

## Diary

Mon 29th Dec  
Thur 15<sup>th</sup> Jan

Cinderella at the Palace Theatre.  
PFT meet at Eileen and Peter Bishop's.

Please pray for:-

- Gary and April, Garth and Jenny, Richard and Sally, Richard and Wendy - our Parish clergy and wives.
- Reverend Richard Bubbers as he commences his new role.
- Our countries response to Iraq and Syrian conflicts.
- Those without enough to eat.
- For all who are yet to know the Gospel.
- Those without clean water to drink.
- Persecuted Christians around the world.
- The NHS and other public sector workers.
- For our local, county council decision makers and MP.
- For those who manage people within their places of work.
- For children living in care.
- For refugees.
- For orphans of war.
- For charities reaching out to the lost, lonely and hungry.
- The Redditch Winter Day Shelter.
- Those who are mourning.
- Those for whom this time of year is difficult.
- Kathleen Powell and family.
- Jo, Grace, Sophie and Lydia Adams.
- Lynda and Geoff Adams.
- Eileen and Rob Truman.
- Sylvia Czink and family.
- June Young and family.
- Bishop John and family.
- Peggy Snellgrove.
- Claire and Paul Burnham.
- Allison and Maureen undertaking ministry training.

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**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> December 2014**

### *Thought for the week*

At the end of what has been an amazing year for us as a family, we would like to wish everyone in St John's a very blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Perhaps like you, we have found that the last year has whizzed by, and here we are at Christmas again!

We want to sincerely thank you for your prayers and support in so many ways, especially during these past few months, and for all your Christ-like grace and love.

Speaking of grace, we never cease to be astonished at God's abundance of grace in every situation, especially in those times when life becomes challenging; and it is right now, as we approach Christmas Day that we celebrate God's incredible gift of his Son; literally, he became one with us so that we might become one with him.

We hear the cry so often in our world, dark as it is at the moment, 'Why doesn't God do something?' Well, he has already done it in sending Jesus, and he will bring all human history to fruition and account in his own time, centred in and through the cross.

Our task is to be faithful, put our trust daily in Jesus Christ, and ask continually for the presence of the Holy Spirit in our everyday lives. We couldn't do better than to hold in our minds the words of Frank Houghton's beautiful carol: 'Thou who was rich beyond all splendour, all for love's sake became poor...thrones for a manger did surrender, sapphire-paved courts for stable floor; stooping so low, but sinners raising heavenward by his eternal plan'. That plan, (always good news) is for you and me!

Gary and April

### Congratulations to Barry and Rosie

Congratulations on their 25 year wedding anniversary to Barry and Rosie, we hope you enjoyed the celebrations yesterday as much as those attending. If you would like to make a donation as an anniversary gift, Rosie and Barry would like to help provide a new lectern Bible. Thank you

### NEWS FROM CHURCHES TOGETHER IN WORCESTERSHIRE (CtiW)

#### Religious Freedom Report launched by Prince Charles

A comprehensive assessment of the threat to religious freedom today is produced, to highlight the plight of more and more people persecuted for their faith.

Aid to the Church in Need, a Catholic Foundation providing support to the global Church, and solidarity to millions of people has produced a detailed assessment of religious persecution. See Prince Charles' speech and download the full report from the comprehensive ACN website:

<http://religion-freedom-report.org.uk/>

#### Prepared to be challenged- if you read on.

The Revd Ian Mead from Mucknall Abbey, led the CtiW Quiet Day last month; here is the report from the Administrator, Stephanie Moyes. Ian gave us insights in to the way we can live when struggling with issues raised in everyday life: how do we give support, compassion and love to those we find difficult? If we meet Christ in one another – how does the person I find so difficult bring Christ to me? St Benedict said we must never pretend to be at peace with someone when we aren't – and we should never turn away from someone when they are not at peace. And so we were both challenged and encouraged as we listened to Ian's gentle delivery. The Benedictine rule of life promotes a way of behaving which should be different from the world's way – and so the third vow known as 'conversion of life' is about both embracing and renouncing things in order to fulfil the calling. And we were reminded that that is surely true whatever our context.

The principle 'whatever I do I do for God' can change our attitudes – so even the mundane becomes important. And so the rhythm of life can include prayer with work and work with prayer. Interestingly, all utensils of the monastery are treated as sacred vessels of the altar – how much better our world would be if we moved towards this and away from our throw away attitude.

Ian led us in meditating on the scriptures... slowing down our reading, savouring every single word in such a way that many of us found it connecting at heart level, helping us to rise to the challenges he had set...

### Today –Christmas 1

10.30am Morning Worship with Rev.Gary Noyes.

6.30pm No evening service.

### Next Sunday –Christmas 2

10.30am Morning Worship

6.30pm Evening praise

This week

Monday 29<sup>th</sup> December

Cinderella at the Palace Theatre.

### **The Most Reverend Justin Welby, archbishop of Canterbury**

I recall a moment when I chose God- I turned to Jesus yet really this was simply the beginning of a life-long realization that my 'choosing' was only possible because God had first chosen me . God chose to create me, to love me, and to invest in me – to the point even of dying for me. The call to ministry is founded there; in acknowledging God's gracious 'Yes' to us, and in doing so to echo our own 'Yes' to God by way of response.

Of course, we do not know the details of where that 'Yes' will lead. But we do know that it involves the privilege of continuing God's work on earth, of being Christ's body – his hands, his feet, his heart – wherever we find ourselves, so that the love of God may be tangible and accessible to everyone. This is the adventure of serving as Jesus served. Everyone who follows Jesus is chosen and called in this way.

Don't be afraid to ask others for help, but don't be afraid to jump in wherever you are – at work, in school, at social events, with family – and take the risk of ministering the light and love of Christ.

**Taken from The Ordination of Deacons order of service Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2014.**