to over every king and every kingdom.

Some people think Christianity seems to be dying out in Western Europe and particularly in England. Just because fewer and fewer people go to church it does not mean that people have stopped believing. Even if there are fewer believers it does not mean that God has stopped existing. It does not matter if people have stopped believing in Him, God is still God. The Kingdom that Jesus brought will never come to an end. He is still Lord over all peoples and Lord over every political system and kingdom. His kingdom is still growing if not so much here.

So as we face a somewhat uncertain future it is worth remembering that Jesus is still here; He is still guiding and helping; still here to support us. Not only does He have a plan for your life, He has a plan for this nation's life. As we look back through history this country has always played a significant role in world affairs both when it was poor, broken and isolated as well as when it when it was rich, famous and powerful. Part of the good news is that God has not finished with us yet and God has not finished with you yet.

So, as we begin a New Year, join me in prayer asking God to guide you as an individual and us as a people into His Kingdom for in His kingdom justice prevails and all are provided for. Remember this above all else, He loves you more than you could ever possibly imagine, and therefore there is no need for recrimination, argument, backbiting, or false accusation; rather now is the time to seek peace, love, joy and, wherever possible, genuine reconciliation.

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely,

Revd. Canon Jonathan Ford.

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