

The Vicar Writes

Christmas Preparations



Dry stone wall builders tell me that it is important to sort the stones before carefully placing the large ones in the foundation trench and starting to build. At the start of any big venture, 'planning and sorting' are important and Christmas is a big event. Good preparation will begin with carefully deciding what will make it special for family, friends and neighbours and by identifying the really important tasks needed to achieve a successful celebration. For any great venture, it is of first importance to think ahead and sort out what we can and should do before we do anything.

Spoil-sport vicar have been heard to say that their church is more important than shops and presents! I was shocked by a new family web site containing a Christmas wish list and links to all the shops where one's wishes can be granted in exchange for hard cash. Feeling the danger of becoming a spoil-sport, I shared my misgivings with my twenty-something niece. She lives and works in London in the real world. She told me that in the past, she had been embarrassed to receive many unhelpful presents and though it would be most helpful if people could say exactly what Christmas presents they would like to receive. I've been persuaded and I am preparing my own wish list for Santa!

Those of us who are in danger of becoming grumpy old vicars do well to remind ourselves about how Jesus was accused of over indulging in food and drink and of keeping dubious company. Jesus Christ – after whom Christmas is named – suggested that, if we begin by seeking what is good in God's sight – like loving others more than ourselves – then many desirable items and events come to us as a bonus. He was no spoilsport and I am sure he would want us to enjoy his festival to the full. He challenges us, however, to sort out our priorities. Then we will enjoy all the treasures of this richly, varied and wonderful world – the world to which he came as the babe in the manger.

May you and your families and friends have a very peaceful and happy time this Christmas and be richly blessed

With Christmas greetings from Monica and myself – David