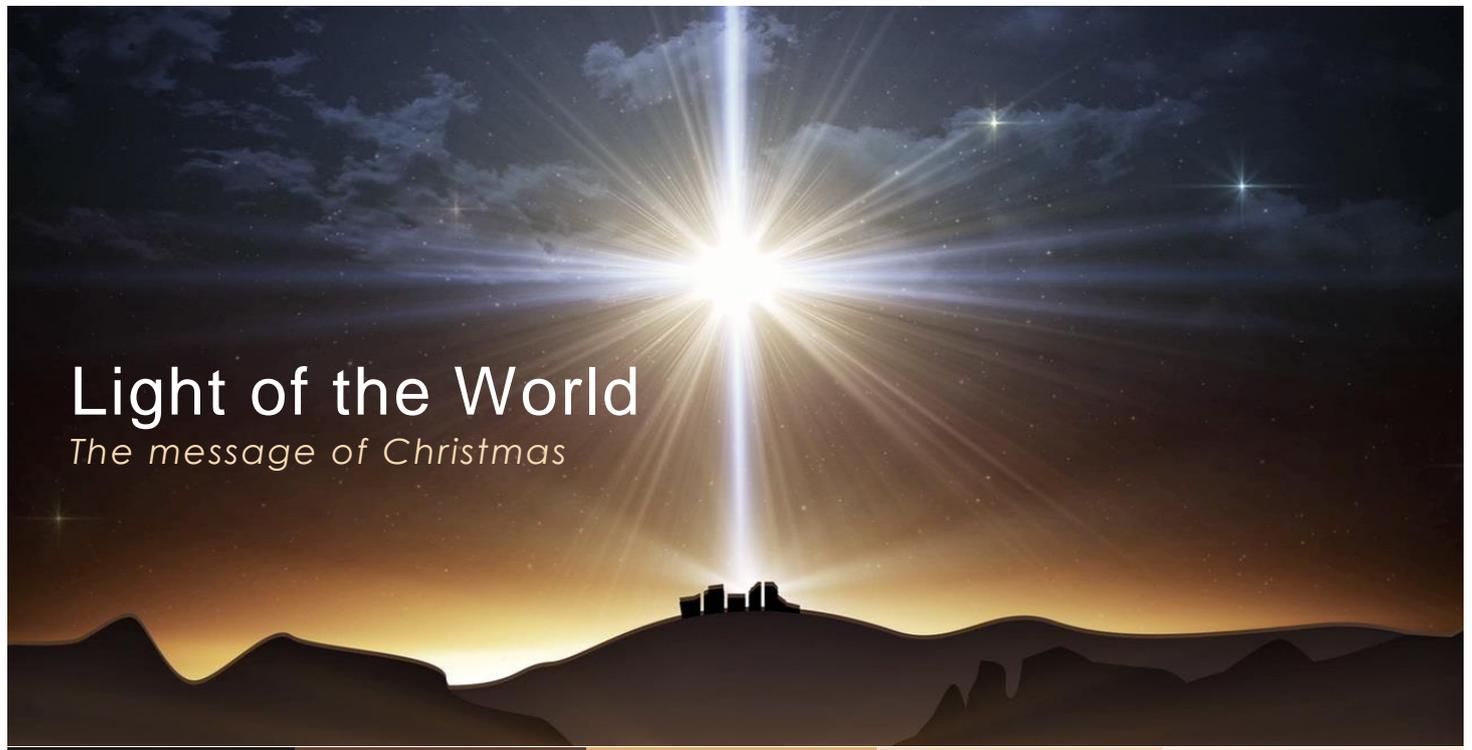


# Parish Quarterly

Our Lady & All Saints Catholic Church, Otley

[www.olasotley.org](http://www.olasotley.org)

December 2018



## Light of the World

*The message of Christmas*

I'm writing this Christmas Message as we draw to the end of Advent. We have been guided on our journey to the great feast of Christmas by the candles on our Advent wreath, the flames spiralling ever upwards. It is easy in our modern society, especially in the Northern hemisphere, to forget the importance of light: after all it's so easy just to flick a switch. Historically it was very different: light was precious and not to be wasted. It was at the centre of life.

It is not by chance that the early Christian Church chose the 25<sup>th</sup> December to celebrate the birth of Jesus. It is a symbolic time, just on the Winter solstice, when the light of nature begins to re-establish

itself after the dark days that have gone before.

It's a time of celebration not just confined to the Christian faith. Hanukkah is a Jewish festival commemorating the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt against the Seleucid Empire. It is also known as the Festival of Lights. The oil in the Temple lamp lasted for 8 full days rather than the usual 1 day, symbolising God's presence in a very special way.

Diwali is the Hindu festival of lights and is celebrated every Autumn in the northern hemisphere. One of the most popular festivals in Hinduism,

Diwali symbolises the spiritual "victory of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance."

Advent has reminded us that we are to be lights to the world. We ask God to help us bring that light of Christ to our own world through prayer and through acts of love & kindness to others. We are asked not to be distracted by lights of the world around us, calling us to a different set of values. The lights that we become, when joined together in the Christian family, magnify the True Presence of God as he reveals himself to us in His son, Jesus, who is indeed "The Light of the World".

**Father Lawrie**

# The story of the Magi - a short reflection.

Most of us remember those times from our schooldays when, as Christmas approached, we prepared our Nativity Plays. The main parts were of course Jesus, Mary and Joseph but there were supporting players, shepherds, angels and the three kings (Magi). They usually entered to the strains of the well-known hymn, "We Three Kings of Orient Are". Who are these somewhat mysterious figures and what part do they play in the Christmas story?

A good principle when reading Scripture is to ask not "is it true" but "what does it mean". This is a good example of that way of thinking. The Magi only appear in Matthew's Gospel. They are described not as kings but as "wise men" from the east who have followed a star to find the infant King of the Jews and to do him homage. Herod tried to use them to identify and eliminate one who he saw as a threat but they were warned in a

dream to avoid Herod and after visiting the mother and child they returned from whence they came by a different way. That's the outline of the story but what is its meaning and why does Matthew relate it?

Matthew was at pains in his Gospel to link the birth of Jesus to Old Testament prophecy and story. He opens the Gospel by tracing the ancestry of Jesus back to Abraham via David thus establishing his kingship and leadership credentials and quotes extensively from the Old Testament throughout the narrative. Jesus is the future Messiah for the people of Israel.

The wise men saw the star as it rose in the East and followed it until it "halted over the place where the child was". Just as Balaam saw the star of David rise (Num.7) the Magi saw the star of the King of the Jews at its rising. The link with King David is strengthened. The light of the star "filled them with delight".

The Magi represent the gentiles and just as Jesus is to be the future King of the Jews so he is to be the "light to the Nations" foretold by prophecy.

When the Magi saw the child with his mother their first reaction was to fall to their knees and do him homage. They then opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. These are strongly symbolic: gold for kingship, frankincense for deity and myrrh for suffering and death. These are all aspects of the Gospel story as it unfolds.

The wise men then return from whence they came and pass into history. There is a tradition that their names were Caspar, Balthasar and Melchior. Where they came from we are not told and there is no real evidence that they even existed but the part they played in salvation history is immense and that is what counts.

**Frank Bowe**

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## Sing the ancient Yuletide carols

2018 is a special year for Christmas Carols, with celebrations in Austria for the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first performance of "Silent Night". The poem "Stille nacht" had been written in 1816 by Joseph Mohr, a young assistant priest, who later asked the teacher Franz Xaver Gruber to write a tune for it. They performed it for the first time at the St. Nikola church in Oberndorf near Salzburg, on 24<sup>th</sup> December 1818.

Carols developed from communal songs of celebration, often sung to a dance tune. They weren't originally just for Christmas, as there were carols for other festivals such as harvest time, and even events such as the victory at Agincourt in 1415. Many carols of the kind that we would recognise today go back hundreds of years. An example is the Coventry Carol, which was part of a Mystery Play, "The Pageant of the Shearmen and Tailors", written down in 1534. It's sometimes said that the Victorians

"invented Christmas", or at least many of the traditions we have now, like Christmas trees which were introduced to Britain by Prince Albert. These even have a carol of their own, "O Tannenbaum". The Victorians certainly enjoyed a carol, and many of our favourites were composed or collected and published for the first time by them. The new carols weren't always to new tunes though. The words of "Good King Wenceslas" were written in 1853, but set to the tune of a 13<sup>th</sup> century spring carol.

Village Carols are another strand of the tradition. These are sung, mainly in pubs, in South Yorkshire and Derbyshire.



The same words may be sung to a completely different tune in each village. Kate Rusby, the Barnsley-born folk singer, describes familiar words such as "While shepherds watched" being sung to nearly 30 different tunes – including one which is more familiar outside that area with a newer set of words, "On Ilkla Moor baht 'at".

But one of the most joyful things about carols is that so many of them mention singing. It's hard to think of a better example than the third verse of "O come all ye faithful":

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in  
exultation,  
Sing, all ye citizens of Heaven above!  
Glory to God in the highest:  
O come, let us adore Him,  
Christ the Lord.

**Helen Weir**

Carol singing for the Christ-Mass is at 5:30 p.m. before 6 p.m. Mass on 24<sup>th</sup> December, 11:30 p.m. before Midnight Mass, and at 10 a.m. Mass on Christmas Day.

# Preparations for Christmas at St. Joseph's School

Christmas is always a busy time of year for the children at St. Joseph's School and this year has been no different!

## Advent

At the start of Advent, we welcomed Father into school to bless our Advent Wreaths. During Advent, each child has an Advent Angel, another member of the class, who secretly does kind deeds for them. In addition, this year we have done the reverse Advent Calendar Appeal. Each member of the school has been asked to donate one toy and one food item which has been made into different hampers to give to the Parish SVP group for them to distribute to those less fortunate than ourselves.

## Christmas Craft

Our annual Christmas Craft Day took place at the end of November. On this day, the children made decorations for the Christmas tree; calendars for the new year and Christmas cards to be sent home.

## Singing

St. Joseph's pupils have been busy singing lots of carols, old and new, at various events around Otley. The children sang at the Victorian Fayre; the Christmas Tree Festival and the Parish Christmas Party at Clitheroe House.

## School led Sunday Mass

Whenever the children lead Mass in school or Church during the week, the children are always praised for how well they read, sing and take part so we thought it would be nice for the parishioners who are unable to attend weekday Masses, to witness this on a Sunday. So, on the second Sunday of Advent, the children from St. Joseph's led Mass. It was a very special Mass and we were delighted with the feedback we received. We already have two dates in the diary for this to happen again this academic year.



## Christmas Dinner

In the penultimate week of term, the children were treated to a Christmas dinner with all the trimmings. The kitchen staff worked hard ensuring that everyone had a delicious dinner of turkey, roast potatoes, mashed potatoes, parsnips, carrots, brussel sprouts and sausages. Followed by festive ice-cream or Christmas pudding and custard – yummy!!!

## School Nativity

One of the highlights in the academic year for most primary schools is when the children perform the Nativity play. This year the children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 performed a "Magical Christmas Journey" which delighted the audience.



We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Parish for all of the support they have given the school this year and to wish everyone a very happy Christmas.

## Helena Harvey

*We are always very grateful for contributions from St Joseph's School which help to let Parishioners know something of the wide range of activities in which the children are involved.*

## Angels for Children Foundation

This summer Beth Street went back home to the Philippines for a family visit and to review the charity's work. "My family all came with me. It was 12 years since Ian, my hubby, and son Shaun had seen my family. You can imagine they were all very excited, especially my Mum!

Ian and I decided to surprise my family by renewing our wedding vows. It was a simple and very beautiful service followed by a thanksgiving party in the evening, organised by my brother and friends. We were surrounded by families & friends from near & far. It was very special!

This year saw the completion of our Angels for Children Foundation building at San Remegio Central School in Cebu. The school was badly affected by typhoon Haiyan in 2015. Our new building has three class rooms which can be used as one big room for meetings and for our school feeding



programme. Last year we had 78 malnourished children in our programme, with 70 more this year. Now, each child enjoys a healthy lunch every day of the school year.

We had travelled about 145 miles in a pickup truck for eight hours along dusty roads with sun, wind & heavy rain. It was all worthwhile when hundreds of happy children greeted us! Eliza and Sheena distributed chocolates & sweets to them. The new building has one classroom used by the ASL Deaf class. Eliza interacted with the children using her sign language skills.

We visited another primary school in Cebu, with over 600 pupils. The Head teacher is desperate to find funding for a roof on the stage & the gym. Performing in front of the whole school and village community, is a regular activity which boosts self-confidence, encourages team work and creativity.

This school has 111 "severely malnourished" children. Despite the difficulties, the children are happy and made us feel very welcome. We agreed to provide feeding for these children as a priority. Sadly, we cannot afford to provide the children with meals every day but agreed to feed them 3 days a week for which they are very grateful. We now have two primary schools with 200 children benefiting from our feeding programme." It costs **28p a day, just £15 to provide a healthy meal for a child for the whole school term.** For more information including how to sponsor a child please contact Beth Street on 07719 785986 or email us at [ask@AngelsForChildren.org.uk](mailto:ask@AngelsForChildren.org.uk) 100% of donations we receive will go directly to the projects. See our website [www.Angelsforchildren.org.uk](http://www.Angelsforchildren.org.uk) Thank you very much for your continued support & generosity. You all inspire me to keep going! Please continue to pray for our work, our mission!!

A full copy of Beth's report is available on the Parish website at [www.olasotley.org](http://www.olasotley.org)



**Next Churches Together Prayer Breakfast:**  
Methodist Church, Otley. **5th January 8am.**

A friendly gathering and simple prayer service led by New Life Church.

One of the **Advent traditions** at the Vatican is the Pope's blessing of baby Jesus statues that children bring to St Peter's Square. This year Pope Francis told the children there "When you gather in your homes in prayer before the manger, looking at the Child Jesus, you will feel amazement at the great mystery of God made man: and the Holy Spirit will give your heart the humility, tenderness and goodness of Jesus. This is the true Christmas. May this be so for you and your families."

## Visit the Parish Website

for Mass Times, News, Parish History & Events

[www.olasotley.org](http://www.olasotley.org)

## Baptisms

Jacob Michael Knaggs

William Alex Dunne

Albert Marcus Russell

Elizabeth Alice Russell

Edward James Russell

Noah Lee David Myers

Theodore Raymond Charles Walshaw

Samuel James Kilmurray

Harrison Theo Kilmurray

Blake Bryan Holmes

Daisy Sheila Taylor

Avaline Sheila Rose Gill

James Pheonix Swap

Elodie May Nicholson

Coraline Evie Nicholson

Elodie Frances Clarke

## Weddings

Ant Dwyer & Kerry Garner

## Recently Deceased

Elizabeth McLaughlin

Margaret Murphy

Bridget Ellen Curzon

Patricia Jackson

Wyn Davis

Vince Stapleton

Harry Smith

Nellie Nealon

Anne Thomas

Maura Pilkington

Sandy Guzdek

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon them.  
May they rest in peace.  
Amen*