
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Order of St James (UK) Newsletter</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">November 2021</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><a href="http://www.orderofstjames.info">www.orderofstjames.info</a></p>	
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## **ADVENT THOUGHTS**

Fr Ed Elsey, OSJ

The whole commercial 'take' on Christmas, my friends know well, I detest and tend to run away from it as far as I possibly can.

Children who think the father of Jesus is 'Father Christmas' from a recent survey shows how either the church has 'lost it' or 'the plot' has been hijacked by media and trade, with parents having to compete with each other to buy exotic or expensive gifts, not so easily afforded in these straitened times.

Advent Calendars dish out sweets and chocolates as little windows are opened during the lead up to Xmas, but few carry any real idea of what Advent is for: for many of us the most important scenario and preparation to 'meet Our Lord in the manger'.

As you read this, Mary is in her final stages of pregnancy, not as luxurious or cared for as in our present days of sanitised births.

The census, if true, was scaring many to lay preparations to return to their home towns or cities to register their presence in a fiercely bureaucratic Roman dominated territory.

Joseph, it seemed was preparing such a journey. Little did they know then what lay ahead of them, scrambling towards Egyptian jurisdiction to escape Pharaoh's preparation to eliminate any Christchild who would threaten his assumed royalty.

So 'the coming': 'Adventus' enthuses Christians, or should, as we get ready to 'adore Him, Christ the Lord'. It is the beginning of the spiritual year, and is observed on the four Sundays before Christmas Day. Each Sunday has a different spiritual theme and often involves the ceremonial lighting of an Advent candle which burns during the service.

Eastern Orthodox churches mark the lead-up to Christmas with a Nativity Fast, which starts on November 28, and as with many aspects of any religion, customs and practices vary from place to place.

China might not immediately come to your mind when thinking of Advent, but remember approximately 5% of their population of 1.38 billion is Christian. Chinese Christians light up their homes with colourful paper lanterns during Advent, and you might find red paper pagodas cut out and placed in windows. Traditions that were brought by Western missionaries are followed. For shoppers, Christmas markets are starting to become popular in Shanghai, which has had most historical exposure to Western influence.

About 86% of the people in the Balkan Peninsula country of Croatia are Roman Catholic, and Advent is a big part of the religious life. For some, preparations for Christmas begin before Advent on St Catherine's Day [Nov 25] Sveta Kata.

Visitors to Zagreb, will find a city in full throes of Advent and Christmas spirit in December, with wooden stalls selling handcrafted souvenirs, roasted chestnuts and mulled wine. On Christmas Eve, comes the tradition of eating bakalar [dried cod].

Portugal also celebrates its dried salted fish delicacy.

Come closer, to Germany and families will set up an Advent wreath with four candles, one for each week and carols begin.

We seem to have lost many of our British carols from our tradition, though they still exist in the famous and timeless Oxford Book of Carols.

Candles seem to carry a magical and mystical significance to the whole of this season, and are much loved by children, of course.

Stollen, a rich and spicy fruitcake, is one of the oldest German Christmas treat traditions. And Advent hosts may serve biscuits spread around their wreaths.

Mountain area towns and cities, with their now famous Christmas markets, Advent concerts and snow-clad hills are specially dramatic and scenic at this time of the year.

Along with a wreath, often hung on the front door, and Advent Calendars packed with tiny chocolates, a Hungarian tradition during Advent is Matins a daily Mass held at dawn from Advent I to Christmas Eve, also called the Angelic Mass or Golden Mass.

Also try a beigli: rolled crust filled with poppy seeds or walnuts, like a crisp chocolate Swiss roll.

In Mexico, each evening in cities and villages, a child dressed as an angel leads a procession of children, who go to selected homes, are denied entry but are given refreshments...a bit like trick or treat. Also followed in USA and Latin American cities.

For deeply Catholic Poland, Advent brings prayer, fasting and spiritual preparation for Christmas, People stay inside during the long, dark evenings making decorations for the Christmas tree and handmade gifts, baking Christmas cookies, and preparing other delicacies for the upcoming holidays. Polish early morning Masses are called roraty. City squares have stalls selling cards and gifts in preparation for Christmas.

Here in UK, while many Advent and Christmas traditions go back centuries, Christingle is a fairly new observance. It started with the Moravians in 1740s Germany, but wasn't celebrated here until the late 1960s. It can mean either a 'symbol of Christmas giving or a service of presentation'.

A Christingle is usually an orange, decorated with a candle, red tape and sweets.

A Christingle service might involve prayers, readings and singing and is frequently a fund-raiser for children's charities.

The tradition extends into the New Year and up to Candlemas, [February 2nd] the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus Christ, the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Feast of the Holy Encounter, a Christian Holy Day commemorating the presentation of Jesus at the Temple.

So whatever tradition you follow, may this significant time of preparation for Our Lord's coming to earth, the essential chapter of our Redemption, move you to increased depth of devotion and prayerful discipline of your soul to humbly welcome him.

And whatever you find you 'have' to do at Christmas, do not forget the deep meaning and true story behind the things we have allowed it to become.

Tell the story and ensure others know it is your story and His story.

To see and trace the prophecy underlining the Nativity story, read each of these linked scriptures ponder and pray with them.

Isaiah 48:3,5

Genesis 3:15; with Galatians 4:4; and Matthew 1:20.

Isaiah 7:14; with Matthew 1:18, 24, 25.

Psalms 2:7; with Matthew 3:17.

Genesis 22:18; with Matthew 1:1; and Galatians 3:16.

Genesis 21:12; with Luke 3:23,34.

Numbers 24:17; with Luke 3:23,34.

Genesis 49:10; with Luke 3:23,33.

Isaiah 11:1; with Luke 3:23,32.

Jeremiah 23:5; with Luke 3:23,31.

Micah 5:2; with Matthew 2:1.

Psalms 72:10; with Isaiah 60:6; and Matthew 2:1,11.

Jeremiah 31:15; with Matthew 2:16.

Isaiah 7:14; with Matthew 1:23.

Fr Ed Elsey Nov 2021

**Unforgiving Prisons:** Are we incarcerating ourselves in our own Prisons?

A prison is defined as a place of captivity – a position of confinement or restraint, be it physical or mental. The worst ‘prisons’ are the mental ones we create for ourselves. They can be the hardest from which to escape.

When we don’t forgive other people’s trespasses against us (either real or alleged), we incarcerate ourselves in hatred and thoughts of revenge. We are locked away in bitterness as we refuse to forgive and move on, waiting until the wrong-doer either apologises or compensates. But if the offender does neither and is let off scot-free, we are the ones imprisoned and we can remain in our self-imposed prison of resentment for the rest of our life. (Matthew 5:24-26).

When God asks us to forgive the debts of offenders, it is primarily for our own benefit. God does not want to see us trapped in a prison of our own making.

The only way for us to escape is to forgive as God forgives us. Only when we are ‘free’ from our self-imposed prisons of bitterness and hatred can we find ‘peace of mind’. Then, once liberated, we are in a position to help set others ‘free’.

Be kind and merciful, and forgive others, just as God forgave you because of Christ.

+David, OSJ (Wales)

## **GOOD DEEDS FOR GOD?**

It is good every person lives uprightly, but does not earn favour with God. Purposely living in sin is wrong, and if deliberately and continually practiced will bring the wrath of God.

Isa 64:6b (NAS) "And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment."

Righteous deeds are correct, but if we are trusting in them to earn us favour with God, then they are as a soiled and dirty garment.

John 14:6 (NAS) "Jesus said to Him, 'I am the WAY, and the truth, and the life; NO ONE comes to the Father, but through Me.'"

John 10:9 (NAS) "I am the DOOR; if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

No matter how good a person is, unless they are born again they will not even see the kingdom of God. Born again does not mean another physical birth. It does mean born of the water and the Spirit. John 3:3-7 and Ephesians 5:26 explains this term below.

John 3:3-7 (NAS) "Jesus answered and said to him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he CANNOT see the kingdom of God.' 4 Nicodemus said to Him, 'How can a man be born when he is old?



He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?' 5 Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water (symbolic for the word - Eph 5:26) and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh (i.e.. a natural birth), and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (i.e.. to be born again.) 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You MUST be born again.' "

Only Jesus Christ who lived a perfect sinless life could offer Himself as our substitute and pay the price for our salvation with His precious blood and the cruel cross of Calvary.

Heb 4:15 (NAS) "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathise with our weaknesses, but One (Jesus Christ) who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."

Heb 9:22b (NAS) "...and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."

Why?

Lev 17:11 (NAS) "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement."

Atonement - Gesenius Hebrew Lexicon: to cover over, purge, make an atonement, make reconciliation, cover over as with pitch, pacify, propitiate, atone for sin and persons by legal rites.

Atonement - Websters Dictionary: satisfaction for a wrong, reparation for a injury, to make amends. The Christian doctrine that the reconciliation of God and humankind is accomplished through Christ.

The Old Testament Doctrine of Atonement was a foreshadow of the New Testament doctrine of Redemption.

Redeem - Thayer's Greek Lexicon: to release on receipt of a ransom price, to liberate by payment of a ransom, to deliver from evils of every kind - internal and external.

Redeem - Websters Dictionary: to buy back, to pay off, to clear by payment, to recover something by payment, to obtain the release of one as from captivity - by paying a ransom, to deliver from sin and its consequences by means of a sacrifice offered for the sinner.

1 Pet 1:18-19 (NAS) ...knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers,  
19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

Heb 9:12 (NAS) and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His (Christ's) own blood, He entered the holy place (the Holy of Holies in heaven) ONCE for ALL, having obtained eternal redemption.

Therefore, we need to put our faith in Jesus Christ alone for our salvation.

2 Cor 1:9 (NAS) "...we should not trust in ourselves, but in God..."

John 3:36 (Broadus) "He who has faith in the Son has eternal life."

What is then ONE purpose of righteous deeds?

Righteous deeds are simply our way of saying thank you to Jesus for all He has done for us.

+David, OSJ (Wales)

### **THE AGE OF THE APOSTLES:** (AD 33-100)

The beginning of the Christian Church is reckoned from the great day on which the Holy Ghost came down, according as our Lord had promised to His Apostles. At that time, "Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven," were gathered together at Jerusalem, to keep the Feast of Pentecost (or Feast of Weeks), which was one of the three holy seasons at which God required His people to appear before Him in the place which He had chosen (Deuteronomy xvi. 16). Many of these devout men there converted by what they then saw and heard, to believe the Gospel; and, when they returned to their own countries, they carried back with them the news of the wonderful things which had taken place at Jerusalem.

After this, the Apostles went forth "into all the world," as their Master had ordered them, to "preach the Gospel to every creature" (St Mark xvi. 15). The Book of Acts tells us something of what they did, and we may learn something more about it from the Epistles. And, although this be but a small part of the whole, it will give us a notion of the rest, if we consider that, while St. Paul was preaching in Asia Minor, /Greece, and at Rome, the other Apostles were busily doing the same work in other countries.

We must remember, too, the constant coming and going which in those days took place throughout the world, how Jews from all quarters went up to keep the Passover and other feasts at Jerusalem; how the great Roman empire stretched from our own island of Britain as far as Persia and Ethiopia, and people from all parts of it were continually going to Rome and returning. We must consider how merchants travelled from country to country on account of their trade; how soldiers were sent into all quarters of the empire and were moved about from one country to another. And from these things we may get some understanding of the way in which the knowledge of the Gospel would be spread, when once it had taken root in the great cities of Jerusalem and Rome.

Thus it came to pass, that, by the end of the first hundred years after our Saviour's birth something was known of the Christian faith throughout all the Roman empire, and even in countries beyond it; and if in many cases, only a very little was known, still even that was a gain, and served as a preparation for more. The last chapter of the Acts leaves St. Paul at Rome, waiting for his trial on account of the things which the Jews had laid to his charge. We find from the Epistles that he afterwards got his liberty, and returned into the East. There is reason to suppose that he also visited Spain, as he had spoken of doing in his Epistle to the Romans (ch. xv. 28); and it has been thought by some that he even preached in Britain; but this does not seem likely.

He was at last imprisoned again at Rome, where the wicked Emperor Nero persecuted the Christians very cruelly; and it is believed that both St. Peter and St. Paul were put to death there in the year of our Lord 68.

The bishops of Rome afterwards set up claims to great power and honour, because they said that St. Peter was the first bishop of their church, and that they were his successors. But although we may reasonably believe that the Apostle was martyred at Rome, there does not appear to be any good ground for thinking that he had been settled there as bishop of the city.

All the Apostles, except St. John, are supposed to have been martyred (or put to death for the sake of the Gospel). St. James the Less, who was bishop of Jerusalem, was killed by the Jews in an uproar, about the year 62. Soon after this, the Romans sent their armies into Judea, and, after a bloody war, they took the city of Jerusalem, and destroyed the Temple.

Thirty years after Herod's time another cruel emperor, Domitian, raised a fresh persecution against the Christians (AD 95). Among those who suffered were some of his own near relations; for the Gospel had now made its way among the great people of the earth, as well as among the poor, who were the first to listen to it.

There is a story that the emperor was told that some persons of the family of David were living in the Holy Land, and that he sent for them, because he was afraid lest the Jews should set them up as princes, and should rebel against his government. They were two grandchildren of St. Jude, who was one of our Lord's kinsmen after the flesh, and therefore belonged to the house of David and the old kings of Judah. But these two were plain countrymen, who lived quietly and contentedly on their little farm, and were not likely to lead a rebellion, or to claim earthly kingdoms.

When they were carried before the emperor, they showed him their hands, which were rough, blistered and horny from working in the fields; and in answer to his questions about the kingdom of Christ, they said that it was not of this world, but spiritual and heavenly, and that it would appear at the end of the world, when the Saviour would come again to judge both the quick and the dead. So the emperor saw that there was nothing to fear from them, and he let them go.

It was during Domitian's persecution that St. John was banished to the island of Patmos, where he saw the visions which are described in his "Revelation." All the other Apostles had been long dead, and St. John had lived many years at Ephesus, where he governed the churches of the country around. After his return from Patmos he went about to all these churches, that he might repair the hurt which they had suffered in the persecution.

In one of the towns which he visited, he noticed a young man of very pleasing looks, and called him forward, and desired the bishop of the place to take care of him. The bishop did so, and, after having properly trained the youth, he baptised and confirmed him. But when this had been done, the bishop thought that he need not watch over him so carefully as before, and the young man fell into vicious company, and went on from bad to worse, until at length he became the head of a band of robbers, who kept the whole country in terror.

When the Apostle next visited the town, he asked after the charge which he had put into the bishop's hands. The bishop, with shame and grief, answered that the young man was dead, and, on being further questioned he explained that he meant dead in sins, and told all the story.

St John, after having blamed him because he had not taken more care, asked where the robbers were to be found, and set off on horseback for their haunt, where he was seized by some of the band, and was carried before the captain. The young man, on seeing him, knew him at once, and could not bear his look, but ran away to hide himself.

But the Apostle called him back, told him that there was yet hope for him through Christ, and spoke in such a moving way that the robber agreed to return to the town. There he was once more received into the Church as a penitent; and he spent the rest of his days in repentance for his sins, and in thankfulness for the mercy which had been shown to him.

St. John, in his old age, was much troubled by false teachers, who had begun to corrupt the Gospel. These persons are called "heretics", and their doctrines are called "heresy" from a Greek word which means "to choose", because they chose to follow their own fancies, instead of receiving the Gospel as the Apostles and the Church taught it.

Simon the sorcerer, who is mentioned in the eighth chapter of the Acts, is counted as the first heretic, and even in the time of the Apostles a number of others arose, such as Hymenaeus, Philetus, and Alexander, who are mentioned by St. Paul (1 Tim. i. 19f; 2 Tim. ii. 17f). These earliest heretics were mostly of the kind called Gnostics,-- a word which means that they pretended to be more knowing than ordinary Christians, and perhaps St. Paul may have meant them especially when he warned Timothy against "science" (or knowledge) "falsely so called" (1 Tim. vi. 20).

Their doctrines were a strange mixture of Jewish and heathen notions with Christianity; and it is curious that some of the very strangest of their opinions have been brought up again from time to time by people who fancied that they had found out something new, while they had only fallen into old errors, which had been condemned by the Church hundreds of years before.

St. John lived to about the age of a hundred. He was at last so weak that he could not walk into the church; so he was carried in, and used to say continually to his people, "Little children, love one another." Some of them, after a time, began to be tired of hearing this, and asked him why he repeated the words so often, and said nothing else to them. The Apostle answered, "Because it is the Lord's commandment, and if this be done it is enough."  
Amen

+David, OSJ (Wales)

### **SCOTLAND AND IRELAND:** A Religious History

The only thing which seems to be settled as to the religious history of Scotland in these times, is that a bishop named Ninian preached among the Southern Picts between the years 412 and 432, and established a see at Whithorn, in Galloway. But in the Year of St. Ninian's death, a far more famous missionary, St. Patrick, who is called "the Apostle of Ireland," began his labours in that island.

It is a question whether Patrick was born in Scotland, at a place called Kirkpatrick, near the river Clyde, or in France, near Boulogne. But wherever it may have been, his birth took place about the year 387. His father was a deacon of the church, his grandfather was a presbyter.



Patrick had the opportunities of a religious training from his infancy. He did not, however, use these opportunities so well as he might have done; but it pleased God to bring him to a better mind by the way of affliction.

When Patrick was about sixteen years old, he was carried off by some pirates (or sea-robbers), and was sold to a heathen prince in Ireland, where he was set to keep cattle, and had to bear great hardships. But "there," says he, "it was that the Lord brought me to a sense of the unbelief of my heart, that I might call my sins to remembrance, and turn with all my heart to the Lord, who regarded my low estate, and, taking pity on my youth and ignorance, watched over me before I knew Him or had sense to discern between good and evil, and counselled me and comforted me as a father doth a son.

I was employed every day in feeding cattle, and often in the day I used to betake myself to prayer; and the love of God thus grew stronger and stronger, and His faith and fear increased in me, so that in a single day I could utter as many as a hundred prayers, and in the night almost as many, and I used to remain in the woods and on the mountains, and would rise for prayer before daylight, in the midst of snow and ice and rain, and I felt no harm from it, nor was I ever unwilling, because my heart was hot within me.

I was not from my childhood a believer in the only God, but continued in death and in unbelief until I was severely chastened; and in truth I have been humbled by hunger and nakedness, and it was my lot to go about in Ireland every day sore against my will, until I was almost worn out.

But this proved rather a blessing to me, because by means of it I have been corrected of the Lord, and He has fitted me for being what it once seemed unlikely that I should be, so that I should concern myself about the salvation of others, whereas I used to have no such thoughts even for myself."

After six years of captivity, Patrick was restored to his own country. It is said that he then travelled a great deal; and he became a presbyter of the Church. He was carried off captive a second time, but this captivity did not last long, and he afterwards lived with his parents, who begged him never to leave them again. But he thought that in a vision or dream he saw a man inviting him to Ireland, as St Paul saw in the night a man of Macedonia, saying to him, "come over into Macedonia and help us" (Acts xvi. 9).

And Patrick was resolved to preach the Gospel in the land where he had been a captive in his youth. His friends got about him, and entreated him not to cast himself among the savage and heathen Irish.

One of them, who was most familiar with him, when there seemed no hope of shaking his purpose, went so far as to tell of some sin which Patrick had committed in his boyhood, thirty years before.

It was hoped that when this sin of his early days was known (whatever it may have been) it would prevent his being consecrated as a bishop. But Patrick broke through all difficulties, and was consecrated bishop of the Irish in the year 432.

There had already been some Christians in that country, and a missionary named Palladius had lately attempted to labour there, but had allowed himself to be soon discouraged, and had withdrawn. But Patrick had more zeal and patience than Palladius, and gave up all the remainder of his life to the Irish, so that he would not even allow himself the pleasure of paying a visit to his native country. He was often in great danger, both from the priests of the old Irish heathenism, and from the barbarous princes who were under their influences. But he carried on his work faithfully, and had the comfort of seeing it crowned with abundant success. His death took place on the 17th of March, 493.

The greater number of the Irish are now Romanists, and fancy that St. Patrick was so too, and that he was sent by the Pope to Ireland. But he has left writings which clearly prove that this is quite untrue. And moreover, although the bishops of Rome had been advancing in power, and although corruptions were growing in the Church in his time, yet neither the claims of these bishops, nor the other corruptions of the Roman Church, had then reached anything like their present height. Let us hope and pray that God may be pleased to deliver our Irish brethren of the Romish communion from the bondage of ignorance and error in which they are now unhappily held!

The Church continued to flourish in Ireland after St Patrick's death, and learning found a home there, while wars and conquests banished it from most other countries of the West. In the year 565, the Irish Church sent forth a famous missionary named Columba, who, with twelve companions, went into Scotland. He preached among the Northern Picts, and founded a monastery in one of the Western Islands, which from him got the name of Icolmkill (that is to say, the Island of Columba of the Churches).

From that little island the light of the Gospel afterwards spread, not only over Scotland, but far towards the south of England, and many monasteries, both in Scotland and in Ireland, were under the rule of its abbot.

For hundreds of years the schools of Ireland continued to be in great repute. Young men flocked to them from England, and even from foreign lands, and many Irish missionaries laboured in various countries abroad. The chief of these was Columban (a different person from Columba, although their names are so like).

He left Ireland with twelve companions, in the year 589, preached in the East of France for many years, and afterwards in Switzerland and all Italy, and died in 615, at the monastery of Bobbio, which he had founded among the Apennine mountains. One of his disciples, Gall, is styled "The Apostle of Switzerland," and founded a great monastery, which from him is called St. Gall.

+David, OSJ (Wales)

**A service for those at home for November**

+David, OSJ (Wales)

**COLLECT FOR THE DAY**

O God, who meetest every man upon that path by which he draweth nigh unto thee, grant us such a measure of thy wisdom that by our love and gentleness the wandering sheep be guided to thy fold; through Christ our Lord. Amen

O God forasmuch as without you, we are not able to please you; mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; Amen

**HYMN:** to be read or sung

Seek ye first the kingdom of God,  
and His righteousness,  
and all these things shall be added unto you;  
allelu, alleluia.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,  
allelu, alleluia.

You shall not live by bread alone,  
but by every word  
that proceeds from the mouth of God;  
allelu, alleluia.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,  
allelu, alleluia.

Ask and it shall be given unto you,  
seek and ye shall find;  
knock and it shall be opened unto you;  
allelu, alleluia.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,  
allelu, alleluia.  
Karen Lafferty

**NEW TESTAMENT:** Hebrews 4 verses 12 – end

Indeed, the word of God is living and active; sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before Him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.

Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

This is the Word of the Lord, Thanks be to God.

**HOLY GOSPEL:** Mark 10 verses 17 - 31

Glory to You O Lord

As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before Him and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments. "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honour your father and mother."

He said to Him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth".

Jesus looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go sell what you own and give the money to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come follow me". When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had great possessions.

Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God". And the disciples were perplexed at these words.

But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God".

They were greatly astounded and said to one another, "Then who can be saved?"

Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible but not for God; for God all things are possible".

Peter began to say to Him, "Look, we have left everything and followed you".

Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, there is no-one who's left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age - houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children and fields, with persecutions - and in the age to come eternal life. But many who are first will be last and the last will be first".

This is the Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you O Christ.

## **ADDRESS**

The temptation of Jesus is told in the gospel of St Luke. He was full of the Holy Spirit after His baptism by John and he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.

'Then the devil led Him up and showed Him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to Him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you then will worship me, it will all be yours".



This was temptation indeed, but Jesus in the power of God resisted the wealth and worldly power in front of Him. He knew only too well what images and promise of an easier life would mean.

He knew as the writer of Hebrews tells us that “the word of God...is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. The result of giving in to temptation would be to cut Himself off from God and He would be in thrall to riches.

Jesus looked with tender love towards the young man who came kneeling before Him. Jesus was preparing to leave for His last journey to Jerusalem. He was preparing for certain arrest at the hands of church leaders. He had in His mind the fate that awaited Him, the death that lay ahead. Yet this man in all sincerity was asking to know the way to eternal life. He was exactly the person who Jesus had come to save.

He was the one to inherit eternal life by Jesus actions.

Yet Jesus saw that he was depending on his own righteousness, following the rules rather than depending on God. He had many possessions that underpinned his security. Jesus challenged him to give up his wealth and leave everything to follow Him. It was too much to ask, even for one who stood within the loving gaze of God Himself. In our Order of St James and our church we are the ones who are free now to follow Him and to inherit eternal life. Following the rules has never been enough.

Loving our God and our neighbour until the end of our lives is our calling.

Trusting in God rather than in our material life is for us who know the joy of knowing Him.

We pray, "Lead us not into temptation".

We give thanks for all that Jesus accomplished, for His life laid down and for the gateway that He opened up to the Father and life eternal. Amen.

### **PRAYER and INTERCESSION**

Holy and Blessed Lord, we give thanks for Jesus Christ our great High Priest, who has entered into the fullness of heaven and opened the gate of glory that can never be closed. May we approach the throne of grace with confidence and in our time of need, know your mercy and grace.

Lord in heaven, hear us and help us.

Lord we pray that we may seek you and enter into life eternal. We pray for all who seek you in simplicity and humility, for all who find you in their service of others.

We pray for all who are seeking to consecrate their lives to you.

Lord in heaven, hear us and help us.

Father we ask look with tender love on those who are being choked by their riches, for people possessed by their possessions.

We ask that we will never be afraid to give and to share. We pray that our spirits will be rich in your keeping and we pray for those who suffer from the greed of others.

Lord in heaven, hear us and help us.

Loving Lord, we thank you for those who have sacrificed for us, those who have enriched our lives by their goodness, for those who have been gracious and generous to us.

We pray for our family and for our friends that we will look to you in good times and times of temptation.

Lord in heaven, hear us and help us.

Lord Jesus, we thank you for all who have entered into the glory of eternal life that you have prepared for them.

We pray for those we have loved and lost, those whose places can never be filled. We pray for those who mourn that they will be comforted

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ

**THE LORD'S PRAYER**

## **THE BLESSING**

May God our heavenly Father, whose Son our Lord Jesus Christ took the form of a servant to be our Saviour, grant that we may serve Him through serving others and the Blessing of God Almighty, Father Son † and Holy Spirit be with you this week and with all those you love for ever. Amen

## **A SERVICE OF HARVEST THANKSGIVING FOR THOSE AT HOME:**

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation; for in your abundant care you have given us fertile land, rich soil, the seasons in their courses: you provide seed for sowing, water, light and warmth to bring forth the miracle of growth.

**HYMN:** to be read or sung

We plough the fields and scatter the good seed on the land, but it is fed and watered by God's Almighty hand; He sends the snow in winter, the warmth to swell the grain, the breezes and the sunshine and soft, refreshing rain. All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above; then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord for all His love.	He only is the maker of all things near and far; He paints the wayside flower He lights the evening star; He fills the earth with beauty, by Him the birds are fed, much more to us His children, He gives our daily bread. All good gifts around us are sent from heaven above, then thank the Lord O thank the Lord for all His love
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Matthias Claudius, trans. Jane Montgomery Campbell

**New Testament:** Philippians chapter 4 verses 4 - 9

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say Rejoice!. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

This is the Word of the Lord, Thanks be to God.

**HOLY GOSPEL:** Mark 10 verses 17 - 31

Glory to You O Lord:

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. Everything that the Father gives me will come to me and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent me. And this is the will of Him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that He has given me, but raise it up on the last day.

This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in Him may have eternal life and I will raise them up on the last day.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord, Praise to you O Christ.

**ADDRESS:**

As we thank God for our daily bread, so we thank Him for nourishing us, for the life in our bodies and the breath of life within us. We think about and thank the farming community who live by the land that God has provided. We thank God for the beauty of the earth that mirrors the beauty of God Himself. But at Harvest time, how do we understand God and what He gives to us every day.

Excessive generosity is a consistent part of Jesus’ teaching. Whenever He speaks of the kingdom of heaven, He tells stories of lavish feasts and banquets. And at these celebrations are people who have been invited but have absolutely no way of ever earning or deserving that invitation, no way of giving sufficient thanks for such abundant food, or for the honour of having a place at God’s table.

And this is where we find ourselves today, in our homes and villages, we are receiving God’s generosity. How do we understand this harvest of Love?

God tells us that ‘my ways are not your ways’ and so it is. Divine love has no interest in restricting itself to just what is necessary. The cross of Jesus was not a proportionate, costed response to the needs of the world for forgiveness.

Jesus's love then and now is not means tested or tied to our productivity or dependent on our individual goodness.

It is not even conditional on our faith. God's love is not like that at all. It is quite simply beyond measure, poured out in overwhelming excess to a world that barely understands it and often forgets to appreciate it.

I believe that WE are called to understand this. We are invited to look around us and to see the sheer wastefulness of God, the lavish excess.

We are called to love like Him, without any notion of what is sensible.

We are asked to allow ourselves to be poured out into the world around us. Do you remember the wedding at Canaan, Jesus's first miracle. Gallons and gallons of the best wine were poured out for the wedding guests, just when the first and inferior wine was running out.

Most of the company didn't know about the miracle of water changed into wine.

Yet divine love was poured out on every guest just as it is today, on those who understand what they are receiving and those who profess to have no idea. But WE are the ones in our generation to understand that Jesus is the bread of all life.

We are the ones to understand that He gives Himself as bread for our journey so that with Him we need never hunger or thirst.



We are the ones who receive His forgiveness, freely given, and receive the blessing of eternal life.

We have the chance today to comprehend the overflowing generosity of divine love and to share this bread with others. Amen

**PRAYER and INTERCESSION:**

Let us ask the God of creation to send a blessing upon us.

Upon the rich earth send a blessing O Lord.

Let the earth be fruitful and its resources be hallowed

We ask in faith

Hear us and help us O Lord

Upon human labour send a blessing O Lord.

Prosper the work of our hands;

may all find dignity and just reward in our work; we ask that you free the exploited and oppressed.

We ask in faith

hear us and help us O Lord

Upon the produce of the earth send a blessing O Lord.

Guide us into a sustainable future, and give us the will to share the fruits of the world.

We ask in faith

hear us and help us O Lord

Upon the seas and waters send a blessing O Lord.

Teach us to cherish the water of the earth and to conserve the seas, lakes and rivers.

We ask in faith

hear us and help us O Lord.

Upon aid agencies send a blessing O Lord.

Where the earth is parched and the wells have run dry;

where war brings want and children go hungry in our country

and abroad, where the poor cry out for bread and compel us to be generous.

We ask in faith,

hear us and help us O Lord.

Merciful Father

Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

### **The Blessing:**

Do not worry about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God and the Blessing of God the Father, God the Son † , God the Holy Spirit be with you and with those you love this week and for always. Amen

+David, OSJ (Wales)

**A PERSONAL ARTICLE:**

+David, OSJ (Wales)

Over recent months I have noted the growing numbers of people struggling with their hurts, pains and certainly emotions. So many I meet encountering very low periods in their lives, depression and anxiety states totally out of control. It is when in clerical collar, YES I said clerical collar!! Though I expect you and I never hardly see a priest in public these days wearing any vestment at all.

Such a sad state of affairs.

My first question is, "Are they ashamed to be seen as a priest?" Or do they not wish to perform any ministry duties when in a public place. The reason I say this is simple, most of my ministry and pastoral chaplaincy is when walking around and seen in collar - an open invitation to come forward and speak with me if one so wishes.

It is amazing how many people will start a greeting with "Good morning Father, or hello vicar." Then if they are acknowledged begin to converse with me and Anne. It is strange how many just need those few minutes and words of solace and comfort to let another know how they truly do feel at that time. Being locked up inside their homes for so long, as one lady confided to me, "I know now how that leper felt in the story in the Bible, that is how I felt. Yet having committed no crime, but given a custodial sentence by a government that just does not care." Pretty damning indictment that one, but many more are feeling that way too.

Consulting with a female chaplain in the last few days, a wonderfully warm lady (you know who you are) herself at times treated abysmally by certain other clergy not Episcopally ordained!!

It is sad that our hospitals have had to admit so many now suffering with mental issues as a result of the lockdowns we have all encountered over the last 18 months.

This lady chaplain having to attend three or more hospitals in one day, her day consisting of an early start and not getting home until 7pm or later.

This is just illustrating one chaplains day, so you can imagine overall the work of Chaplains in the majority of cases are never witnessed, until one calls on their services. Yet none complaining because of the love of their jobs.

I as a Bishop wish to thank personally my colleagues and Chaplains from all Faiths. We are engaged in the same duties ALL of us though we may be from different Faiths, we respect each other highly. Especially in the Order of St James. We can all learn something from each other.

I wish to share a prayer, a very personal prayer, the opening five words are so important:-

Stay Close to me Lord.

Stay close to me Lord, because You are my life, and without you. I am nothing.

Stay close to me Lord, so that I clearly hear Your voice and follow me.  
Stay close to me Lord, to guide me on my way each day.  
Stay close to me Lord, for I am weak, and I need Your strength.  
Stay close to me Lord, and help to keep me faithful to You.  
Stay close to me Lord, I desire to be with You always.  
Stay close to me Lord, for You are my Light and without You it is dark.  
Stay close to me Lord, for it is getting late and the day is coming to a close.  
Stay close to me Lord, I need You, my Jesus, in the night.  
Stay close to me Lord, for death, judgement and eternity approaches. Amen.

In the prayer as the words state, "Stay close to me Lord" it is so sad so many are losing their Faith, or have not had any at all. Thus having nothing to fall back on no reserve(s) to call upon when low or depressed and in that dark tunnel of doom.

Thus as Chaplain wearing a collar in public we do offer a glimmer of hope. Even our ministry of 'Presence' is an awakening call to those so low returning a cheery and warm, "Good morning to you, and how are you today?"

This greeting returned to a totally despondent, dare I say it broken hearted soul is saying to them you are NOT neglected, and affords an opportunity to open up, and chat with us.

All human beings have the sense to know if a person is hurting inside. Maybe a compassionate question such as, "How are you 'REALLY' feeling at this moment. If we are pushed for time, never shut off any person, but explain

truthfully why you must continue to your appointment etc., and offer them a time when you can meet and speak with them.

If you shut them off at that stage, to them it becomes a snub. What is not realised is that may have been the last and only opportunity for them to open up, admit they have difficulties and say they really do need help. If we just close them down, they will feel rejected possibly made worse, ultimately we may never see them again, such vulnerable desperate and broken souls will leave, probably take their own lives.

UNLESS someone such as a friend or relative becomes so concerned about their now irrational thinking and / or behaviour they need urgently to seek immediate help for them. Admission to a hospital as a place of safety and in the care of suitably qualified CPNs (Community Psychiatric Nurses). Who really do a wonderful job, (correction on that word)...not a job a vocation.

May all souls we meet who say 'hello' even those who do not.... let us be the ones who acknowledge them with a smile and a greeting even if one word "Hello" it means so much in this present environment we are currently facing.

May we show everybody that as individuals we really do care, even if those we meet daily on the road of life have suffered at the uncaring hands of harsh government policies. May we all conduct our ministry, each of us, as we walk the streets out shopping, walking, exercising daily.

I could continue writing for hours on this subject, but I feel I will leave the subject here at present. Thank you for reading this article.

Lastly, doctors and nurses are fatigued, tired and many stressed from what they have witnessed and dealt with over two years, who are now themselves struggling, we thank them all and now it is our turn to be there for them as Chaplains, Priests and Laity alike as they were / are there for us. God Bless.

May I end on this prayer:

JESUS SAID COME FOLLOW ME

You must let go and allow Me to love you  
You must let go and be filled with My love.

You must let go and trust in Me  
You must let go and receive My peace  
You must let go and listen to me  
You must let go and I will teach you

You must let go and learn from Me  
You must let go and thank Me  
You must let go and praise Me  
You must let go and let My spirit rest in you.

You must let go and love Me  
You must let go forgive and be merciful  
You must let go and accept yourself

You must let go and wait for Me to work  
You must let go and let My wisdom,  
Knowledge and truth inspire a change in you  
Amen.

All blessings,

+ David.



### **OSJ (UK): Website Visitor Information:**

Total page hits from 1st January 2021 to 30th October 2021 are as follows:

January	17,267	average - 557 per day
February	17,314	average - 558 per day
March	30,217	average - 975 per day
April	45,111	average - 1,455 per day
May	56,415	average - 1,820 per day
June	44,393	average - 1,478 per day
July	47,566	average - 1,534 per day
August	54,160	average - 1,747 per day
September	66,984	average - 2,166 per day
October	78,366	average - 2,611 per day

Total visitor hits since 03/09/2013 from 242 countries recorded worldwide

Counter 1: 4,407,170 visitors    Counter 2: 5,120,887 visitors

(We run two counters for comparison purposes as they record hits differently.

We publish the lower figures as a matter of course on a regular basis but show the higher figures on this occasion to show that there are statistical discrepancies.)

### **Emergency Measures, OSJ (UK):**

It has been decided that given the protracted situation we find ourselves in currently that two new temporary measures have been implemented for all members of OSJ (UK), whether in the Ministry Team or the Ministry Support Team.

Any member of OSJ (UK) may self-administer communion using the form suggested, and that includes to their families and all who are in need if they cannot receive communion from a priest or Eucharistic Minister through unavailability.

The same applies to the giving of last rites (viaticum).

Suggested forms of approved service are available (with instructions) to download from our website downloads page:

1. Self-administered Communion

2. Last Rites (Emergency Measures)

Also to be noted, regular services at St Leonard's have been temporarily suspended until further notice.

This is particularly regretted.

+Ian, Executive Bishop, OSJ (UK)



**St Leonard's Chapel,  
Hazlewood Castle,  
Yorkshire,  
LS24 9NJ**



**OSJ (UK) Services, 2021.**

Unless otherwise stated:

Services take place on the FIRST and THIRD Sundays of each month at 6.00 p.m.

Services take the form of a short and very gentle communion service, lasting 20-30 minutes.

Covid-19 precautions: St Leonard's will remain closed until restrictions are fully lifted.

3rd January, 2021	17th January, 2021
7th February, 2021	21st February, 2021
7th March, 2021	21st March, 2021
4th April, 2021	18th April, 2021
2nd May, 2021	16th May, 2021
6th June, 2021	20th June, 2021
4th July, 2021	18th July, 2021
1st August, 2021	15th August, 2021
5th September, 2021	19th September, 2021
3rd October, 2021	17th October, 2021
7th November, 2021	21st November, 2021
5th December, 2021	19th December, 2021

We use a non-alcoholic wine so children may take part too.

There is no requirement to be baptised or confirmed, only to treat with due respect.

All are very welcome and all may receive regardless of tradition or denominational background.

**Additional Services:**

Remembrance Sunday: 7th November 10.35 a.m.

Midnight Mass: 24th December 11.20 p.m.