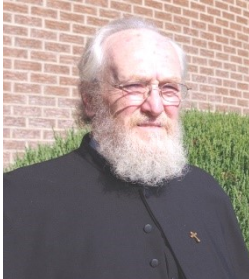


THE TRADITIONAL ANGLICAN NEWS

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Fr. Robert's Remarks



FR. ROBERT MANSFIELD, SSC
VICAR GENERAL

Greetings; the Lord be with you!

Tomorrow, December 16, we begin again to use the anthems on the Magnificat at Evening Prayer.

I remember, as a child, in my boredom, reading through the Calendar at the beginning of the Prayer Book. Fairly quickly, I got a handle on the fact that we commemorated Saints Days and other historical figures and events. I enjoyed reading what I could find about them. I do confess to being at a loss as to why we commemorated "O Sapientia: an ancient Advent anthem." It just seemed odd. The anthems or antiphons were not part of the culture of the parishes we lived in so it was only later that I came

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Merry Christmas!

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Fr. David Marriott, SSC: A Sermon for Advent III



FR. DAVID MARRIOTT, SSC

Steward: the word is used quite often, but in many different connotations: steward on a cruise ship, flight attendants used to be called stewardesses, there might be a steward at a golf club, or in charge of an exclusive sort of club that exist in many cities: think of the Vancouver club, the Union Club in Victoria, and last but not least, the most common use of the word steward in the place I come from was that of the man in charge, the manager of the working men's club in the industrial towns of northern England.

But in all of these examples, the title of steward is an adaptation of the original meaning: which is that of the person in charge of all the day to day management of a country estate: from supervision of the estate lands, management of the farmers who are tenants on the estate, hiring and firing of estate workers, management of the produce of the estate so that the return on investment is optimized: in short, a position of great trust and responsibility, especially when the owner of the estate might live elsewhere, or be occupied in endeavours overseas, for considerable periods of time.

In Holy Scripture, we have an example of this sort of stewardship in the work done by Joseph as steward of all the lands of Egypt: the next in authority after the Pharaoh.

So what are we asked to do, if we are to be true stewards of the mysteries of Christ, as St. Paul writes?

In this example, we are the entrusted guardians of all that we have learnt of the teaching and gift or promise of Jesus Christ. We are called to be faithful to all of the teachings that we have been given: and

Fr. David Marriott, SSC: A Sermon for Advent III

so it is imperative that we can accept the teaching, read mark learn and inwardly digest the teaching: and then that we can go out and teach the word, not necessarily in an ‘educational;’ sense, but rather through the very example of who we are as people, how we behave as Christian faithful, and thereby, as Jesus says of His gift on the Cross, ‘bring all men to me’. We are not asked to do as He did on the Cross, but to do as he did in the example of His life and work and words, that others saw this life, this work, became convinced of the truth of the Word, and then brought others to follow the Way, the Truth and the Life.

In all of our work we are to be fully aware that the work we are called to do is not man’s work, and therefore any judgment of man is of no value: indeed, we might anticipate that man’s judgment will be negative: but we are called on to have the strength and courage to defy the logic of man, and embrace God’s logic – which we do not and cannot understand in its complexity – withstanding all the trials and tribulations of this world. ‘But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.’ (1 Cor. 4.3-4)

The collect defines the ‘job description of the steward of the mysteries of God: ‘prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at thy second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight.’

We are charged with this preparation for Our Lord’s return: that He might find the work done to be satisfactory as the returning Lord of the manor would require of his faithful steward. Therefore we might do as St. John the Baptist did: in his preparation of the people in his wanderings throughout the land of Judaea, so that they might be prepared for the advent of a new ruler of the Jews, prepared for the coming of the Lord. John anticipated a messianic figure who would be greater than himself (Funk, Robert W. & the Jesus Seminar (1998). The Acts of Jesus: the search for the authentic deeds of Jesus. San Francisco: Harper.) He was looking for a man of action, someone who would take charge and make things happen: a new David, military might and the promise of victory.

In this anticipation, we see the humanity of a people undergoing great stress: who are looking for a way out, a way to be provided through human strength and effort: whereas of course what Jesus offers is a very different style of leadership, a style which is predicated on a prior institution of a faith in God, and His power over all creation, and that this power is such that, even when it might seem that our life on earth is coming to an end, it is not the end, as for those who confess Jesus Christ as Saviour, those who have repented and made penance for their human frailties, there is the promise of life eternal in His loving care, and that we will see Jesus Christ come again as our judge. St. Paul writes, ‘judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.’ (1 Cor. 4.5)



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Bonnie's Reflections: The Angel's Other Message



MRS. BONNIE IVEY

As Christmas draws near, we might see pictures of the Virgin Mary being visited by the angel Gabriel. We may not know that Gabriel had already come to earth about six months previously, with an important message. It concerned Mary's cousin Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah. Both these visits were part of God's very long-term plan to save us from sin and death.

Centuries earlier, the Jewish nation had been defeated by the Babylonians. Torn from their homeland, the Jews spent seventy years in captivity in Babylon. Released at last in 430 BC, they returned to Jerusalem to rebuild. They restored their Temple, but

something was missing from their connection to God. There were no longer any prophets inspired by the Holy Spirit to announce God's specific messages to them.

Why? Outwardly they were keeping the rules, and making offerings, but pagan ideas had crept into society during their time in Babylon. The priesthood became a mere political appointment. Intermarriage with pagans introduced the worship of idols. God's people no longer watched for the old prophecies to be fulfilled and had no expectation of ever hearing from him. Therefore, his protecting hand was withdrawn. Their land was conquered again and again, finally ending up in the possession of the Roman Empire. Bible scholars refer to this time as **The 400 Years of Silence**. But things changed when Zechariah's turn came to serve in the Temple.



Zechariah the priest and his wife Elizabeth were an older, childless couple. Years had trickled away without the hoped-for gift of a child. This was considered a deep misfortune by the Jews, even interpreted as proof of God's disapproval of a couple.

This day Zechariah, arriving at the Temple for his turn of duty, was chosen by lot for the task of offering incense in the Holy Place. This was considered a great honor and was only granted once in a priest's lifetime. Zechariah mounted the steps to the high altar of sacrifice to gather hot coals on a golden shovel. He carried them, alone, into the Holy Place, past the tables of blessed bread and the great golden lampstand with its seven lights. Carefully placing the coals on the Altar of Incense, he then sprinkled ground resin and spices upon them. The rising smoke represented the prayers of all the people, including his own, carried up to God. When the entire chamber was filled with sweet smoke, it would be his duty to go out to the congregation and speak a blessing.

Bonnie's Reflections: The Angel's Other Message

But as he turned, he realized he was not alone. A great angel stood there. He told Zechariah his prayer was answered. Elizabeth would bear a son. This child had a great destiny. He would lead a life set apart. He would speak with power and authority like the prophet Elijah, challenging people to change their lives, to be ready to receive the Lord. (Luke 1: 13-17)

Zechariah asked, "How can I be sure of this? My wife and I are advanced in years." The angel rebuked him.

"I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God and have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news." He said Zechariah would be mute until the baby was born because he had not believed the message.



The congregation outside became restless, wondering why the priest was delayed. Suddenly Zechariah stumbled out, silent, trying to make people understand, by signs, what had happened.

Silent he remained after he had returned home, and silent after the couple realized that Elizabeth was pregnant. Only after Zechariah wrote down the name chosen for the new baby, "John", did he recover his speech. John means "Jehovah is gracious". His statement of faith in choosing this name ended the discipline he underwent for his early doubt.

Then Zechariah, filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke this prophecy so familiar to us from the Morning Prayer service: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people...and thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his way..." The whole first chapter of Luke is packed full of details about the two unlikely couples visited by the same angel. They are participants in God's great plan.

When John grew up, he lived in the desert, and preached about the need for repentance. He was not known to be soft on sin! John's warnings were expressed in striking language. He gathered crowds of ordinary people as well as the rich and powerful. He would take those willing to be changed down into the muddy waters of the Jordan river, and baptize them as a symbol of that change.

One day John saw Jesus approaching and pointed him out, saying, "Look! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" He reported seeing the Holy Spirit come down and rest upon Jesus. "I have seen, and I testify, that this is the Son of God."



Fr. Stanton: Two Sermons



FR. ARTHUR STANTON

From Father Stanton's Last Sermons in S. Alban's, Holborn are two sermons—one is Christmas Morning preached a century ago on Christmas morning in 1909; the other is The Last Day of the Old Year preached on December 31, 1911.

CHRISTMAS MORNING

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law."—Gal. iv. 4.

CHRIST was born on Christmas Day, so we sing and so we say. The 25th of December will do just as well as any other date. Why not? We who live under the conditions of minutes, hours, days and months and years, we must have our dates. Let it be so. Christmas Day is the 25th of December. That is man's computation—that is not God's. The date with God is this: "When the fulness of the time was come." God Who lives in eternity alone can know "the fulness of the time." And when in the eternal wisdom of God the fulness of time came for which the ages had been waiting, then that hour struck which never can be struck again, and God the SON leapt out of Eternity into Time across the hills of frankincense and the mountains of myrrh, and was born amongst us—born of a woman, was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.

And, brethren, just let me stop one moment this morning to say, mark you, "*the fulness of the time.*" God's dealings with His own people are not according to the dates of man, but according to His own dates, when the fulness of time comes. When at the marriage of Cana of Galilee our Blessed Lady spoke to Him, He said, "Mine hour is not yet come." When it had come, He turned the water into wine. And when the fulness of time comes to God's chosen people—to you who are His people—when God's time is ready, He will come. He will always come according to His own time; "He will come and save us." Remember how the Bible ends: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. . . . Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." ² It is always the same all through your life—God's time—and He will come.

And the next reflection I want you to make on the Mystery is this: that the operation of the Holy Spirit of God in the womb of the Virgin Mary was the work of the Holy Trinity. God sent forth His Son into the world by the overshadowing of the Father, by the coming upon the Blessed Virgin of the Holy Ghost. That holy Thing which was born in her womb was the Eternal Son of God. That is what we believe, and that is what we teach. God, born of a woman. That Body with which the Son of

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God hung upon the Cross and died for us was formed by God in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. There is no body created on earth but what God created it—“God giveth it a body.” The tiniest insect has the whole Trinity behind it. God formed the body of Redemption in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

And what is this practically to us?—just another pause over this.—God Himself formed the Body of the Eternal Son that He might live in time, the Body of Redemption, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. And He Who gave the Son of God a body for time can give us a body for eternity. He called Him out of eternity to live in time and gave Him a body. He calls us out of time into eternity, and gives to us, the sons of God, an immortal body. All our faith is grounded upon the Incarnation of the Son of God.

And now, lastly, for I cannot keep you this morning, they all tell you, and you read in the papers, that a great national crisis is coming upon us in the new year. Don't wince, I am not going to speak politics from the pulpit. I am not going to degrade my ministry by the introduction of politics, by turning the Altar of God into hustings, or the pulpit into a political platform. Every man must vote according to his conscience—not what I think, or any one else thinks, but what he thinks right before God. And let no man meddle with another man's conscience. But I can say this: in the interests of your heart and your soul, be for ever on the side of God, and of the family, on the side of Mary and Joseph and the Babe in the midst. Stand up and do all you can for religion in the family. It is for the mother to name for the child first the Name of God, and it is for the mother to keep the hearth and the home warm with the love of God. I would that the Mother and the Child were ever in every house ever since Mary brought into the world in her arms the Salvation of the human race. Be on the side of religion in the family. If religion dies out of the family, it dies out of the heart of man, and if the faith dies from the heart of man all is lost. And you hear ever and anon the growl of divorce, when parent is separated from parent, and the children torn away. Why, even the tigress in the jungle would resent her cubs being taken away from her. God keep away from homes the hideous outrage of divorce, we pray to-day.

And on this Christmas Day, if you are on the side of the family, and God in the family, be on the side of the poor. You know how the Bible puts it: “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Do you know it? Do you know it to-day? Ye know it. We have learnt it at Christmas. Go to the Crib and learn it, and say three Hail Marys, one in honour of the Father, one in honour of the Son and one in honour of the Holy Ghost. “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor. viii. 9). And that is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to become poor for the sake of others, and that is the love of God—make no mistake—and that is the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. Now we have the Mind of Christ. Never forget to be on the side of the poor. He Who was the outcast of Israel, at the Birth was cast out of the inn. There was no room for Him. Then at His death He was cast out of

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His own city Jerusalem. The Prince of Peace cast out of the city of peace because He was the outcast of Israel! Why should He be the outcast of Israel? Because He should gather together the outcasts. Heart to heart, Soul to soul, Saviour for sinner. "The Lord doth build up Jerusalem." How does He build it up? Not as you and I would do it, with all our grandeur and grand churches and hierarchies. How does Christ build up Jerusalem? "He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel. He healeth those that are broken in heart." That is the way He built up Jerusalem. That is the Jerusalem we love, and the outcasts are gathered in, and the broken in heart comforted. He Who "telleteth the number of the stars: and calleth them all by their names," He does that. He Who is very God of very God, Who inhabiteth Eternity, for us men and for our salvation, came down as at this time from heaven and lifts us up. Take care, then, that if you are for God and home, you are always on the side of the poor. Take care, you who are Christians, of being on the side of the home, on the side of the poor, on the side of God. God Who came down from heaven to earth that we might go from earth to heaven; God Who became a partaker of our nature that we may be partakers with His Divine Nature; God Who came down to be with us that we might go back and be with Him. Who became a dweller in time that we might live in eternity. "I go to prepare a place for you that where I am ye may be also" (S. John xiv. 3). There is your Christmas message. There is the meaning of the INCARNATION of the Son of God Who took upon Himself the swaddling bands of time.

"HE WHO IS VERY
GOD OF VERY GOD,
WHO INHABITETH
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MEN AND FOR OUR
SALVATION, CAME
DOWN AS AT THIS
TIME FROM HEAVEN
AND LIFTS US UP. "

" Amazed,
The Seraphim behold their King descend
Disguised, to this heir of crimes and woes,
And heal with His Own Hands the mangled worm,
And tell to all the world His joy, His joy,
If by that worm He be, perchance, beloved.
O'er gulfs profound I saw Him move towards me,
And tenderly, 'Ah ! why so long,' He cried,
'From My embrace thou hidest?' Near, and yet
More near Ho came, and bright and yet more bright
Out flashed the lustre of His eyes. I caught
The flame, and in that flame shall burn for ever."

Notes

- i. S. John ii. 4.
- ii. See Isa. xxv. 9.
- iii. Rev. xxii. 17 and 20.
- iv. 1 Cor. xv. 38.
- v. 2 Cor. viii. 9.
- vi. See Ps. cxlvii. 2-4.
- vii. Translated from Silvio Pellico's *Dio Amore*.

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THE LAST DAY OF THE OLD YEAR

"Commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." — 1 Pet. iv. 19.

ON the last day of the year, it is always the custom among most of us to take a sort of spiritual stock of what we are to ourselves, and what we are before God—to make it a time of reflection. I just want to say a few words about that to-day: the things which come into our mind.

First of all, there is retrospection. We look back to the year that has just gone, or just going—going—not quite gone, and our question to our hearts is, What sort of a year has it been? Has it been a sanctuary in which the goodness of God, and the Presence of God have been with us all through the year? Do you feel that? Or has it been a criminal court of accusation, in which we feel, O Merciful Saviour! as Shakespeare says-

"COMMIT THE
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—1 PET. IV. 19.

"My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain."¹

We cannot help looking back, and asking ourselves, What sort of year have we had?

Well, then, there is introspection. We look into ourselves, and search and search within our hearts to see if there has been any improvement in our lives. Are we better men and women than we were at this time last year? And we search, and search, and search, but we never seem to find really any satisfaction. So it throws us upon the Gospel strength—our only satisfaction is in the Lord our God.

Well then, again, we may say there is circumspection. We look round, and What have we done in the world? Have you brought any one nearer God, or nearer Christ? Have you helped any heart towards the destiny of life? And yet you have hands to bless, and feet that can be swift in service, and a heart that can love, and eyes through which the expression of your soul might pass on to another soul! And if your heart has been filled with the love of God, and faith, it will have come out in your life, and shine in your eyes as you looked into the other's face. What have we done? We cannot help asking ourselves this.

To-night, as you know, this church will be full—choke-full—of all the people we ought to have with us always, the people of the parish. What do they come for? Do they come because they worship or serve God? Oh! No! Don't make any mistake about that. They come because they like to see the New Year in, in church. They have a superstition that it is lucky to see the New Year in, in Church. That is all!

And then they turn on us and say, "Do you influence the masses?" "What have you done to influence the masses?" "Are the masses influenced?" "What have you done?" And what can we say? Shall we call to the hills to cover us? Shall we say, "You must wait. You must not be in a hurry. You must wait." The cannon ball goes

Fr. Stanton: Two Sermons

straight to its point, and brings destruction in a moment; but the river runs slowly, slowly, and brings blessings on its way towards the deep. That is it. And did it not take a thousand years, thousands and ten thousands, before the rocks were raised in all their beauty? Learn a lesson of the rocks, and do not be too hard upon us when progress in spiritual things seems so slow.

When will it come, the age when to their den
Rapine and lust and murder shall be scared?

Is the dream vain, that in some far-off year,
In its own saintly lustre panoplied,
Goodness shall walk this world without a fear?"

What have you done? And yet we cannot take our solace from the rocks and their ages. Rocks do not go to hell, Eternity may be piled on them, but they cannot suffer, and man may be lost!

You have thought these things. They have been in your mind. And to-night, as you sit over the embers, waiting for the old year to go out, it all comes into your mind, when you think, and think, and think—and you cannot help a man thinking to-night, can you?

And then they come and say another thing to us Christians: they say, "Well, if Christianity is really as you all are teaching it, if it really is of God and divine, why is it that it is not generally accepted? Look out over London, and see the thousands and the multitudes in their relation to the Christian idea. If it is divine, why not generally accepted?" And what is our answer to that argument? Why this, that an argument like that will bring destruction, and crush down all good custom, all that is noble and beautiful, all longing and desire for progress. It would shatter the edifice of beauty and aspiration and joy altogether. All falls if you use that argument. For instance, shall I propose: Is it good to be honest? Yes—of course. You will admit that—every one of you—that goes without saying: it is good to be honest—we admit it. But not if you use that sort of argument, for that will show honesty cannot be good because so many people are dishonest. Is temperance—to keep the body under control, to use God's gifts in moderation—is that good? Is there any one here to propose it is not good? Certainly not. Very well, but if this argument is used which is used against Christianity, temperance cannot be good, because not all people are temperate, so many people are drunken. Or, again, still further: Shall I say, who would deny amongst us that cleanliness is right? Certainly—you say—cleanliness is most desirable, and right in every respect, in all the states of social life. But you might as well argue, because so many people go about dirty, it is not desirable. The argument does not hold good in the ordinary experiences of life. Oh, you must never say, If Christianity were divine, everybody would believe it. Ah, I look for a new heaven, and a new earth, a new Jerusalem, a church beautiful, as the

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Fr. Stanton: Two Sermons

Lamb hath redeemed it.

The real matter is this, dear brethren: you know when God created us, our “Faithful Creator” He did it all. It was all of God, and nothing of man. You were not asked, when you were born. You were not asked the day that you should be born; you were not asked the country in which you should be born; you were not asked the stature which you should grow to. “Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?” (S. Matt. vi. 27). It was all of God. Not even your name that you have was asked you. God arranged all for you in your creation without your consent. Not so, in your redemption. In your redemption, don't you see, God has and will have your co-operation. You must respond. You must co-operate with God, and it is your redemption, sanctification and perfection. That is the difference.

AND THE SPIRIT AND
THE BRIDE SAY, COME.
AND LET HIM THAT
HEARETH SAY, COME. . .
. EVEN SO, COME, LORD
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OUR LORD JESUS
CHRIST BE WITH YOU
ALL. AMEN.” THE LAST
VERSE OF GOD'S WORD.

And so, all down the year that has passed, comes the message to you, “Come unto Me—Come unto Me—Come unto Me.” And the Lord calls it all down the ages. You can always hear it on the winds; in the murmur of the sea; in the rustling of the leaves. It is the Master's invitation: “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (S. Matt. xi. 2S). “And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life” (S. John v. 40). How often would I have gathered thee, but thou wouldst not come! Oh Earth! Earth!! Earth!!! hear the word of the Lord. God gave you a soul, and the soul must respond in the redemption of humanity. “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. . . . Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.” The last verse of God's word.

“How gently flow the silent years,
The seasons one by one;
How sweet to feel, each month that goes,
That life must soon be done !

Oh weary ways of earth and men!
Oh self more weary still !
How vainly do you vex the heart
That none but God can fill!

It is not weariness of life
That makes us wish to die;
But we are drawn by cords which come
From out eternity.”ⁱⁱ

Notes

i. *King Richard III*, Act V. sc. iii.

ii. Faber's *S. Philip and S. Martin*.





Robert Southwell (1561-1595)

The poem New Heaven, New War was written by Robert Southwell, a contemporary of William Shakespeare. The last four verses were set to music as *This little babe* by Benjamin Britten (1913-1976) in *A Ceremony of Carols*

New Heaven, New War

Come to your heaven, you heavenly quires!
 Earth hath the heaven of your desires;
 Remove your dwelling to your God,
 A stall is now His best abode;
 Sith men their homage do deny,
 Come, angels, all their faults supply.

His chilling cold doth heat require,
 Come, seraphim, in lieu of fire;
 This little ark no cover hath,
 Let cherubs' wings his body swathe;
 Come, Raphael, this babe must eat,
 Provide our little Toby meat.

Let Gabriel be now His groom,
 That first took up His earthly room;
 Let Michael stand in His defence,
 Whom love hath link'd to feeble sense;
 Let graces rock when He doth cry,
 And angels sing this lullaby.

The same you saw in heavenly seat,
 Is He that now sucks Mary's teat;
 Agnize your King a mortal wight,
 His borrow'd weed lets not your sight;
 Come, kiss the manger where He lies;
 That is your bliss above the skies.

This little babe so few days old,
 Is come to rifle Satan's fold;
 All hell doth at His presence quake,
 Though He Himself for cold do shake;
 For in this weak unarmèd wise
 The gates of hell He will surprise.

With tears He fights and wins the field,
 His naked breast stands for a shield,
 His battering shot are babish cries,
 His arrows, looks of weeping eyes,
 His martial ensigns, cold and need,
 And feeble flesh His warrior's steed.

His camp is pitchèd in a stall,
 His bulwark but a broken wall,
 The crib His trench, hay-stalks His stakes,
 Of shepherds He His muster makes;
 And thus, as sure His foe to wound,
 The angels' trumps alarum sound.

My soul, with Christ join thou in fight;
 Stick to the tents that He hath pight;
 Within His crib is surest ward,
 This little babe will be thy guard;
 If thou wilt foil thy foes with joy,
 Then flit not from this heavenly boy.



The Church Mouse: When Winter Comes

“How I love to nap all afternoon in my cozy mouse bed at this time of year. It really is cold outside and I am so happy to live in a warm, quiet church. So comfortable, so quiet – Wait! What’s that?”

BOOM Thump Thump Clump Clump Clump!”

Oh, It’s the children arriving for a lesson with Father Palmer. They are stomping the snow off their boots as they come in the door.

I got up out of my nest and scurried along to my listening place, underneath the radiator. The children were settling in their chairs. They said a prayer, sang a chorus, then Father Palmer announced “Today we will talk about food for your soul. You know all about food for your body. It makes you strong. It makes you grow. It even makes you better able to learn!”

One of the smaller boys put up his hand and asked, “How can we feed our soul? What is It, and where is it, anyway?”

“Your soul” replied Father Palmer, “Is not a solid thing like your body. But it’s real. It is the REAL YOU. Sometimes people make the mistake of thinking they ARE a body and the soul is some little thing added on somewhere. But you ARE a soul, and you HAVE a body. Your soul needs food of a special kind, just as your body needs food. If you do not have food, your body gets weak. If you do not feed your soul, it gets weak too. You need your soul to be wide awake and strong in order to live the Christian life; to know and love God.”

“We can feed our souls by learning about God and his love for us. We can learn about the way he designed us to live, and what pleases him. When we pray, and listen to hear his voice inside our heart, that feeds our soul. When we read the bible, that feeds our soul. It makes us better able to trust God to take care of us and lead us through life. And when you are confirmed and come to receive the Holy Eucharist, that is the best food of all for your soul.”

“Now, I want you to think about the little animals; squirrels and chipmunks and mice...”

(Mice! I was so surprised to hear him talk about us mice!)

“How do you think they get through a cold hard winter?” Those children were pretty smart and observant, I must say. They knew all about squirrels and chipmunks, who are so busy in the fall hiding food away for winter. But they didn’t know much about mice, probably because we mice are very small and take good care not to be noticed! But Father Palm-



The Church Mouse: When Winter Comes

er told them how mice like to hide away little piles of seeds in different places. “Places you might not expect,” he said, “such as in a desk drawer...”

(Oh! So he had seen that, but he had not taken it away. Perhaps he didn’t mind my putting it there.)

“When winter’s cold is hard to bear, the animals use the food they stored away to keep them strong and growing. We can store away food for our souls. We can learn things by heart and store them away in our mind. Yes, by memorizing them. Then when life gets hard, we have those good things ready to help our souls be strong and growing.” He then gave each child a paper to keep, with some verses to memorize. They took turns reading them out loud before they put on their warm clothes and went out into the snowy evening.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart.” (Proverbs 3:5)

“I am the good shepherd.” (John 10:11)

“Do not be afraid for I am with you.” (Isaiah 43:5)

“I will never leave you or forsake you.” (Hebrews 3:5)



Fr. Robert’s Remarks

to understand what they were. When I did come to understand, I was grateful that even though we had not used them, one of the favourite Advent hymns in those parishes. was *O Come, O come, Emmanuel*. This hymn is a sort of poetic collage of the antiphons.

With the exception of the antiphon for St. Thomas’ Day—O Thomas Didymus—and that for December 23rd—O virgo Virginum—the antiphons are an interesting collection of titles given to Jesus, the Messiah, adapted to prayer.

You will remember that the word “Emmanuel” means “God with us.” The antiphon for December 22nd is

O Emmanuel, our King and Lawgiver, the Desire of all nations, and their Salvation:
Come and save us, O Lord our God.

I have always been impressed that the Greek word translated as “Salvation” is related, not just to the idea of rescue from a bad situation but also to “victory” and “health”. We pray for ourselves, for the Church, and for our whole world, “come and save us, O Lord our God” that Our Emmanuel might come and save us, show forth his victory, and heal our brokenness and that of the whole world..

Till next month.

May our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ. bless you and keep you as we celebrate with thanksgiving the Feast of His Incarnation.



The Heritip by Albert Durer

Web Gallery of Art www.wga.hu

Merry Christmas

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GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD

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Fr. David—Africa Appeal

What is the point of the Africa Appeal?

As you are aware, the 'Africa Appeal' is an outreach of the Parish of St. Bride in Pitt Meadows, which is in regular contact with the ACC Dioceses and churches in Central Africa, providing financial support and encouragement to those of our brothers and sisters in Christ who live in countries where the standard of living is often dangerous and where life is often at risk from crime and corruption, but where the devotion of so many to Jesus Christ is of great importance to any who find that when in peril, there is often great solace and comfort in the promise of salvation and peace at the close of this life.

So, whilst we can so often get concerned about the changes and chances of everyday life in Canada, we can come to a deeper understanding of the great good fortune that we enjoy as we prepare for the Nativity of Jesus Christ in a peaceful and largely safe place, we can pray for those for whom the greatest gift at Christmas is the ability to worship Our Lord in church in Congo, Cameroon, South Sudan, Rwanda and Kenya, where thanks are given and praise given for the greatest gift of all, Jesus Christ, in that stable behind an inn in Bethlehem.



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The Africa Appeal

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