Christmas 1

Well Christmas is still with us in a New Year sort of way and some people will have already taken down tree and decorations, rather than see out the twelve nights. I must admit, I like to hang on to Christmas and savor it for as long as I can. It’s easy to feel a bit flat once festivities die down, although I do actually like the ‘quiet days’ between Christmas Eve/Day and New Year. These are days to maybe go for a walk or sit in front of the telly. They are also days where we might celebrate the Feast of St Stephen? Or the Holy Innocents? Perhaps they are days where we meet up with family we didn’t see on the big day and the Christmas meal comes out again, which I never seem to tire of. I used to find it strange in the days when I went out to work, doing shift in factory or warehouse and you went back into work the day after Boxing Day, but all the Christmas decorations were still up. It felt a weird holding together of two different things. Whatever way we celebrate Christmas and however long we celebrate it, it’s easy to just put it behind us and move on. But let’s remember a child has been born and just as we don’t forget any new born child, we don’t forget this one. Jesus came to make a difference in our lives. He came to make a difference to the world and maybe this coming new year we might try a little harder to live with that reality. Be a part of that reality that God was with us in flesh and he gave his flesh for us.

We don’t know how things went for the shepherds once they left Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger, but we do hear. ‘The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.’ They had after all seen this child the angel had told them about. The one who is ‘good news of great joy for all people:’ the one whom they are told is Saviour, Messiah and Lord. All of this must surely have made an impact on their lives, alongside the normal slog and routine of daily life. Surely for them the holding together of their heavenly experience and the news that brought, was possible to hold together when they went back to the grind, back to family and back to routine? Jesus was a holding together of two different things, divinity and humanity. God and man. This means he accompanies us in the daily wear of living with all it’s trials and demands, it’s joys and excitement and it’s sadder times. It is sad when people entrenched in the reality of the day to day, don’t feel that the good news of Jesus is working in their lives. That the saviour, is not especially saving them. Even us as Christians, who feel we have a faith in Jesus, can get entrenched in the hear and now. Jesus might seem a little distant. As distant as the Christmas holidays we leave behind, with Christmas dinners and Christmas specials on the telly. But that’s not what Jesus wants for us. Jesus wants our reality to be a reality with him in it. We hear in Galatians today. ‘because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying Abba Father!’ That sounds like a life!

May the Spirit filled heart, be our reality. May we pray for great joy to be shared in our very real world that needs the good news that Jesus is real to us. Not a fleeting visitor but someone to talk to and get to know. In the words of a Second World War RAF pilot contemplating what the day might bring, we might even say in our own trials.

‘It’s going to be a busy day O Lord, if I forget you, don’t forget me.’

And when we remember he didn’t forget, we might with the Son say Abba! Father! Our hearts filled with the reality of God with us.

Amen