



Issue no 2
Christmas 2022



Wrecsam Clarion

The newsletter of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Wrexham –
serving the parishes of North and Mid Wales



To make clearly known
To declare
To clarify
To call to prayer



Bishop's Column

It might be tempting to say that there has never been a year like this in which the celebration of the Nativity of the Christ Child in the poverty of the stable in Bethlehem is mirrored in reality of to-day's world, but even within living memory there have been winter energy crises, poverty, homelessness, hunger, cruelty, strikes and war that have blighted the festival Christmas.

Perhaps that is all the more reason to value the immense gift that we have received and celebrate the birth of the Son of God among us and the hope contained therein. The image of the crowned Infant Jesus holding an orb and cross (globus cruciger) and bestowing blessing is another reminder to us of the dominion Christ has over the world as God and man. In Him is our life.

As the Catechism reminds us:

Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit. (CCC.1817) ... it keeps us from discouragement; it sustains us during times of abandonment; it opens up our heart in expectation of eternal beatitude. (CCC.1818)

It is with that hope that we are able to face the realities of the world and find meaning for our lives even when things are tough as they are for many, many people this Christmas. Hope is that unshakable trust and assurance that the promises of God will be fulfilled as Joseph and Mary believed they would be fulfilled. Our trust is based on what He has done for us in His Son Jesus, through the Incarnation and His Death and Resurrection. For those of us who are blessed with plenty and no anxiety the greatest gift we can give is the gift we have received – Jesus, in the care, support, charity and message in which we rejoice and celebrate this Christmas.

I wish you and your families peace, joy, health and happiness this Christmas, may it be for you all a time of blessing and hope.

Nadolig Llawen,

+ Peter



*Wishing you a very
Happy and Holy Christmas,
and a Blessed New Year.*

**This second edition of "Clarion" is published
as a special Christmas edition
with our best wishes**



*Nadolig Llawen a
Blwyddyn Newydd Dda.*

Crib Offerings

Not of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh,

but Education, Food and Opportunity

Your kind donations made at the manger scene in your church this Christmastide will be divided between World Villages for Children www.worldvillages.org.uk Registered Charity No.1058973

(Their vision is for every child to grow up free from poverty. They know that education is the key to a good start in life and freedom from hardship and disadvantage. They work to provide care and access to education for the world's poorest children by raising funds to support the humanitarian programmes of the Sisters of Mary.)

.....And Mary's Meals www.marysmeals.org.uk Registered Charity SCO22140 *(Their intent is to bring new hope to desperately hungry children in the poorest parts of the world with life changing school meals.)*

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Visit the Diocesan website: rcdwxm.org.uk

Were there *really* any animals around the manger?

This Christmas let's not forget the animals in the Bible. Alongside the global focus on climate change and our care for creation, we are reminded of the significance of animals in the Nativity story.

Most Western representations of Jesus' birth show donkeys, oxen, cows, and sheep watching over the Holy Family and occasionally, a camel or two arriving with the Three Kings. Rarely do we see animals native to other continents depicted at the manger scene such as a zebra or giraffe; although a peacock, goshawk, pheasant and select dogs are included in some Italian paintings. So perhaps we should encourage wider diversity of livestock and celebrate the earth in all its fullness. But were there actually any animals at the manger on the first Christmas? It is hard to know since most of our evidence is unclear.

Pope Benedict XVI's book *Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives* says: "In the gospels there is no mention of animals" at the Holy birth. He argues that that references to the ox and the donkey in other parts of the Bible probably led Christians to include them in Nativity scenes. In its present form the custom of displayed figures depicting Christ's birth owes its origins to St Francis of Assisi (c.1181-1226) who made the first recorded Christmas Crèche or Manger for Christmas Eve in 1223 at Greccio, Italy. St Bonaventure in his life of St Francis written in 1260 refers to this idea and quotes him:

"I wish to recall to memory the little child who was born in Bethlehem, I want to set before our bodily eyes the hardship of his infant needs, how he lay in the manger, how with an ox and ass standing by he lay upon the hay."

The donkey is the animal most commonly seen in the Nativity because so many scholars believe Mary rode to Bethlehem on a donkey. Most artistic representations show Joseph leading Mary into town as she rides on the back of a donkey. Since donkeys were a common mode of transportation for the poor in biblical times this is entirely plausible. Another option is that Mary and Joseph travelled in a caravan to the census that King Herod has instigated. Travelling in a caravan was also common practice, was much safer than traveling alone and at times required camels. However, we usually see the Three Kings on camels rather than the Virgin Mary in our art. The earliest Nativity scene in art is carved into a sarcophagus lid once thought to be for a Roman general, Stilicho, who died in 408 CE. Jesus is wrapped in his swaddling clothes with an ox, an ass and two birds around him. Mary and Joseph are not there and this might allude to the Old Testament Book of Isaiah, chapter 1:3 –

*The ox knows its owner,
and the donkey its master's crib;
but Israel does not know,
my people do not understand.*

Many nativity scenes and icons include a cow near the cradle or nestling in the manger, and along with the donkey, they are breathing on the Christ-child to keep him warm. Cattle become a firm favourite with modern nativity

scenes after the publication of the Christmas carol "Away in a Manger" and its phrase "the cattle were lowing." Sheep are still included in most manger scenes, usually close to the shepherds and again make their presence known in some of our carols such as "While Shepherds watched their flocks by Night".

Animals are such a central element to how we visualise the Nativity that it is unthinkable to renounce them regardless of their scriptural authenticity. No manger is complete without its donkey, ox and sheep bleating with joy at the Christ-child's birth.



The Nativity, Sarcophagus lid, c. 408 AD, Basilica of St Ambrose, Milan.



Marble relief Flight to Egypt or Bethlehem, c. 400 AD.



The Nativity with the Prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel by Duccio, c.



Nativity by Sandro Botticelli, c. 1473-1475.



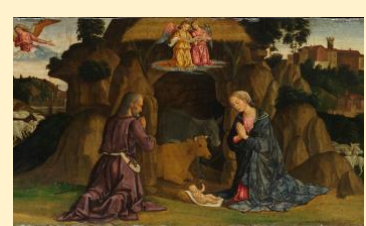
Nativity by Gentile da Fabriano, 1423.



Adoration of the Magi by Gentile da Fabriano, 1423.



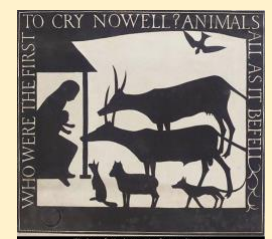
Adoration of the Magi by Fra Angelico, Fra Filippo Lippi, c. 1440-1460.



The Nativity by Antoniazio Romano, c. 1480s



Christmas Night (The Blessing of the Oxen) by Paul Gauguin, c. 1902-1903



The Nativity who were the First to cry Nowell Animals all as it befell by Eric Gill, c. 1914

For more detail, go to:

The God Who Speaks, click on the links, below:

Christmastide - www.godwhospeaks.uk/christmas/

The Coming of Christ [Video of The Nativity](#)

Plus practical work for children based on the 'donkey'!

Prayer and Retreat Resources



Would you like help praying the Sunday Scriptures?

Please read on!

ST BEUNO'S OUTREACH IN THE DIOCESE OF WREXHAM

With the support of the diocese, St Beuno's Outreach has been helping people pray with the Sunday readings at Mass for the last 30 years. Our aim is to help you develop a personal relationship with God through Jesus as you pray, whether with others or alone. We now run about 20 prayer groups ('Prego groups') across the diocese, some face to face, some on Zoom. Most meet weekly or fortnightly.

Prego groups welcome people of all ages and backgrounds who come together to support each other in their faith. The focus is on praying with Scripture in a quiet reflective way (so the feel is rather different to a Bible study or discussion group). The groups are led by a team of experienced prayer guides from the diocese, all of them trained in Ignatian spirituality. We also produce a weekly 'Prego' leaflet with suggestions to help you pray the Sunday readings (including visual images) and we are hoping to produce a short prayerful reflection for each issue of the Clarion.

Prego meetings last about an hour or a little more, beginning with stillness, quiet music and silent prayer, followed by guided reflection on the readings. We then share something of what went on in our prayer, and intercessions are offered for the people or issues we carry in our hearts at this time. The atmosphere is always gently prayerful and there is never any pressure on anyone to say anything or share unless they feel comfortable to do so. Many people across the diocese have found this way of praying with Scripture a great help.

All are most warmly welcome. Please email stbeunosoutreach@beunos.com for times and dates of meetings. You can also find out more at <https://stbeunosoutreach.wordpress.com/> and download the weekly Prego leaflet here.



THE WORD OF GOD
IS ALIVE AND ACTIVE!
Hebrews 4. 12



2022

VINCENTIAN DIVINE RETREAT CENTRE, PANTASAPH *Retreat Schedule*

VINCENTIAN DIVINE RETREAT CENTRE, PANTASAPH

2023 Retreat Schedule

JAN	MAY	SEPT
7 th : 1 st Saturday Devotions & Healing Service*	6 th : 1 st Saturday Devotions & Healing Service*	2 nd : 1 st Saturday Devotions & Healing Service*
13 th -15 th : Family Healing Retreat (English)	12 th -14 th : Inner Healing Retreat (English)	8 th - 10 th : Inner Healing Retreat (English)
FEB	27 th : Anniversary Convention + Padre Pio Day	23 rd : Padre Pio Day
4 th : 1 st Saturday Devotions & Healing Service*	JUNE	OCT
10 th -12 th : Family Healing Retreat (English)	3 rd : 1 st Saturday Devotions & Healing Service*	7 th : 1 st Saturday Devotions & Healing Service*
17 th -19 th : Family Healing Retreat (Tamil)	9 th - 11 th : Deliverance Retreat (English)	13 th - 15 th : Inner Healing Retreat (English)
MAR	1 st : 1 st Saturday Devotions & Healing Service*	20 th - 22 nd : Healing Retreat (Konkani)
4 th : 1 st Saturday Devotions & Healing Service*	JULY	NOV
10 th - 12 th : Inner Healing Retreat (English)	7 th - 9 th : Family Healing Retreat (English)	4 th : 1 st Saturday Devotions & Healing Service*
APR	11 th - 13 th : Family Healing Retreat (English)	10 th - 12 th : Inner Healing Retreat (English)
1 st : 1 st Saturday Devotions & Healing Service*	AUG	DEC
7 th : Good Friday Retreat (English)	5 th : 1 st Saturday Devotions & Healing Service*	2 nd : 1 st Saturday Devotions & Healing Service*
14 th -16 th : Inner Healing Retreat (English)	11 th - 13 th : Family Healing Retreat (English)	8 th - 10 th : Inner Healing Retreat (English)
	25 th - 27 th : Family Healing Retreat (Konkani)	

* FIRST SATURDAY CONVENTION STARTS AT 10:00AM AND ENDS AT 2:30PM
 * RESIDENTIAL RETREATS START ON FRIDAY MORNING AT 9:00AM AND END ON SUNDAY EVENING AT 4:00PM
 * NEAREST TRAIN STATION: FLINT (7.05 MILES)
 * GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS ARE WELCOME FOR PRIVATE RETREATS WITH PRIOR BOOKING
 VINCENTIAN DIVINE RETREAT CENTRE, PANTASAPH
 FRANCISCAN FRIARY, MONASTERY ROAD, PANTASAPH, HOLYWELL, CH8 8PE
 BOOKINGS: PANTASAPHDIVINEUK.ORG | +44 7417 494277



Forthcoming Events and Invitations

Parishes may find an opportunity to mark these occasions in their own way

Saturday 31st December: 12 noon: *Cathedral*

Bishop Peter invites all **Altar Servers** of the Diocese to a Mass of Thanksgiving and Rededication on **Saturday 31st December at 12 noon in the Cathedral**. At that Mass, Altar Servers nominated by their Parish Priest will be enrolled into the Guild of St. Stephen. Further details will be available from your parish priest.

Saturday 31st December 5pm: *Cathedral*

Bishop Peter extends an open invitation to everyone to a **New Year's Eve Vigil and Prayer at 5 pm on 31st December**. On the last day of 2022 you are invited to St. Mary's Cathedral to a celebration of Evening Prayer of the Church and Eucharistic blessing to commend to God all our work and efforts, sufferings, and joys as well as to give thanks for the graces and blessings received throughout the year. We shall also rededicate our discipleship of Jesus and commitment to the Church in the service and love of God and neighbour for the coming year.

Sunday 15th January -3rd Sunday of the year

(An idea for parish children's catechists?)

A Blessing given to children: *Parishes*

Santo Niño (Holy Child) – The Infant of Prague the statue in the church of Our Lady of Victories in Prague since the 17th century reflects a devotion which has its origins in Spain. The 16th century statue is of the crowned Christ child holding in his left hand an orb surmounted with a cross, and with his right hand he is giving a blessing.

<https://infantprague.org/the-story-of-the-infant-of-prague/>

With the Spanish rule of the Philippines a statue, and the devotion, was taken there in 1572 and with it the devotion grew that on the third Sunday of the year (15th January 2023) there is a blessing given to children.

<https://www.catholicsandcultures.org/feasts-holy-days/santo-nino-and-sinulog-philippines> and

<https://carmelitesistersocd.com/2017/the-origin-of-the-infant-of-prague/>

Sunday 22nd January: *Parishes*

Sunday of the Word of God –

The Holy Father encourages every parish to devote this day to “the celebration, study and dissemination of the Word”. “Devoting a specific Sunday of the liturgical year to the word of God can enable the Church to experience anew how the risen Lord opens up for us the treasury of his word and enables us to proclaim its unfathomable riches before the world.” (Apostolic Letter *Aperuit Illis* 30th September 2019)

Suggestions: Since its inauguration various activities have taken place in parishes -

- inviting families to bring their Bibles to Mass and receive a blessing for their reading of them,
- the commissioning of parish readers/proclaimers of the Word,
- having a retreat day in the parish or deanery that weekend for liturgical readers,
- introducing a procession of the Book of the Gospels (not the Lectionary) and more solemn proclamation of the Gospel at Mass especially on Sundays.

Parishes and liturgical readers what might you do to mark this day? Liturgical and Pastoral resources will be available in the New Year

Saturday 11th February: *London*

'Sharing the Church's Story' Conference

'Catholic Voices' and 'Word on Fire' are hosting a one-day conference called 'Sharing the Church's Story'. Come and join 1300 Catholics who are passionate about the renewal of the Church in the UK and a host of dynamic speakers including the internationally renowned speaker and author, **BISHOP ROBERT BARRON**. So whether you are a volunteer, parent, catechist, clergy, religious, or just want a boost for your faith life, then this conference is for YOU.

WHEN? Saturday 11th February 2023, 10am-5pm

WHERE? QEII Centre, Westminster, London, SW1P 3EE

REGISTER/Details? www.sharingthechurchsstory.com

Gospel Year of Matthew

'All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and they shall call him Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a Lord. And he called his name Jesus.

Matthew 1:22-25 ESV-CE

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth,
break forth into joyous song and sing praises!
Sing praises to the Lord with the Lyre,
with lyre and the sound of melody.
With trumpets and the sound of the horn,
make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord!

Psalms 98:4-6 ESV-CE

Wonderful the dignity you bestowed, O God, on human nature when you created it; more wonderful still its condition when you recreated it. Grant, we pray, that as Jesus Christ, your Son stooped to share our human nature, so we may share the lot of his divine nature. Through that same Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit has shared one life and kingly power, one godhead, from all eternity.

Leonine Sacramentary. Early 6th Century



News from the wider Community

“Mass in Celebration of Marriage 2023 and Married Life: All are welcome

Saturday 18th February 2023, at 12 midday at the Cathedral Church of Our Lady of Sorrows, Wrexham. Please let us know if you are celebrating a special anniversary this year (by 9th January 2023) and for more information, contact Jeanie Larkin:

mfl@rcdwxm.org.uk or 07542 268728”



Mass in Celebration of Marriage and Married Life

ALL ARE WELCOME

Saturday 18th February 2023
at 12 midday
The Cathedral Church of Our Lady of Sorrows, Wrexham

Please let us know if you are celebrating a special anniversary this year and for more information, contact Jeanie Larkin:
mfl@rcdwxm.org.uk or 07542 268728

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

For anyone looking to arrange activities, reflections, texts and meetings for Christian Unity, there are many resources and information available. Click on the link below which will take you directly to the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity. *This is one advantage of the on-line Clarion – all the information you require is just a click away!!*

[Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2023](#)

Congratulations

On the feast of St. John of the Cross, **Canon Peter Collins** of the Archdiocese of Cardiff was ordained and installed as the fifth Bishop of East Anglia in succession to **Bishop Alan S. Hopes** who retires.

In November the announcement was made that **Mgr Canon Philip Moger**, a priest of Leeds Diocese, currently the Rector of the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, is appointed Auxiliary Bishop in Southwark Archdiocese. His ordination will be in February.

Also in November, we learned that **Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti**, the Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain since July 2020, has been appointed by Pope Francis as the Prefect of the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches. We extend to all four our best wishes and prayers.

In Memoriam

Please pray for the repose of the soul of **Kevin Campbell**, formerly Deputy Head Teacher at St Joseph’s High School in Wrexham. As well as being a long-standing member of staff, Kevin was the commissioning manager for the school’s rebuild and re-opening as the Catholic and Anglican High School. Kevin was a very active and supportive member of the group of Heads and Deputies of the three Catholic Secondary Schools. On a personal note, your Editor was always very grateful for Kevin’s warm welcome and desire to work for the community of the Diocese.

His funeral took place in Ireland on 24th November, just as the Clarion was published.

May he rest in peace.

Aged between 18 and 35?? This is FOR YOU..... Register your interest for World Youth Day 2023

Pope Francis will meet young people in Lisbon for the next World Youth Day in August 2023.

We hope a group from the Diocese of Wrexham will travel from July 31st to August 7th to join in this wonderful event.

If there are people in your parish who will be aged 18 to 35 by August 2023 and would like to go to Lisbon, please could you invite them to register their interest by emailing Catherine McCormack at catherine.mccormack@strichardgwyn.flintshire.sch.uk and to receive further details. www.lisboa2023.org



Around and About in the Diocese

The Anglesey Centre of Mission prepared itself for Christmas spiritually and socially...

During Advent it held a Craft Afternoon with cooking, games, and making Table and Tree decorations.

Then Fr Brian Maher OMI led an Advent Retreat in Holyhead. For some years now there has been an Advent and also a Lenten Retreat, so the island community is pleased that this has been able to resume this year!



Can you believe it?.....

The Flat Earth Society is celebrating its increase in members around the globe.

Prayer Intentions

During the Christmas season we pray for migrants, refugees, and expectant mothers



*Christmas
Humour
(or
the ones you found
in the Christmas
Crackers.)*

Puns Galore!

- What is Santa's dog's name? Santa Paws!
- What's the absolute best Christmas present? A broken drum — you can't beat it!
- Who is never hungry at Christmas? The turkey—it's always stuffed.
- What did the English teacher call Santa's helpers? Subordinate Clauses.
- What is Santa's primary language? North Polish.
- How do you know when Santa's around? You can always sense his *presents*.
- What was Santa's favourite subject in school? Chemis-tree!
- What goes "Oh, Oh, Oh"? Santa walking backward!
- How do Christmas trees get their email? They log-on.
- How did the two rival Christmas trees get along? They signed a peace tree-ty!
- How do Christmas trees get ready for a night out? They spruce up!
- Why are Christmas trees so fond of the past? Because the present's beneath them.
- Why are Christmas trees so bad at knitting? They have too many needles.
- What do you get when you mix a Christmas tree and an iPad? A pineapple!

Knock, knock! Who's there?

- Knock, knock! *Who's there?* Wayne. *Wayne who?* Wayne in a manger...
- Knock, knock! *Who's there?* Mary. *Mary who?* Mary Christmas!
- Knock, knock! *Who's there?* Santa. *Santa who?* Santa Christmas card to you, did you get it?
- Knock, knock! *Who's there?* Anna. *Anna who?* Anna partridge in a pear tree.



**In the
Spotlight**



(See Luke 2:1-16) 12-19-2014
IT HAD A STAR ON TOP SO I FIGURED IT SHOULD HAVE A MANGER AT THE BOTTOM

Are you looking in the right direction?



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Telephone 01978 262 726 Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Bishop or the Diocese.
For further information and contributions please contact the Editor, Mark J. Philpot at clarion@rcdwxm.org.uk

The newsletter is distributed through parish email lists.
To register for your copy individually, please email your request to communications@rcdwxm.org.uk



Relax with a Christmas Quiz:

1. Which carol was originally written as Adeste Fideles?
2. What type of pudding is in 'We wish you a merry Christmas'?
3. How many types of bird are in the Twelve Days of Christmas?
4. What are they? And how many wings does that make?
5. Which carol sends 'tidings of comfort and joy'?
6. Which song repeats the lyrics 'pa rum pum pum'?
7. When did King Wenceslas look out?
8. Of which country (then and now) was he king?
9. What is the final line of 'Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer'?
10. Which song begins 'Sleigh bells ring are you listening'?
11. Which carol includes the words "Gloria, Hosanna in Excelsis"?
12. Which song do the Germans sing as 'O Tannenbaum'?
13. Whom did the spirits of Christmas past, present and future visit?
14. In which story?
15. Name the ghost, and the other main character in that story.
16. Who was crowned King of England on Christmas Day, 1066?
17. Which country donates the Trafalgar Square Christmas tree?
18. What was Little Jack Horner eating?
19. How many Wise men visited the stable?
20. What is myrrh, one of their gifts?
21. True or False? The name Boxing Day derives from the collection of money in boxes?
22. Santa's suit has always been red. True or False?
23. Who was the original 'Santa', and why?
24. When do many European children receive presents -why?
25. Which young singers are associated with 'Walking in the Air'?
26. In New York, which famous centre becomes an ice-rink?
27. From where did Dick Whittington originate and set out?
28. Who introduced Christmas trees to England?
29. In which year did HM Queen give Christmas message first on tv?
30. What fruit did nuns place in the stockings of the poor in the 12th century?
31. In which Christmas film does Donald Trump appear?
32. What was originally a soup made with wine and raisins?
33. What would you be doing if you go 'a-wassailing'?
34. What is a 'wassail cup'?
35. What is a 'bûche de Noel'?
36. What is the collective noun for turkeys?
37. To which group of plants does the poinsettia belong?
38. What might be considered dangerous in a poinsettia?
39. What is special about the growth of mistletoe?
40. What is the common name of the Helleborus niger?
41. What is hederia helix?
42. From where do cranberries come?
43. What is the main constituent of brandy?
44. Which charity was the first to produce a Christmas card, when?
45. Which famous double-act comedian made the first mobile phone call on New Year's Day 1985?
46. A white Christmas, a cake made of coconut, crisped rice, and dried fruit is popular in which country?
47. Who narrated "The Grinch who stole Christmas" in 2000?
48. What is the title of the poem by Clement Moore?
49. A town called Christmas is in two US states. Which ones?
50. Which British spacecraft was 'lost' on Mars at Christmas 2003?
51. What is a baby turkey correctly called? (Not a chick!)
52. 'La befana' delivers Christmas presents in which country?
53. What song did James Pierpont compose in 1857?
54. 'Estincelle' is French. What English word has it given us
55. Kiritimati is the first inhabited place to experience New Year. By what name do we know it?
56. From what does the month of December take its name?
57. And what about January?
58. On Christmas Day 1950, what disappeared from Westminster Abbey?

and the Answers:

1. O come all ye faithful
2. Figgy pudding
3. 6
4. Partridge, turtle doves, French hens, colly birds, geese, swans 2+4+6+8+12+14 = 46 **
5. God rest ye merry, Gentlemen
6. The Little Drummer Boy
7. Feast of St Stephen, 26th December
8. He was Duke of Bohemia, now in Czech Republic. ('King' was conferred posthumously)
9. "You'll go down in history"
10. Winter Wonderland
11. Ding Dong Merrily on high
12. O Christmas Tree
13. Scrooge
14. A Christmas Carol
15. Jacob Marley / Bob Cratchit, Tiny Tim
16. William the Conqueror
17. Norway
18. Christmas Pie
19. We do not know. There are 3 gifts, not people
20. A spice for embalming
21. True
22. False -it was green
23. Saint Nicholas – gave money to the poor
24. December 6th Feast of St Nicholas
25. Aled Jones, Peter Auty
26. Rockefeller Centre
27. Unknown -perhaps Lancashire
28. Prince Albert
29. 1957
30. Tangerines
31. Home Alone 2
32. Christmas pudding
33. Drinking a wassail cup (also singing carols)
34. A drink, perhaps cider
35. Yule log
36. Rafter
37. Euphorbia
38. Sap can be toxic
39. It is a parasitic plant
40. Christmas Rose
41. Ivy
42. Evergreen dwarf shrubs (common in US)
43. Wine
44. Unicef, 1949
45. Ernie Wise
46. Australia
47. Anthony Hopkins
48. A Visit from St Nicholas (The Night Before Christmas)
49. Florida, Michigan
50. Beagle 2: however it was found in 2015 to have landed successfully
51. Poult
52. Italy
53. Jingle Bells
54. Tinsel
55. Christmas Island
56. Decem, latin for 10 (it was the 10th month)
57. Janus, the God who looks both ways
58. Stone of Scone

** (by the 12th day, your true love will have given you 368 flapping wings!!)

On the road to Jerusalem...

Jesus had just reached Jericho's dust-raising alleys and streets. He and his followers are walking to Jerusalem. From there we hear the story of Zacchaeus. Something in this man Zacchaeus wanted desperately to catch sight of Jesus as he and his followers walked through the narrow, crowded streets. He was so anxious to see this man that he forgot his dignity as and unpopularity and climbed an overhanging sycamore to catch a glimpse of him as he passed by.

Zacchaeus was a little man, who had become extremely rich through his work as a tax-collector for the Roman government. Ordinary people would have hated and feared him. He had even Romanised his name, changing it from the Hebrew *Zechariah* – which means *Yahweh remembers* – to something that sounds passably Roman. He seems to have suppressed or half-forgotten his Jewish identity. He must have known that he was more than the pseudo-Roman he seemed to be. Zacchaeus is a man unhappy with the way he lives, a man looking for a new life closer to God.

While he was struggling in the tree trying to see who Jesus was, he heard the voice of a man somewhere below calling him to come down quickly - for he, Jesus, must stay with him in his house that night. We should try to imagine the flood of emotions that overwhelmed the tax-collector when he heard that voice. The man who felt buried in his successful worldly life had been remembered and called to the life that he longed for as a son of Abraham. Without any prompting he gave half his wealth to the poor and offered restitution to any man who felt he had been cheated by him. Zacchaeus is able to separate himself from his world. How different he is from the rich young man who turned disappointed away when told by Jesus to give his wealth away. He found it impossible to leave his old life behind.

When Jesus reached Jerusalem...

Gospels are full of stories of meetings and encounters that change lives. This is one of them. It is a very real story, a mixture of the dust of the roads and the comedy of the world. It is a 'true story', a story from the real world, the sort of story that we might see on the TV News. Jesus and his followers must have left Jericho and the next day and continued their pilgrimage to Jerusalem. There Jesus and his closest followers had the Passover supper together then joyfully singing psalms they made their way in the evening light to the spiritual trials of Gethsemane and the worldly trials and suffering that followed. One of the psalms they sang that night on the way to the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemane contains the wonderful statement, ***I shall not die but live and I will recount the deeds of the Lord.*** (Psalm 118:17). The Church has always recognised this as a kind of 'prolepsis', a kind of anticipation of the true meaning of that first Easter. Between the trials and the crucifixion came the desolation and abandonment of the scattered disciples. In the fifty days that followed a kind of gestation of the meaning of everything that Jesus had said and done in his brief life, a period that culminated at Pentecost and the gift of the Holy Spirit which brought the Lord into the hearts of all his followers. You no longer had to hope for the happy accident of meeting Jesus on his way, because he dwells in and is with us always. We have only to realise that He is present.

How should we understand Advent?

Advent begins the Church Year. It is the first season in the liturgical Year, the first stage, so to speak, of that Journey to Jerusalem. But the Readings we hear in the year do much more than tell us the historical facts. The liturgical year is not an extended version of the News at Ten nor anything like a historian's account of the causes of the Second World War. No,

the readings set out to show us the ultimate significance of everything that has happened. They help us to see the world at least in part as God sees it and to order our lives accordingly.

The four weeks of Advent

This seeing the world as God sees it transforms everything we hear in scripture and meet in life. This is the work of the Holy Spirit that can bring Christ into our lives if we let him. We learn to see all of them in the light of Eternity. We begin to move in a new, spiritual world. As Matthew says, 'For behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.' (Matthew 28:20). That is why Jesus is always 'Immanu-El', God who is with us.'

The readings for these weeks do not assume that turning to Him is something that we will find easy or automatic - to 'walk in love' as Paul puts it (Ephesians 5:2). For surely, if our heart is faulty, our steps will take us away from the path of life. Every beat of the heart is a step on that road. Our task is to mend our hearts and we do this by coming closer to the Lord who is with us always.

Week 1: Besides this, you know what hour it is, how it is full time now for you to awake out of sleep. (Romans 13:11)

What is this 'sleep' that St Paul is talking about? John Henry Newman put it like this: Sleep is a state of insensibility to things as they really are in God's sight. When we are asleep, we don't know what is really happening. Our waking lives are more than a bit like that, full of misperceptions and delusions. But how can we wake up to seeing things in God's light? How can we ever know that we are on the right path? Mark's answer is clear: 'Whoever will come after me, let Him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.' Conscience becomes clearer and lighter, the closer we come to the Lord. You can always say *No!* to that second glass of wine!

Week 2: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' (Matthew 3: 1)

The kingdom of heaven is close at hand, but not in the way Halley's Comet comes close to the earth every 75 years. No, we draw closer when we start to 'wake up' and recognise that Christ has been with us at least since our first baptism and is drawing us closer to Him. For as the gospels tell us He dwells within us.

Week 3: Be patient, brothers, until the Lord's coming. (James 5:7)

Gaudete Sunday begins with Isaiah's prophecy of the desert turning after rain into a flowering garden but continues here with a call for patience, the mending of the heart. But between our half-waking lives and the joy and peace of the Kingdom, things will not be easy. We will need what James calls 'patience, a kind of toughness, steadiness, and calm. Walking in love is no walk in the park.

Week 4: When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home. (Matthew 1:24)

This fourth and supreme reading is a contrast in fundamental attitudes. King Ahab in Isaiah's time refused to hear the prophecy of God. It was the great refusal in the long history of human refusal. Isaiah's revelation may seem trivial when compared to matters of national survival: an unnamed woman will give birth to a child. Only with the birth of this man – whose name means 'God is with us' – is the true future of the world shown to us. Isaiah spoke the truth then because it is and remains the truth for all time, but centuries passed until the hour when Joseph overcame his inner conflicts and obeyed the angel's call 'not to be afraid.' The camping shepherds, the poorest of the land. Knew that something important was happening. Just as it is happening for us now. (End)

(This article is a contribution from Robin Brereton – The Editor welcomes contributions from members of the Diocese)

THE BACK PAGE
Bishop's Engagements, and a 'gallimaufry of serendipity'

December

21	5.00pm	Christmas Mass for the Filipino Community	Cathedral
24	Midnight	The Nativity of the Lord	Cathedral
25	10.30am	Christmas Day Mass	Cathedral
26	10.00am	Mass	Cathedral
28	3.00pm	Syro-Malabar Mass	Cathedral
30	11.00am	Mass for the Feast of the Holy Family	Holy Family Convent
31	12noon	Altar Servers' Mass	Cathedral
	5.00pm	2022 Thanksgiving & 2023 Vigil	Cathedral

January

01	10.30am	Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. New Year's Day	Cathedral
06	12noon	The Epiphany of the Lord	Cathedral
08	10.30am	Baptism of the Lord	Cathedral
27		Holocaust Memorial Day	Wrexham

February

01	6.30pm	Confirmations	Colwyn Bay
8	12noon	Modern Slavery – St. Josephine Bakhita Mass	Cathedral
	6.30pm	Mass for the Feast of St Thomas Aquinas	Bangor Chaplaincy
10	6.30pm	Induction of Fr Vimalarajan Parunanthu, OMI	Colwyn Bay
11	12noon	Mass for the Sick	Cathedral
18	12noon	Mass for the Celebration of Marriage	Cathedral
21		Episcopal Ordination of Mgr Canon Philip Moger	Southwark
22	12noon	Ash Wednesday	Cathedral
26	3.00pm	Rite of Election	Cathedral
28	12noon	Chapter Mass	Cathedral

National Communities
On Wednesday 21st
December at 7.00pm in the Cathedral the Filipino Community will be gathering to celebrate Christmas

and the following week on **28th December** the Kerala Community will be gathering for a Christmas Mass in the Syro-Malabar Rite at 3.00pm in the Cathedral.



Children's Corner

Decoder Puzzle

Each number below represents a letter of the alphabet. Substitute the letters for numbers, to reveal the coded words!



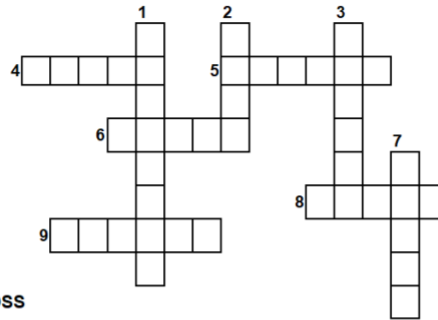
N	J	O	F	E	V	P	B	I	M	Q	R	W
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13

L	S	Z	U	T	H	A	D	C	K	X	G	Y
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

- 15-3-1 _____
- 6-9-12-25-9-1 _____
- 2-3-15-5-7-19 _____
- 8-9-12-18-19 _____
- 10-5-15-15-9-20-19 _____
- 2-5-15-17-15 _____
- 10-20-12-26 _____
- 19-17-15-8-20-1-21 _____
- 20-1-25-5-14 _____
- 13-9-4-5 _____

Jesus	Birth	Virgin	Angel	Messiah
Wife	Mary	Son	Husband	Joseph

Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

- Images and emotions that occur while you are sleeping
- To be filled with fear
- To become husband and wife
- A heavenly being; a messenger for God
- The earthly father of Jesus

DOWN

- A name that means "God is with us"
- The mother of Jesus
- A young unmarried woman
- The Son of God

Afraid	Mary	Marry	Dream
Jesus	Emmanuel	Joseph	Virgin

Children's Prayer

Heavenly Father. We think you that there is salvation in the name 'Jesus'. During this Christmas time, please help us to remember that is Jesus' birthday that we are celebrating! In Jesus' name we pray, amen.



With acknowledgements to St Marie's Cathedral, Sheffield, Roman Catholic Diocese of Hallam

