

From the Rector:

He is Here, Be Ready to
Welcome Him!



My dear friends

Soon we shall be singing with the angels and the whole Choirs of heaven in their endless praise saying Glory to God in the Highest and peace on earth to men who are God's friends'

The event we are about to celebrate is the one event that did a lot to change the course of history. About the actual date of the birth of Christ, that is a matter for theological debate. The significance for Christians however, is that this Jesus, who did a lot to bring God to people, was born into our world like every other human being. Though the events surrounding his conception are shrouded in mystery, both his mother Mary and Joseph did their best to carry out the role assigned to them by God. By his birth the world has been sanctified.

The privilege which was lost after the sin of Adam has now been restored. Man can now look forward to communion with God. The central focus for this Christ event is the transformation of our world. By identifying with humanity God has a message for all of us. He is saying that the world He created is good and that He will continue to lavish his love on it. The four weeks leading to Christmas is a time of preparation. Though Advent in the Christian context has taken on a new meaning, the word would have been understood by people well before Christianity made a breakthrough.

The coming of any king was heralded by intense preparation so that when the king arrives, he would find things in their right places. So the call of John the Baptist which we heard on the second Sunday was as ordinary as ordinary could be. He was merely stating the obvious. The king is about to appear, and people should be prepared to meet him.



For us here in Holy Name, like Christians all over the world, the call is as urgent today as it was for those who first heard it. Our king is about to appear, how do we prepare? What narrow roads are to be straightened? What valleys are to be filled? These are questions which each of us will answer for his/her self.

Advent is a joyful celebration of the condition we find ourselves in as Christians. It announces that God is always moving. He is at work in the world and in our lives, ever creating and ever renewing. The Lord comes to us not only in prayer but in our encounter with other people and our interaction with the world.

Yes, often you hear people say that Christmas has been commercialised, and the so called committed Christians are calling for the real meaning of Christmas according to them, to be restored. This in my view is a colossal misunderstanding of what God had done by sending Christ to the world. Christ was sent into an ordinary world, into an ordinary family, into an ordinary environment. Joseph did not stop being a carpenter to look after Jesus. If Jesus was sent into an ordinary world, a world of trade and commerce, that fact alone sees the commercialisation of Christmas as something good in itself. If people can at this particular time suspend all they are doing to buy and sell for Christmas that in itself is preaching the Gospel of Christ. Any good you do at this time whether you are doing it as a Christian or as one those who see the whole thing as an opportunity to have a holiday, you are indirectly referring to that momentous time in history when God chose to send his Son to a world waiting to be redeemed. Salvation is about the whole person. Yes, while some of us lay more emphasis on the spiritual aspect of Christmas, those who lay emphasis on the material aspect are equally acknowledging the presence of the messiah.

In the Liturgy, we see a wonderful example of what God had done in Jesus. It gives us the opportunity to re-live the actual events as they happened years ago because the Liturgy remembers events of the past, makes them present and looks forward to their fulfilment at the Second Coming of Christ at the End Times. As we prepare to sing with the Choirs of angels let us prepare ourselves so that when He comes, He will find us ready and waiting.

May the blessings of the Season be on you and all you Love.

Barnabas



★ *Christmas Services* ★

Sunday, December 20th

6.30pm-Nine Lessons and Carols by Candlelight

CHRISTMAS EVE

11.15pm-CAROL SERVICE

11.45pm-MIDNIGHT EUCHARIST OF

THE NATIVITY

CHRISTMAS DAY

11.00am-CHRISTMAS FAMILY EUCHARIST

In addition the Eucharist will be Celebrated on the following Feast

Days at 10.00am:

Saturday, 26th December: St Stephen, the First Martyr

Monday, 28th December: The Holy Innocents

Tuesday, 29th December: St John, Apostle and Evangelist

Friday, 1st January 2010: The Naming of Jesus

(The Holy Name)

ALL WELCOME

A Wee Festive Essay

Lights, bells, freezing cold weather and parties. Yep, Christmas is almost upon us and there is no chance at all of ignoring it. It is the season of cheer and goodwill to all people during the cold winter (if you are living in the northern hemisphere, that is.) and the winding down of yet another year.

You can go down your average supermarket, high street store or other public service and see constant figures associated with the modern Western Christmas. You see Christmas trees, glitter, mistletoe, tinsel and of course – Santa Claus. The latter represents our desire to show our friends and family how much we love and care about them by giving presents. These presents of course generate the large rush of well-meaning people spending hundreds of pounds on the must-have toy or gift of the year to impress our loved ones. I do this too, of course!

Despite its warm and cosy appeal, Christmas is not without its critics. One of the biggest criticisms of the festive season is that it is too commercialised. If you think about it, it is one of the easiest ones too. The things associated with Christmas that I have mentioned earlier have little or nothing to do with the original Christmas story. I have come across people who said that there is less focus on Jesus' birth and the circumstances surrounding that and more on the commercial drive to spend, spend and spend some more. These are sad observations, but let's face it – how many nativity cribs have you seen in comparison to Santa suits?



To clear this up, I do not hate Christmas. What I have just said are not complaints, but observations. As someone who is working in a supermarket, I will be exposed to the so-called 'Christmas Rush' which every major retailer experiences and every customer endures – or vice versa. The days leading up to Christmas can drive people to madness, especially when they have NOT finished their Christmas shopping and are under lots of pressure (mostly from themselves, might I add) to deliver. It is not just the presents, but also the food. It has been speculated (as I cannot give myself a tour of the place when it is closes!) certain shelves are completely empty by either Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve. I found this very amusing as it demonstrates how people can go crazy in the shops at this time of the year. Fortunately, I do not work in a department store and I have never been in the city centre for the start of Winter Sales – I have seen images on television of people stampeding in to stores to get their hands on the big bargains. Ridiculous!

One thing that warms the heart about Christmas is that it brings family together. Christmas to me is all about family. To the cynics amongst us, it is all about children. Children are out of school, the whole Santa Claus thing appeals to the very young and the Christmas story has a baby Jesus at the heart. Let us forget the family friendly films that are shown on television. There are still several Christmas specials from years ago taped on VHS locked away in our garage – some are better than others of course, but they always bring back those idyllic memories of childhood.

Whether it had become a secularised, commercially-driven party season or a festival commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ; Christmas is a great time to be with the people who matter the most to us and enjoy their company. It is that which makes Christmas the 'season of goodwill'. I hope you and your loved ones have a wonderful Christmas and all the very best for 2010.

Ikenna Oguguo



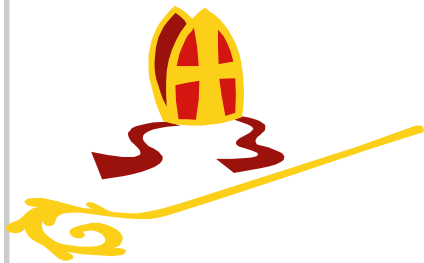
From the Editor

I hope that by printing this magazine in full colour I've made up just a bit for all those missing editions!

It could be a lot better in 2010 if I had more contributions-like the Wee Festive Essay by Ikenna which was totally unsolicited. Feel free to put pen or whatever to paper, it will be gratefully received.

I have some plans for the magazine which I'll discuss with the Rector and Vestry and let you know of any changes. The next issue will be in February and although I don't want to mention it too early as Christmas hasn't even come yet, it will be in time for Lent which comes early this year with Ash Wednesday on February 17th! Happy Christmas to you all.

Joe xx



The Episcopal Election will take place on January 16th. Please remember the Electoral Synod, especially Margaret Gascoigne in your prayers and the three Candidates - Very Rev Gregor Duncan, Rev Canon Alison Peden and the Venerable John Applegate.



*Hosanna
in the
Highest*

AGM Appointments:

Marion Conn was elected to serve as Vestry Member.

Sheila Capaldi was elected to serve as Representative to the North East Regional Council.



Quick Notes

THE MOTHERS' UNION WILL RESUME MEETING IN MARCH.

THE LUNCH CLUB WILL BE BACK ON THE LAST FRIDAY IN JANUARY.

LOOK OUT FOR IKENNA & JUDITH'S FREE GUITAR AND KEYBOARD LESSONS IN THE NEW YEAR.



"That's a great looking star, but my dream has always been to saddle up the camels and follow the Big Dipper."

EZGtoons.com

by Erin Gillespie

