

This Week at St Mary's

20 December 2020

COVID AND CHRISTMAS

A seemingly very small event occurred in a distant corner of the Roman Empire just over 2,000 years ago. A young woman had a baby. She could not even be in her own village for the birth. Away from home, so insignificant would it have been that no one would expect to give it a second glance.

On November 17th 2019 a 55-year-old from Hubei province, China displayed pneumonia like symptoms of unknown cause. (Others say 'patient zero' may have been a man in his 70s, displaying symptoms on 1st December.) Everyone will know that during 2020 this 'seemingly small event' grew into the Covid 19 pandemic, not only accounting for the death of over a million people, countless others infected with serious consequences but to which the whole state of the world fundamentally altered, and still remaining so. A tiny virus, apart from a few virologists, no one would have been likely to give a second look.

The accounts we have of the story of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem indicate that remarkably quickly, people were on notice this was no ordinary birth. Night watchmen in charge of some sheep reported an extraordinary phenomenon on the hillside. Some astronomers appeared, having 'read about it in the stars'.

Our perspective of this birth today, of course, is different. Remarkably soon after Jesus death and resurrection, people were saying the 'whole world had been turned upside down' because of it. Not because of a relentless mechanical advance, creating fear and pain, rather because people in relationship with God through Jesus discovered a new depth of love and life.

We hope 2021 will roll out the vaccine against COVID-19. My prayer also is that many discover that the fulness of life and love Jesus brings is freely available to all.

Tom Gillman

THE PRAYER OF EXAMEN

Here is a suggested form of the Examen for use at the end of the day.

1. Father, may we be aware of your presence with us, your grace and unconditional love.
2. May your Holy Spirit shine His light as we look back on today with gratitude and honesty.
3. May we rejoice and give you thanks for those moments when we felt your life at work in and through us.
4. We bring before you those moments when we turned from your ways or when others sapped life from us.
5. As we look ahead to the day to come, may your Holy Spirit lead and guide us in all things.

Important to bear in mind that Ignatius Loyola who first articulated it emphasised

- This is examination of consciousness, not conscience. It's about the choices we made in the day. It should not first of all be guilt inducing.
- It's Holy Spirit led, not rule keeping. Engaging in conversation with God.
- It's about how we feel, how we are inside. What brought life, what sapped life?
- Its aim is formation of Christ like character in us and that we exercise our God-given ministry. It's part of our growth and development, as we live in relationship.
- It's being confident that God is part of our everyday life. Most of us need to learn to welcome this, a choice, involving security that we are loved for who we are and to be a Christian is to be a bearer of God's love.

GIVING MONEY - Best done online via **Donate** button on the website. Preferable from St Mary's viewpoint is a **Standing Order** (NatWest St Mary's PCC 560061 00834602) For **one-off donations**, cheque, cash yellow envelope, in chest by South Porch Door. **IT WOULD BE APPRECIATED IF YOU COULD MAKE ANY DONATION YOU ARE PLANNING BEFORE 31/12/20.**

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

IT IS NECESSARY TO BOOK A TICKET FOR ALL THESE

Christmas Eve 7.00pm 9 Lessons & Carols

www.trybooking.co.uk/WZW

Christmas Eve 11.30pm Midnight Communion

www.trybooking.co.uk/WZX

Christmas Day 10.30am Carol Singing outside

11am Sung Eucharist inside www.trybooking.co.uk/WZZ

Sunday 27 Dec 11am Parish Communion (Not Livestreamed)

NO EVENING SERVICE 27 Dec (Resuming 10 Jan)

Sunday 3 Jan 11am Parish Communion, Epiphany (Not Livestreamed)

Please note **6.15pm Wednesday Evensong** will resume 13 Jan

CHRISTMAS ON NOTTS TV featuring St Mary's

Episode 1 8pm 21 Dec & 11am 22 Dec

Episode 2 9pm Christmas Day & 6.30pm Boxing Day

BISHOP PAUL'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE There's still plenty of time to watch and share-& no prize for spotting St Mary's Choir
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=91YOA9FitLU>

LONE Emmanuel House Support Centre's short (9 min) film, highlighting actual experiences of homeless people in Nottingham. Very highly recommended. Available to watch on their website emmanuelhouse.org.uk. Launching their Winter Appeal in an alternative way.

THE MEADOWS FOODBANK - this week they welcome toiletries, washing up items, pasta sauce, sugar, tinned veg & meat. Contact Beth Mitchell 07775707855 0115 947 6736 tony.m1941@icloud.com

Wherever you are, we extend a very warm greeting to you, especially if you've recently discovered St Mary's

*St Mary's is usually open for private prayer and reflection
11.30-2.30pm each weekday - please call to confirm if visiting*

PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR Estelle Barks, John Bowers,
Barbara Davis, Harry Palmer, Mike Ridley

**Please note St Mary's Parish Office will be closed
Christmas Eve and re-open 4 January 2021
(In emergency call 07825 041 432)**

WORSHIP AT ST MARY'S.

- Numbers limited to 120, please book.
- Test and Trace signing in or by App, please.
- Automatic hand sanitiser at door and/or wash hands.
- Distancing as you would expect.
- Wearing of masks, please.
- Still no communal singing inside.
- Please take away the paper service sheet you use
- Please avoid gathering on arrival/exit

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