



St Leonard's and Eastbourne Bugle



DECEMBER / JANUARY 21 / 22

Welcome to your Advent edition

Dear Bugle Readers,

In just a few weeks' time, we shall rejoice at the Birth of Jesus on Christmas Day. And as we move through Advent, our time of preparation for this wondrous event, we might perhaps consider what we can bring to the Crib as our gift to Jesus. Most importantly, we can show Jesus that we love Him by spending time with Him in prayer and silent adoration; in treating others as we ourselves would like to be treated; and by learning from His own words which we will find in the Gospel stories about the way He wants us to live our lives.

**'What can I give him, Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give him -
Give my heart.'** (words by Christina Rossetti 1830-1894)

It is to St. Francis of Assisi that we owe the presence of the Crib in each and every Christian church. St. Francis gained permission from the Pope to recreate the Nativity scene in a cave in the Italian village of Greccio in 1223. St. Francis then recounted the story of the 'Babe of Bethlehem' to the villagers as they gazed upon the scene. This was the very first crib. Each crib scene reminds us of the true meaning and importance of Christmas; a time to thank God for sending His Son Jesus Christ to live on Earth and show us the way to eternal life in Heaven. All too often in the world of today, the true meaning of Christmas is lost in a frenzy of consumerism and self-indulgence when Mankind seeks worldly distractions and the very existence of God is never mentioned.

May God bless you all



First Nativity scenes often attributed to St Francis who used them to help us understand what happened





An early icon of
Saint Walburga with healing
oil

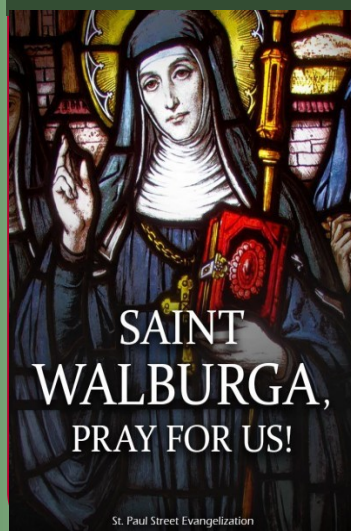
Prayer to Saint Walburga

St. Walburga,
by your blessed life of love,
God blessed you
with the power to heal,
to make whole the soul
as well as the body.
Beg for us what we cannot
obtain for ourselves,
and heal our world
of sickness and sorrow.

May God hear you,
who lived so graciously
for His glory, and send us
the healing grace we need,
through your
powerful intercession.
Amen.

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St Teresa of the Cross as a
young lady at University



Saint Walburga, Abbess

In the beautiful Parish church of St. Anthony of Padua in Rye, there is a stained glass window showing St. Walburga, dressed as a Benedictine Abbess and standing in front of a small church, with an inscription describing her as Parish Patron 1900-1928. This fine window commemorates an earlier wooden church, built on the site where St. Anthony's now stands, which was dedicated to St. Walburga.

St. Walburga was born in Devon in about 710 AD, into a deeply religious family. She was one of the 3 children of a West Saxon chieftain and her 2 brothers were called Willibald and Winebald! As a young woman, Walburga became a Benedictine nun at a monastery in Wimborne, Dorset. There, she lived according to the rule of St. Benedict, spending her time in work and prayer and praise of Almighty God as she sang the Offices of the Day with the community.

After some years in her peaceful Wimborne house of prayer, Walburga was asked by her brother Winebald to help him by bringing order and discipline to the nuns at Heidenheim in Germany, where he was struggling to manage a double monastery of monks and nuns.

It must have been a huge sacrifice for Walburga to leave her homeland and all she held dear in order to follow what she knew to be God's will, shown to her through the request of her saintly brother. And in Heidenham, she eventually became the Abbess, ruling over the entire monastery and known to have cured the illnesses of many local residents.

Walburga died in 777 in Heidenheim and was canonized in 870. Each year, in the depths of winter, oil gathers round the tomb of St. Walburga. It flows copiously in December and January, only vanishing towards the end of February. On 25th February when her feast is celebrated, her Benedictine community is blessed with oils collected from her tomb. The Abbess makes a cross on each nun's forehead as she prays, 'May God bless you with healing and strength.'

As we reflect on the life of this holy nun who followed the Will of God without hesitation, let us ask Almighty God to give us the grace to do what He asks of us, without counting the cost:- **'Loving God, you called Walburga to leave her home and follow your guidance. Help us to be open to hear your invitation each day.'**

Jesus worked miracles of healing while on earth. Through the intercession of Walburga, He continues to offer healing, consolation and strength to those who appeal to Him in their weakness.





O' Holy Night, behind the Christmas Carol

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**O HOLY NIGHT, the stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of the dear Saviour's birth;
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
'Till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn;**

Chorus

***Fall on your knees, Oh hear the angel voices!
O night divine! O night when Christ was born.
O night, O holy night, O night divine.***

**Led by the light of Faith serenely beaming;
With glowing hearts by his cradle we stand:
So, led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,
Here come the wise men from Orient land,
The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger,
In all our trials born to be our friend;**

Chorus

***He knows our need, To our weakness no stranger!
Behold your King! Before Him lowly bend!
Behold your King! your King! before him bend!***

**Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is Love and His gospel is Peace;
Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother,
And in his name all oppression shall cease,
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful Chorus raise we;
Let all within us praise his Holy name!**

Chorus

***Christ is the Lord, then ever! ever praise we!
His pow'r and glory, evermore proclaim!
His pow'r and glory, evermore proclaim!***

Around this time every year, we start to hear all those familiar Christmas carols. But how often do we really think about the messages they contain?

O' Holy Night is one of the most popular carols of the 20th century; but it was written long before then; in France in 1847 during a time when the practice of slavery was being questioned.

The movement to end slavery started in England around 1790 led by a group of Christians. They adopted this carol recognising God's commandment that "we love one another", should always lead us to respect people around us: and the birth of Jesus helped us understand that we are made in God's image & that we all deserve that respect.

The surprise of 'O' Holy Night' is that it was written by a French wine waiter & composed by a Jewish composer. Invited by his local priest to produce a Christmas poem, the wine waiter decided to write words that spoke of the justice & joy Christ's birth would bring. Later he asked his Jewish friend to set the words to music & the result was 'O Holy Night'

In 1857 people in America were also starting to reject slavery. 'O Holy Night' with its message that Christ was born to free all people from injustice & fear, contributed in a small way to the change in people's attitude to slavery & by 1865, after four years of civil war slavery was outlawed in America.

Forty-one years later an ambitious scientist on another mission – to work out how to transmit the human voice over the radio, finally found a way to transmit speech'. Up till then only coded impulses could be sent across the airwaves. On Christmas Eve 1906 he read the story of Jesus' birth from the Gospel of St Luke on the air. Then he picked up his violin & played 'O Holy Night'. The carol was the first piece of music to be transmitted over the radio! To the people listening it must have sounded miraculous!

For a third time in history 'O Holy Night' helped share the message of Christ's birth & God's call for justice. But it's important to remember this couldn't have happened without the help of a wine waiter, a Jewish composer, and an ambitious scientist. They used their abilities to share the message of God's love with the world; just as we are called to do today.



The Nativity in Art and Music



For the last two thousand years, the Nativity of Jesus in the stable at Bethlehem has been recognized as a wondrously happy event, celebrated by Christians all over the world and recorded by artists, sculptors, poets, musicians, writers and playwrights. Their works reflect the love of Mankind for the Baby Jesus, and for His Mother Mary and St. Joseph, chosen by Almighty God to be the foster father of Our Lord and Saviour. The Nativity has been a major subject of Christian art since the early Middle Ages. The artistic images, many by famous artists, are based on the Bible stories we find in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke and they bring to life for us this extraordinary scene when we picture the birth of God made Man. We are all able to see some of these great paintings in our many Art Galleries, or reproduced on Christmas cards; others we will find hanging on the walls of cathedrals, churches and houses all over the world.

If you enjoy listening to classical music, you may already have heard the sublime music of Handel's Messiah and Bach's Christmas Oratorio. Some of the greatest works by composers have been inspired by the Nativity and you will hear them sung by choirs celebrating Christmas and praising God in heavenly music. And all of us enjoy singing Christmas carols in church during Advent, on Christmas Day itself and in the days leading up to the Epiphany on 6th January.



Many poets have been inspired by the story of the Nativity of Jesus. Christina Rossetti (1830- 1894) wrote the lovely poem, 'In the Bleak Midwinter' which was set to music by the composer Gustav Holst and became a favourite Christmas carol. The great poet, John Milton (1608-1674) wrote in his poem 'On the Morning of Christ's Nativity'

**It was the winter wild
While the Heaven-born Child
All meanly wrapt
In the rude manger lies....**

One of my favourite Christmas poems, 'The Oxen,' was written by the great West Country poet Thomas Hardy (1840-1928):-

**Christmas Eve and twelve of the clock.
'Now they are all on their knees'
An elder said as we sat in a flock
By the embers in hearthside ease.
We pictured the meek mild creatures where
They dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
To doubt they were kneeling then.....**



We hope you will all enjoy discovering your own favourite pictures, poems, plays and other works of art which show the Birth of Jesus. Perhaps you will be inspired to create your own pictures and poems and to write in your own words the story of Christmas. And perhaps while you are drawing and writing, you will listen to music inspired by love of Jesus.

Images of Mary and baby Jesus through the ages

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A typical scene from 1400's showing the nurturing aspect of our Lady—reflecting the role of Mother Church for us all. Note how mature the baby looks, a common theme of this era.



This scene is from 17th Century. You can see the new rich style of painting and a more realistic depiction. The style reminding us of the majesty and authority of the Holy Mother and Son.

Notice how the journey of the art reflects the teaching and Theology of the Church during the relevant period



This fresco from the late 1800's reflects a more romanticised, softer image of the relationship between mother and child



This contemporary scene from 20th Century, shows the softer "humanity" of the relationship between Our Lady and the baby Jesus



Prepare.

by Cindy Thomas

A feeding trough in a hillside cave,
a little straw, a swaddling cloth –
A baby took his first breath
unnoticed by a town that had
no room.

Nobody knew that time had been invaded,
split in two, as human and divine
were forever fused
in flesh and bone, tissue and blood,
the fragile body of a newborn child.
Nobody knew that within his tiny chest
beat the very heart of God.

It doesn't take much to receive him.
No fanfare, no gilded cradle. He doesn't ask
to be swaddled in silk or
adorned with gold.
He only asks for a longing heart,
an earnest cry, a yearning soul
where he can grow,
human and divine forever fused
in you.



I was thinking

As 2020 comes to an end, we start our special preparations for Christmas. Listening to carols & festive songs reminds us of Christmases we've spent with family & friends. Think about all the preparations we made throughout this year - birthdays, holidays, exams! But because everything was so uncertain, most of these were spoiled. We're not used to feeling this. We're irritated if the weather predicts sun & we get rain, we're annoyed if the internet cuts out. We've got used to knowing what is happening and making plans.



But in history people have had to live with uncertainty. Many of the Bible readings we hear during Advent remind us of this. These readings from the Old Testament were written by prophets who lived hundreds of years before Jesus, in very unsettled times - war, injustice, famine & disease. People were afraid & worried and began to doubt God's love; they weren't even certain that God was there. For the prophets who lived in these times, things were different. Even when the world wobbled around them, their faith in God was strong & full of hope. The prophets listened out for God's voice & acted to guide & console. There is more to God than we can know or believe, we just have to stay faithful.

We've reached the season of Advent. A time to look back & forward to new beginnings. Almost 800 years ago St Francis recreated the nativity scene so that we could understand the many lessons God wanted to teach us through Jesus' birth. Luke told us the story through the eyes of outsiders who came from far to witness this event.

The first words spoken by the angel to the shepherds were 'Do not be afraid'. The message was a joyful one, echoed by a host of angels. God, who so many feared, had entered our world as a baby, ready to welcome everyone, ready to help us find peace. This was a new message about a new kind of saviour.

That the shepherds, the local Bethlehem boys, nobodies, were chosen to receive the message from the angels was surprising. They were terrified, but they had faith in God. When they saw the child, they repeated what they had been told about him. That they were chosen to share great news; gave them confidence & courage. The judgements others made about them didn't matter anymore; God believed in them.

After Jesus had been born at Bethlehem, wise men came from the east to worship him. Herod met with them asked them to let him know when they found the child so he could pay homage. Going to the house where the star shone down, they saw the child with his mother Mary & they paid him homage. These men were very different to the shepherds. They were wealthy & wise - but they were not influenced by power & status. They listened, watched & thought before making judgements. They recognised power-mad Herod as untrustworthy & Jesus as a true king.

Today who would we feel more comfortable with, the clever wise men who read the stars and travelled through countries to follow their dream; or the shepherds- first terrified and then delighted to follow the angel's instructions to go and pay their respects to the new-born child. Whichever we feel close to, today we are the witnesses and the watchers. The new life we bring into the world when we choose to follow the example Jesus set from the manger, is a gift from God. None of us chooses our beginnings but it is important to see what we can do with our lives as we grow up and share this with those around us; to recognise that all people are made in God's image and are worthy of welcome, love & care.



The Church Commandments

Over the past year, we have been looking at The Ten Commandments, what they mean to us and how they impact on our lives. But did you know that the Catholic Church also has “Commandments”, passed down to us by the Apostles and through the traditions of the Church. The purpose of these expectations or “obligations”, are to help us build our relationship with God, and so bring us ever closer to Him.



These obligations are seen as the minimum that is expected of us in our devotion to God, but as we know, as we grow closer to God, spending time with our Lord is no longer an “obligation” but a joy. Being aware of these laws might help us to make some New Year's Resolutions.

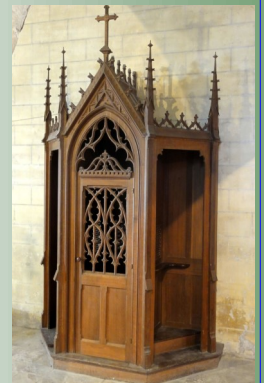
You shall attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation and rest from servile works.



We are called to celebrate Sundays as the "Lords Day", the memorial of the Resurrection of Jesus. If it is difficult to get to Mass on a Sunday (including work commitments), most Catholic Churches have a Vigil Mass on Saturday evenings which allows us to meet the Sunday obligation. Holy Days of Obligation are: Christmas Day, the Epiphany, the Ascension, Corpus Christi, Saints Peter and Paul, the Assumption of Our Lady and All Saints. We are excused from attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days if we are ill, or if we live a long distance from the Church. It is considered a serious sin if we miss Mass without a good reason.

You shall confess your sins at least once a year

Our Lord gave the Church the authority to forgive our sins in the name of Jesus. Just as we go to the doctor to heal our bodies, we have the chance to go to our priests to heal our souls and for this reason it makes sense to go to Confession regularly (once a month is good practice), but at least once a year around Easter time. A good New Year's resolution might be to consider going to Confession more frequently. Remember the story of the Prodigal Son? Heaven rejoices when we go to confession – it is how we return to God's grace. Jesus grants us forgiveness for our sins and the grace to make a fresh start, helping us little by little to become holier.



You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church

Every Friday we remember the Sacrifice that Jesus made for us by going to the Cross. It is a day for us to show our appreciation and love for Christ through making a personal sacrifice, by doing without something we enjoy. On Fridays in Lent Catholics, aged 14 and over, must not eat meat. On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday Catholics, aged 18 to 59 (inclusive), must not eat meat. If you are healthy, you are called to have only one full meal during that day and two smaller meals, with no snacking in between. People in poor health do not have to follow this law

You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church

Adults should contribute to the support of the Church, according to what they can afford.

The Christmas Presence



Remember far-off Christmases,
 when Jesus came to stay;
 When He pulled a Christmas cracker
 as He watched the Children play?
 How He sat by you at dinner,
 And He served the Christmas pud,
 And He passed the brandy butter,
 And it tasted really good?
 Remember how He asked us
 If we'd like to see His house?
 And we walked through
 Streets at midnight, each as
 Silent as a mouse.
 And inside, the choir was singing
 and the candles flickered low,
 And the children's minds were elsewhere,
 tumbling through the drifting snow.
 Remember toddling home,
 and Jesus put the children to bed?
 We left mince pies for Santa .
 "He will like that "Jesus said.
 Then we left each other presents
 And we watched the snowflakes pile.
 "I will leave you mine at Easter
 Jesus whispered with a smile.
 Remember how, next morning,
 All around the Christmas tree,
 We gave each other presents,
 one for you and one for me?
 And now we share our
 Christmas with children who have grown,
 Who celebrate Christ's birthday
 with children of their own.
 He shares their Christmas dinner.
 Their presents may be different
 But His gift is just the same.

Our thanks to Teresa Collins for sharing this lovely poem with us



A Christmas Quiz



Joseph and Mary

- 1 Who told Mary and Joseph to go to Bethlehem?
- 2 True or False: Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus because they were following a star.
- 3 What form of transportation did Mary and Joseph use to get to Bethlehem? The answer is not a taxi cab.

Jesus

- 4 Which Old Testament prophet had the most to say about the birth of Christ?
- 5 In the accounts announcing the birth of Christ (Matthew 1 and Luke 1 and 2) how many times did an angel or angels appear?
- 6 Who told Joseph the baby's name was to be Jesus?
- 7 Can you list 5 names of Jesus found in the Bible? Some on my list are from Old Testament prophecies.
- 8 What are the meanings of the names Jesus and Emmanuel?

Shepherds and Wise Men

- 9 The shepherds and the wise men went to see Jesus. Which group followed a star and which group went to find the baby because an angel told them where to look?
- 10 What did the angels sing to the shepherds?
- 11 When the shepherds went looking for Jesus, what was the sign they were to look for?
- 12 How many wise men or kings or magi came to see Jesus?
- 13 Matthew 2:8 says that Herod asked the wise men to inform him where the baby Jesus was. Why does this verse say he wanted to know?
- 14 How old was Jesus when the wise men found him?

For answers see back page

Just for fun





Helping our youngsters to understand what it means to be Saints in today's world

Answer to Christmas Quiz

- 1 Caesar Augustus. He ordered the people to go back to the city of their forefathers. Joseph's family was from Bethlehem. Luke 2:1.
- 2 False. As in the previous answer, they went not because an angel told them or because a star led them. They were obedient to the established governmental authority.
- 3 The Bible does not say how they went from Galilee to Bethlehem. It was an 80 mile trip for them. It is likely that they rode some type of animal, but the Bible gives no details. It is commonly depicted that Mary rode a donkey while Joseph walked along side. But that is simply an artistic depiction. We don't really know.
- 4 The book of Isaiah has much to say about the birth of the Saviour. If you have ever heard the oratorio by George Handel called The Messiah, you have heard many direct quotes from the book of Isaiah concerning the birth of Christ.
- 5 At least 3 angelic announcements for the birth of Christ and 1 for the birth of John. For Christ an angel appeared before Mary and Joseph individually and a multitude of angels spoke to the shepherds. For John's birth announcement in Luke 1 Gabriel appeared before John's father to announce the birth of John the Baptist. Matthew 1:20-24; Luke 1:11-20; Luke 1:26-38; Luke 2:9-15.
- 6 An angel in Matthew 1:21. The Bible does not say that this was Gabriel; however, it is assumed to be him since he was the one specifically mentioned as the messenger to Mary and Zacharias in Luke 1.
- 7 Jesus, Emmanuel, the Christ, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:21, 23.
- 8 Jesus means Saviour and Emmanuel means God with us. Jesus is the same name as the Old Testament name Joshua which also means Saviour. Matthew 1:21, 23.
- 9 The shepherds followed the instructions of the angels in Luke 2:9-15. The wise men followed the star to find the place where Jesus was. Matthew 2:1, 2.
- 10 Technically angels are never said to "sing" in the Bible. Each time they appear they only speak. However, to answer the question, the angels praised God with these words: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Luke 2:14.
- 11 A baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. Luke 2:12.
- 12 The Bible does not say how many wise men there were. Tradition says there were three because of the three gifts. There are even names given to the three wise men in different countries and cultures, but we don't really know their names. It is also very likely there were many more than just three.
- 13 So that he could worship the child. But we know that his intentions were far from worship. Matthew 2:11-18.
- 14 It is certain that Jesus was somewhere between a month old and a couple of years old. The wise men saw His star at his birth and began following it. If the journey was 500 miles from Persia and Mesopotamia (around modern day Iraq) then it would have taken at least a month. By the time they arrived Jesus and His family had moved into a house. Later in the story Herod ordered all the children aged 2 years and younger to be killed. Therefore, Jesus was at least a month old and not yet 2 years old. Matthew 2:9-18.

Our thanks and heart felt appreciation go to the contributors in this months edition:
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