



Issue no 14  
Christmas 2023



# Wreccsam 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



## A Christmas card to you



Altarpiece in the church of Saint Mark, Zagreb, Croatia. – ©Zatletic

**TODAY A LIGHT WILL SHINE UPON US,  
FOR THE LORD IS BORN FOR US**

**NADOLIG BENDIGEDIG A  
BLWYDDYN NEWYDD DDA**

**A BLESSED CHRISTMAS AND  
A HAPPY NEW YEAR**

*Best wishes and  
prayers  
+ Peter*



The Rt Rev'd - Y Gwir Barch Peter M Brignall  
Bishop of Wrexham – Esgob Wreccsam

LL13 7EW

## from Bishop Peter

And in this edition: ----



**Bishop Peter's Column  
Page 2**

In which he considers a  
**green Christmas**



**News of SVP  
and details of their  
good deeds  
Page 8**



**Crib offerings, 2023  
Toybox, and DePaul Trust  
Page 3**



**Altar Servers' Mass December 30<sup>th</sup>  
Page 4**

**The Gospel of Mark  
John The Baptist reveals  
the One Who is to Come**

**Page 3**



**Pray for peace this Christmas  
Page 5**

**Mass for  
Married Life**

Celebrate your  
wedding anniversary  
with others

**An invitation  
Page 4**



**Christmas Fun,  
Puns, Quizzes, and stories  
A Russian legend Page 3  
Christmas lunch Page 4  
The REAL Advent Page 5  
Quiz 1 and 2 & Carols Page 7  
Pun Fun Page 9  
Answers Page 9**



**Greccio 1223  
St Francis creates the  
first 'crib'. Re-enacted in  
St Peter's Square, 2023  
Page 6**

The weather forecasts anticipate the chances of a white Christmas or even any snow within the next 30



days as being most unlikely. So, if not white, what colour will *your* Christmas be?

There is lots to recommend it be **green**

Earlier in this year in which we recollect the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Francis creating the first crib or Christmas nativity scene we were reminded by Pope Francis of some fundamental matters of our faith and of their relationship to our environment and climate change. In his Apostolic Exhortation *Laudate Deum* on the Climate Crisis (4<sup>th</sup> October 2023) the Holy Father wrote:

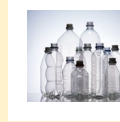
62. *The Bible tells us: "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good" (Gen 1:31). His is "the earth with all that is in it" (Deut 10:14). ... "responsibility for God's earth means that human beings, endowed with intelligence, must respect the laws of nature and the delicate equilibria existing between the creatures of this world.*

65. *Hence, "the creatures of this world no longer appear to us under merely natural guise, because the risen One is mysteriously holding them to himself and directing them towards fullness as their end. The very flowers of the field and the birds which his human eyes contemplated and admired are now imbued with his radiant presence". If "the universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely ... there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person's face". The world sings of an infinite Love: how can we fail to care for it?*

71. *Efforts by households to reduce pollution and waste, and to consume with prudence, are creating a new culture. The mere fact that personal, family, and community habits are changing is contributing to greater concern ... we are helping to bring about large processes of transformation rising from deep within society.*

In November, in anticipation of Christmas, I wrote about food waste; I add the briefest words now about recycling, especially of the additional materials generated by our Christmas celebrations.

All that wrapping paper!! Use only that which can be recycled.



Also, too, the plastic bottles. (Avoid single-use). Glass and cans (nearly 40% more are used than in any other fortnight) are 100% recyclable.

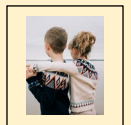
The batteries from all those lights, toys and games - and seem to expire so quickly - can be recycled.



How are you going to dispose of your Christmas tree after Twelfth Night? Keep the artificial ones for another year - their average life is five Christmases:

the natural ones can be shredded to benefit the garden... somebody else's if not yours!

If not kept for another year, all those Christmas jumpers.... Will they fit in twelve months time? They will benefit the homeless or refugees who've lost everything, and have nothing. (cf Matt 25:35-36).



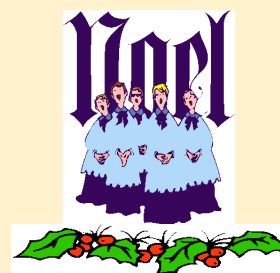
These are just some ideas: I am sure you can think of more.

All of this goes to show there many ways of giving praise to God (*Laudate Deum*) in addition to coming in homage to the crib in wonder and awe at the love of God in the supreme gift to us of his Son – the Christ-child who shares our vulnerability and in whom we find life and the wonder of creation in all its fullness.

I wish you and your families a blessed and happy Christmas, may it be for you all a time of peace, health and joy.

Please keep all of our priests in your prayers and know my Christmas Mass will be celebrated for your intentions,

+Peter



### The Baptism in the Jordan



Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt round his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptise you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit."

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; and with you I am well pleased."

(Mark 1:6-11 ESV-CE)

Jesus comes out of the water, drawing the world with him, as it were, and raising it up when it had hitherto been sunk in the abyss. He sees the heavens, not being rent, but opening of their own accord. The first Adam had of old closed heaven to himself and us, just as he had seen the earthly paradise closed to him, with a fiery sword barring access.

The Holy Spirit bears witness. Here all is in perfect harmony, for the testimony comes from heaven, just as he to whom the Spirit bears witness has come from heaven.

*Gregory of Nazianzus (4<sup>th</sup> century)*

#### A Russian

A mediaeval prince, Alexis, lived in a sumptuous palace, surrounded by the poor peasants in hovels. Moved with compassion, the Prince determined to help them, so he visited them, but in so doing found he had no point of contact with them, and they treated him with utmost respect, even worship. They never confided in him, and even less could he gain their affection. He returned to the palace, a defeated and disappointed young man.

Then one day, a very different young man arrived in the village. A rough and ready young doctor, who wanted to devote his life to the poor. He rented a filthy rat-ridden shack in a back street. He made no pretence of being superior - his clothes were old and tattered, he lived on the simplest food, and did not know

#### legend

where his next meal would come from. He treated people for free and made no money from his profession. The young doctor soon won the affection of the people, as Prince Alexis could not. Little by little he transformed the village, settling quarrels, reconciling enemies, and helping people to live decent lives.

No-one guessed that the young doctor was in fact the Prince himself, who had abandoned his palace and gone down among his people to become one of them.

*That is just what God did on that first Christmas Day. He came right down, side by side with us, to help us to become the sort of beings He intends us to be.*

### CRIB OFFERINGS

**Not of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh, but Identity and Opportunity, and a Safe Place to Sleep Tonight**

Your kind donations made at the manger scene in your church this Christmastide will be divided between: -

**TOYBOX** <https://toybox.org.uk/support/campaigns/a-gift-they-have-waited-for> Registered Charity No.1084243

The aim of this small British charity is to help children who have no official identity -so called 'XXX children'- obtain a birth certificate. Without a birth certificate these children their basic human rights will never be met. Education, healthcare, shelter and ultimately a marked grave – all of these are denied a child who is unregistered; officially they don't exist. The TOYBOX Christmas Appeal is devoted to helping children like these gather the necessary evidence to obtain official recognition that will help them obtain education, healthcare and shelter as well as reducing the risks of abuse, trafficking and modern day slavery.



And

**DEPAUL Homelessness has no place**

[www.depaul.org.uk](http://www.depaul.org.uk) Registered Charity 802384

This winter thousands of young people in the UK will have nowhere safe to sleep through no fault of their own. Through DEPAUL'S 'Nightstop' emergency service they 'Help a young person reach a safe place tonight' through a network of trained and vetted volunteer hosts who welcome young people into their homes and provide a safe and warm place to sleep, a hot meal and a listening ear.



In those parishes that operate a Contactless giving system please be sure to tap on 'Crib Offering' to make your gift.

## Forthcoming Events and Invitations

For further information of these events and celebrations please look for the details in your church, on the Diocesan website 'Diocese of Wrexham' [www.rcdwxm.org.uk](http://www.rcdwxm.org.uk) or ask your priests.

December

Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> Guild of St. Stephen, Altar Servers' Mass.  
In St. Mary's Cathedral

January 2024

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> BSL Mass 12noon at Bishop's House  
Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord  
18<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity  
Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the Word of God



### Altar Servers Guild of St Stephen

Bishop Peter invites Altar Servers all over the Diocese to join him for the celebration Mass for the Guild of St. Stephen and to renew their commitment to serving at the Altar on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> December at 12noon in St. Mary's Cathedral.

Attending servers are asked to bring their vesture – cassock & cotta, alb, etc. with them. Following the Mass there will be a 'Burger Lunch' for all servers in the Cathedral Hall.

*(To help defray the costs a small cover charge will be made for the lunch.)*

**"Free to a good home!!"**

#### Parish Mass Books

Now that our church in Rossett has closed, we have a number of Parish Mass books (in good condition) and a number of hymn books (obviously used but still ok condition!) surplus to our requirements in Llay.

Are you a parish in need?

First come -first served..... If your parish could make use of these, please email [clarion@rcdwxm.org.uk](mailto:clarion@rcdwxm.org.uk) and the Editor will forward your request to the responsible authority!

Please note: These are the current Parish Mass Books, and the readings etc will change on the First Sunday of Advent 2024, so they will have just one more year of use.....



 **Diocese of Wrexham**  
**Marriage and Family Life Commission** 

*Annual Mass in Celebration of  
Marriage and Married Life*

*All are welcome*  
*Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2024*  
*at 12 midday*  
*in*  
*The Cathedral Church of Our Lady of Sorrows, Wrexham*

- **All are welcome to take part in the annual renewal of vows with Bishop Peter**
- **Special blessing for engaged couples due to be wed in 2024**
- **Buffet lunch afterwards**

*Please let us know if you are celebrating a special anniversary this year (1<sup>st</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup>, 60<sup>th</sup>). Or, if you are getting married in 2024 and would like to receive a blessing from Bishop Peter, please contact Jeanie Larkin at*  
**[mfl@rcdwxm.org.uk](mailto:mfl@rcdwxm.org.uk) or 07542 268728**

#### A different Christmas Lunch

Christmas Eve, a prosperous businessman hurried to a butcher's shop before closing time. "Buying your Christmas turkey?" a friend enquired. "No. Hot dogs", he answered. He explained - in the Great Depression a bank failure wiped out his fortune. He faced Christmas with no job, no money, and less than a dollar for food. He, and his wife, and small daughter said grace, then sat down to eat hot dogs – a whole kennel of them! His wife had given each frankfurter toothpicks for legs, and broom straws for whiskers and tails. Their child was enchanted, and her infectious delight spread merriment among them all. After dinner, they gave thanks for the most loving and festive time they had ever had. "Now it's tradition", he said. "Hot dogs for Christmas

to remind us of the happy day when we realised that we had one another and our God-given sense of humour".

*There is a moral here: that perhaps we put too much store by the material appendages of Christmas, and need to re-visit the happy moments, based on love and relationships. Are we in danger of mistaking the size of the gift for the measure of our love?*

**In Memoriam** Please pray for the repose of the soul of **Peter Geoffrey Cross**, formerly Deputy Head Teacher at St Richard Gwyn High School. His funeral took place on 20<sup>th</sup> December. May he rest in peace.



**"Come to church to Pray for Peace this Christmas" say Wales' Church Leaders**

The Catholic Archbishop of Cardiff and Bishop of Menevia, **Mark O'Toole**, the Anglican Archbishop of Wales, **Andrew John**, and the Moderator of the Free Church Council of Wales, **Simon Walkling**, have issued a joint message acknowledging the tensions and tragedies in the world today, whilst encouraging people to "come to church to find space to reflect and make time to pray for peace this Christmas."

*The news has been full of the terrible tragedy unfolding in Gaza after the awful terrorist attack on Israel. Thousands of children killed in a war they did not choose. It seems a long way from the Christmas adverts here and the pressure to be merry. It is understandable that the church leaders in Jerusalem have invited Christians there to forego any unnecessarily festive activities and stand strong with those facing affliction. They see it as standing in support of those continuing to suffer, just as Jesus did by being born as a baby in Bethlehem two thousand years ago.*

*Jesus was born in a land occupied by the Romans. He was born away from home because of an imperial census. There were family tensions around Mary being pregnant and Jesus was laid in a feeding trough because there was no room at the inn. Herod killed the boys in Bethlehem to get rid of the threat to his power. All these are part of Christmas, along with our joy at God's love and the traditions which help us celebrate.*

*This Christmas we may be aware of tensions in families, and the difficulties of making ends meet. This year we remember the wars in the land of Jesus' birth, Ukraine, and other parts of the world.*

*We also remember that this year was the centenary of the Wales Women's Peace Appeal which took a petition to America about joining the League of Nations to promote 'Law not War'. It was a message signed by around 60% of women in Wales and went from home to home and hearth to hearth, showing what the co-ordinated work of ordinary people could achieve.*

*We need peace in our world. We may want to be free of tension in our families. We may long for five minutes of peace for ourselves in all the Christmas preparations.*

*Why not come to church to find space to reflect and make time to pray for peace this Christmas?*

*We are praying for joy and hope for us all.*

The message can be read in both Welsh and English:

[Pray for peace this Christmas, say Wales' Christian leaders - Catholic Bishops' Conference \(cbcew.org.uk\)](#)

**But.... WHO is he coming to....?**

"Oh come, Oh come, Emmanuel" -the radio plays it again..."The Advent carol" says the DJ, "Advent means 'COMING'".

My lessons of Latin come flooding back: "No," I shout, "that is only half the story!"

In my mind I recall Caesar's 'Veni, vidi, vici,' after the victorious battle of Zela. 'I came, I saw, I conquered'.

**Veni**, - past tense of 'Venio, venire, veni, ventum'.

**Venite** – Imperative plural form 'Come' as in 'Venite Adoremus' -Come, let us adore (him).

Oh, how commonly we use the Latin forms, without thinking.....

For example, the verb 'to go'

io, ire, ivi, itum, (1<sup>st</sup> person/infinitive/perfect/supine)

Conjugated as :

eo,	is,	it,	imus	itis	eunt,
I go,	you go,	s/he goes,	we go,	you (pl) go,	they go.

All we do is put 'ex' in front, and we have Exit, the 'way out', because s/he 'goes out **from**'.....

The stage direction, 'exeunt' = 'they go out', when more than one actor leaves the stage.

We are reminded of Shakespeare's famous stage direction 'Exit, chased by a bear' (King Lear).

Another use is 'exeat', = 's/he may go out from'. It is permission for a weekend leave, army, or Boarding School. (The subjunctive form)

*So, where does this etymology lead?*

Actually, it provides us with the REAL meaning, the TRUE meaning of Advent.

We have anglicised the 'ventum', = 'the coming', to simply 'vent'\*. However, we have maintained the 'ad' which is the preposition 'to', thus **Advent** is **MORE ACCURATELY**, 'the Coming TO...'.

Since we know that it is the 'coming of Christ' at Christmas, why are we so frightened of adding 'to'?

In **your** family, in every family, **WHO IS CHRIST COMING TO, this Christmas??**

Are we truly allowing Christ to come TO us, each one of us, personally and individually?

AS we place Christ in the nativity scene, are we also opening our hearts and minds, because he really is coming to us... to **ME**.....

A happy Christmas, **TO YOU!!**



\*'vent' – **Not** to be confused with 'venting' one's feelings, which comes (possibly) from the verb 'ventare' to blow out, as 'ventus' = wind (French 'le vent'):

**NOR** with 'vent' an opening in a jacket, from 'fente' in old French, meaning slit, 'fendre' to split'



*The  
Franciscan  
Crib  
Greccio, 1223*



**CELEBRATION OF THE EIGHT HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE CRIB OF S. FRANCIS**

800 years ago, St. Francis of Assisi wanted to create the first crib and Pope Honorius III (1216 to 1227) approved the Rule of the Order of Friars Minor. In memory of this double anniversary, this year the crib in St. Peter's Square and the Paul VI Hall will come from the valley of Rieti, in the diocese of Rieti, while the monumental Christmas tree will come from the upper Maira valley, in the province of Cuneo. The traditional inauguration of the Nativity Scene and the lighting of the Christmas tree took place in St. Peter's Square on Saturday 9 December presided over by Cardinal Fernando Vérgez Alzaga, President of the Governorate of Vatican City State.

Further information and the relevant history can be seen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJsuJO6zfuw> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= QDhfq0IbhE>



**The Christmas of St. Francis in 1223**

The idea this year is to relive in St. Peter's Square the atmosphere of Christmas 1223, when St. Francis, returning from a journey to the Holy Land, asked to recreate the birth of Jesus, in a village that reminded him of Bethlehem: Greccio, a village in the Rieti area nestled among the rocks at an altitude of 700 metres above sea level.

St. Peter's Square is thus transformed into an ideal Greccio, where around the crib and the ox and donkey are placed some characters: those who fulfilled St. Francis' wish, such as the nobleman Giovanni Velita and his wife Alticama, three fellow friars of the Saint and some shepherds. The memory goes back to Tommaso da Celano, who described the first living nativity scene in history.

Also, in the Paul VI Hall, thousands of Venetian glass tiles will narrate the representation of the birth of Jesus. In imagination, there to welcome him, as eight hundred years ago, are representations of St. Francis and St. Clare who, (although they were not present on the night of Greccio), symbolise the presence of the feminine universe of Franciscan life and spirituality.

**The tree, in the spirit of Laudato Si'**

As for the fir tree, almost 25 metres high, it comes from a particularly green area, the high alpine valley where hundreds of thousands of indigenous plants grow side by side in immense forests.

One particularity concerns the decoration, which is in the spirit of care for the Common Home, in the spirit of Pope Francis' encyclical "Laudato si". It is very different from previous years and is characterised by the decoration of the tree with thousands of Edelweiss flowers. They symbolise the snow and bring to St. Peter's Square the flower that characterises the Maira valley. It is very important to note that the edelweiss live in their natural state at an altitude of over 1800 metres.



**A (sometimes tough) Christmas Miscellany:**

1. In which ocean is Christmas Island?
2. Who wrote the poem 'The Cultivation of Christmas Trees'?
3. Who or what popularised the image of Santa Claus in 1931?
4. How many ACTUAL ghosts appear in 'A Christmas Carol'?
5. Which reindeer is NOT mentioned in 'The Night Before Christmas'?
6. In the song, what was the only present requested?
7. From which country does 'Silent Night' originate?
8. Which ballet tells a magical Christmas story?
9. What food is made from 'mash worts'?
- 10 Where would you be if you received presents from:
  - a) La Befana, b) Père Noël, c) Babouschka?
- 11 Poinsettias are from which country?
- 12 What is the biggest selling single of all time?
- 13 From which city does the Christmas tree in Trafalgar Square come?
- 14 What were postmen called in Victorian England?
- 15 When was the first Christmas card sent?

## Quiz 2;

1. How many Wise Men brought gifts?
2. What was the name of the mother of John the Baptist?
3. In which country did Christmas Trees originate?
4. Who started the tradition of 'wassailing'?
5. What character did Robert L. May invent in 1939?
6. What were marched from Norfolk to London in Victorian times?
7. Which word means 'turning of the sun'?
8. What is the first line.....?
  - a)..... on the feast of Stephen.
  - b)..... the stars are brightly shining.
  - c)..... His wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame
  - d)..... so the Holy Bible say?
9. and the next.....?
  - a) O come all ye .....
  - b). It came upon.....
10. How many letters are there in the Christmas alphabet?

**Identify the Christmas Carol, or song:**

Eg: AWIAM = Away In A Manger

1. SATWS
2. GKWLO
3. RTRNR
4. HTHAS
5. ICUTMC
6. IDOAWC
7. CASTHM
8. JTTWTLIC
9. JBJBJATW
10. HFITB
11. WTKOOA
12. LJSS
13. OCAYF
14. AFTROG
15. AVMPATPD
16. HYAMLC
17. OLTOB
18. LTAIB
19. OIRDC
20. TFNTADS

**A monster of a gift...**

A little girl was trying to persuade her father to come to her school Nativity play. "I'm to be one of the Kings" she announced proudly, "and carry the Frankenstein".

**Forever practical....**

One Christmas Eve, the British Ambassador in Washington received a telephone call from the local radio station asking, "What would you like for Christmas?" The Ambassador thought for a while and gave his answer.

The next day, he heard the announcer say, "We have been running a poll on what foreign Ambassadors want for Christmas. The French Ambassador said, 'I earnestly desire that the next year should be a year of peace in the world'. The Russian Ambassador hoped for a year of justice for all people. The German Ambassador wanted to see a greater sharing of wealth in the world. The British Ambassador said 'I would like a box of crystallised fruits'"

**Spreading the good news....**

A proud parent called the local newspaper and reported the birth of twins. The girl on the newsdesk did not quite catch the message over the phone. "Will you repeat that?" she asked. "Not if I can help it", was the reply.

**Knowledge is a fine thing....**

The small boy pestered his father with a number of questions – 'where', 'when', 'why', 'what for', and so on. Finally he asked "Daddy, what do they make asphalt roads of?" His father replied "That's the nine-hundredth questions you've asked me today. Do give me some peace. What do you think would have happened if I had asked my father so many questions?"

The boy thought about this and responded, "You might have learned the answers to some of my questions".

**Crisis? What crisis.....**

Members of several religious Orders were in a room together one evening, when suddenly the light went out, leaving them in darkness.

The Benedictine simply went on saying his Office, which he knew by heart anyway.

The Franciscan knelt down and began praying for light.

The Dominican suggested to his companion that they should enquire into the nature of light and consider the sequence of causes that might have led to its failure.

The Jesuit had left the room. He had gone to mend the light.

(Douglas Woodruff)

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

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



*Nadolig Llawn a  
Blwyddyn Newydd Dda.*

**Will My Dad Be Glad To See Me?**

The phone rings early here in the Presbytery and keeps on ringing throughout the day. With any luck it might go quiet about 9.00 pm. On this particular early morning, the phone call was very welcome - it was from one of our inmates from **HMP Berwyn, North Wales**, who was now back home with his family on the South Coast. He'd come here for Mass more than once in that strange period between the prison gates clanging shut behind him and actually crossing the front door of his own home once again after all those years. Those hostel months are amongst the hardest of the whole sentence.

At long last, he was home again. But what sort of welcome was he going to get? Let's call him Bernie. Names don't matter, and given my mania for alliteration, Bernie from Berwyn will do as good as any other. Bernie, like all prisoners, talked incessantly of home when he was inside. He spoke of his elderly parents, the small family business they owned, and how they had always intended that Bernie would take it over. But would they want him now? Would they trust him? Would anyone?

You lose a lot in prison. Those parishioners – a stubborn few – who tell me I shouldn't be wasting my time going in, really should come with me one day. You lose your liberty, but you also lose your self-respect. You're rubbish. The prosecution lawyer told you that during your trial, and the judge rubbed it in when he sent you down.

You're rubbish in the eyes of most of your family and treated that way by some of the Prison Officers too. Thank God, not by all of them. Worst of all, you're rubbish in your own eyes.

"How are you getting on, Bernie?" I asked him. "Is it good to be home? To be out of that rigid Prison timetable? Able now to have lunch when you want it? Go to bed when you feel like it? How's the business going?"

Bernie was silent for a few moments before responding. "We had a problem last week. I knew how to fix it, but who'd ask me?"

"So, what happened?" I asked.

"Dad turned to me, and said 'Son, what do you think?'"

Quietly, Bernie started sobbing.

*Fr Paul Shaw, SVP Working with Prisons Chaplain*



*Fr Paul Shaw is Parish priest at St Werburgh's in Chester*

**60 years of service with SVP**



Kevin Carney is a member of the Holywell conference. He has been a member for 60 years, Here he is receiving the long service medal. A Mass will be said in January.

**Visiting the lonely**

*When Tom's wife died after 22 years of marriage he muddled along, unable to express the deep grief he felt. When his cooker also broke down, he felt life was conspiring against him. He contacted the SVP, grumbling that his 'dismal pension' wasn't enough to cover the cost of replacement.*

*We visited to find out exactly what Tom needed and discovered that the kitchen appliance had very little to do with it. The first time we met him he was grumpy and embarrassed to be asking for help.*

*We listened to his needs over a cup of tea. We were able to find him a cooker fairly quickly, but far more importantly, Tom has become a dear friend with whom we have shared many a cup of tea. As is so often the case, the cooker was the cover for a much greater need. (Help us to love and respect those we visit and to understand their deeper needs).*

**Helping those in crisis**

*Anne contacted us when she awoke one day to find her niece, Laurie and Laurie's two young children on her doorstep. Laurie had finally found the courage to escape her abusive husband and they had managed to get to ----- . Anne was delighted to see them but desperately worried as they had nothing: no clothes or possessions.*

*Within a couple of days, the local SVP group had given the children toys and clothes, including a school uniform for the eldest child, as well as clothes for Laurie.*

*Jo, the SVP member who visited the family said 'it was humbling being spontaneously hugged by a cheeky 4-year-old who was beyond delighted with his clothes and toys; even more so when I said he could keep them.*

*(Come Holy Spirit, kindle within us the fire of your love that we work with humility).*



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

**December**

22	6.00pm	Penitential Service	Cathedral
24	Midnight	The Nativity of the Lord	Cathedral
25	10.30am	Christmas Day Mass	Cathedral
26	10.00am	Boxing Day Mass	Cathedral
30	12noon	Altar Servers' Mass	Cathedral
31	11.00am	Holy Family Mass	Holy Family Convent, Wrexham
	3.00pm	Kerala Christmas Celebration	Cathedral



**January**

07	10.30am	Mass of the Epiphany	Cathedral
19		Visit to Christ The Word School	Rhyl
24		Mass for the Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas	Bangor Chaplaincy
30-31		Joint Bishops' Conference	

**Pun Fun –**

How does Moses make his tea? Hebrews it!  
 Venison for dinner again? Oh deer!  
 A cartoonist was found dead at his home. Details are sketchy.  
 I used to be a banker – then I lost interest!  
 French pancakes give me the crêpes.  
 Britain has no kidney bank –but it does have a Liverpool  
 I tried to catch some fog – but I mist.  
 They told me I had type-A blood – it was a typo.  
 Jokes about German sausages are the würst.  
 I know a bloke addicted to brake fluid – he can stop any time!  
 I stayed up all night to see where the sun went – then it dawned on me  
 A girl recognised me from the Vegetarian Club. - I'd never met herbivore.  
 When pharmacists die, they barium.  
 I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I can't put it down.  
 The theatrical performance was about puns. It was a play on words.  
 I didn't like my beard, at first. Then it grew on me.  
 Did you hear about the cross-eyed teacher who lost her job because she couldn't control her pupils?  
 When you get a bladder infection you know urine trouble.  
 Broken pencils are pretty pointless.  
 What do you call a dinosaur with an extensive vocabulary? A Thesaurus.  
 I dropped out of communism class because of lousy Marx.  
 All the toilets in New York police stations have been stolen. The police have nothing to go on.  
 I got a job at a bakery because I kneaded the dough.  
 Velcro? – it's just a rip-off!

**Answers:**

**Quiz 1.**

1. Indian Ocean
2. TS Eliot
3. Coca Cola Advert
4. One! Marley's Ghost, the others are the Spirit of Christmas, Past, Present, Future
5. Rudolph
6. 2 front teeth
7. Austria
8. The Nutcracker (Tchaikovsky)
9. Cranberry Sauce
10. a) Italy, b) France, c) Russia
11. Mexico
12. Bing Crosby "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas"
13. Oslo
14. Robins
15. 1843/44 (Sir Henry Cole produced the first commercial card in 1846)

**Quiz 2:**

1. We don't know -the gospel just says Wise Men...
2. Elizabeth, Mary's cousin
3. Germany
4. The Anglo-Saxons
5. Rudolph, the Red-nosed Reindeer
6. Geese (perhaps turkeys, also)
7. Yuletide
8. a) Good King Wenceslas looked out,  
b) O Holy Night  
c) The Angel Gabriel to Mary came  
d) Long time ago in Bethlehem
9. a) faithful, joyful and triumphant  
b) a midnight clear
10. 25, No 'L'

**Carole and songs:**

1. See Amid the Winter Snow
2. Good King Wenceslas Looked Out
3. Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer
4. Hark, the Herald Angel Sings
5. It came Upon the Midnight Clear
6. I'm Dreaming Of a White Christmas
7. Christians Awake, salute the Happy Morn
8. Joy to the World, the Lord is Come
9. Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells, Jingle All the Way
10. How Far Is It To Bethlehem?
11. We Three Kings of Orient Are
12. Little Jesus Silent sleep,
13. O Come all Ye Faithful
14. Angels From The Realms Of Glory
15. A Virgin Most Pure as The Prophets do tell
16. Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas
17. O Little Town Of Bethlehem
18. Long Time Ago in Bethlehem
19. Once, In Royal David's City
20. The First Nowell, The Angel Did Say

