

Dear friends,

I have recorded a reflection on the readings for the third Sunday of Advent. If you'd like to watch it just click on this link;

<https://youtu.be/wqJPxVVJHXY>

Alternatively, if you'd like to read it just follow this link to my Blog. <https://revmartinjacques.blogspot.com/2020/12/john-baptist-advent-3.html>

A poem about the incarnation by Luci Shaw. Luci describes the work of the poet as “the slender antenna of awareness combing the air for messages” Our own Bishop Robert included it in his “Ad Clerum” letter to the clergy this week.

Blue homespun and the bend of my breast
keep warm this small hot naked star
fallen to my arms. (Rest ... you who have had so far to come.)
Now nearness satisfies the body of God sweetly. Quiet he lies
whose vigour hurled a universe. He sleeps
whose eyelids have not closed before.
His breath (so slight it seems no breath at all)
once ruffled the dark deeps to sprout a world. Charmed by doves' voices,
the whisper of straw, he dreams,
hearing no music from his other spheres.
Breath, mouth, ears, eyes he is curtailed who overflowed all skies,
all years. Older than eternity, now he is new.
Now native to earth as I am,
nailed to my poor planet, caught that I might be free, blind in my womb
to know my darkness ended,
brought to this birth for me to be new-born.

The lighter side!

A Geordie Happy Christmas from one of my best mates from my days in Tynemouth, Dan Entwisle. Howay Dan <https://www.facebook.com/dan.entwisle.9/videos/10157434225120059>

Thought for the day

I was reminiscing about Christmases past in a previous letter which led me to remember the days when as a curate in Margate I, my wife, and daughter Claire used to give up our Christmas day meal to cook a Christmas dinner in the church hall for about 40 disadvantaged or people living alone in the early

2000's. Full Turkey dinner, crackers, wine, decorations and everybody got a present! Tremendous hard work, (and quite expensive) though we got help from a family who saw it as their mission to do this every year with us. It did give us a sense of enormous well-being at the time but after a couple of years, my wife insisted that we have – quite rightly - a Christmas dinner on our own. There is a hidden danger in all this “charity” or “community” engagement though that is not expressed very often – that there is a danger that, in providing such largesse we start to see the people/community as “clients”, poor, inarticulate helpless recipients of our charity who should be grateful for what they have been given - Instead of acknowledging their innate dignity and worth and admitting the possibility that we can learn from them and enjoy their company. It is better to give than receive it is said. But better than both is sharing.

The Prayer for Today is by Kate McIlhagga

This is the day that the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice and be glad in it

We will not offer to God

Offerings that cost us nothing

Spirit of God

Brooding over the waters of our chaos.

Inspire us to generous living.

Wind of God

Dancing over the desert of our reluctance,

Lead us to the oasis of celebration.

Breath of God

Inspiring communication among strangers,

Make us channels of your peace.

That we may give in deep thankfulness,

Placing the overflowing basket of our gifts

On the table of rejoicing.

Love and peace,

Martin

Please note my new email address is vicar@rmcommunity.co.uk