

A Happy New Year from the Vicarage ...



There is a Lancashire saying with which many will doubtless be familiar – it is the one referring to things which ‘only happen once every Preston Guild’! Well I guess we all will need to be ready for such events happening this year, as it precisely that – the year of the Preston Guild!!

This is a tradition which has been running every 20 years since 1179 when King Henry II granted a royal charter to Preston’s traders. I was fortunate enough to participate in the last Guild, processing with local churches – it was a wonderful occasion. It doesn’t seem like 20 years have passed since then – but, alas, time marches on and it is indeed ‘Guild Year’ once more.

So we now ‘leap’ into a new year – with February’s extra day for good measure – and we may look forward with renewed faith and courage, as we are reminded once more of the gift we have all received from our heavenly Father – the precious gift of His Son – celebrated with much joy over Christmas.

At the beginning of Advent we delivered leaflets to every home in the parish (at least that was our aim which was mostly achieved). In these we advertised our Advent/Christmas services and have been rewarded with good numbers at each. Many thanks to all who took upon themselves the task of walking the parish streets to make these deliveries – and to all who responded so positively. It was a particular delight when we were invited to take some carollers to sing for and with the residents at two local housing complexes – the singers enjoyed these opportunities as much as the residents to whom we sang.

Once again the church was taken over by Ansdell Primary School pupils and staff when they came along for their end-of-term Carol Service and Nativity. Despite the injection of a host of ‘emergency chairs’ from the hall; it was still ‘standing room only’ for those who

couldn't arrive early! To see every pew filled, the choir stalls packed and the back of church jammed with those unable to find seats was amazing! The children did themselves proud and were a credit both to their school and to their parents.

Of course, we then had our Crib Service at which the children from our Thursday evening congregation treated us to a twist upon the traditional story-line – giving an insight as to the Innkeeper's perspective. It was a lot of fun whilst still getting the message across in a meaningful way. The final scene around the crib by candlelight remains one of the most moving imaginable – well done to all involved.

We may also reflect at this time upon the year now ended – and there is much for which we may be thankful. Certainly, I feel it is important that I thank all of you who have supported me in my ministry here – which resulted in my appointment as Vicar. My thanks go to all the church management team – to the wardens, treasurer/secretary, vergers, PCC members, Readers, Pastoral Assistants, organist, choir, sides-people, Uniformed Group leaders, MU members, flower arrangers, cleaners, gardeners, providers of refreshments and everyone who offers support through fund raising efforts, transporting others and the volunteers in the shop. Thanks too to everyone for your prayerful support – especially anyone who, perhaps, is no longer able to be with us on a regular basis.

God bless ... and have a wonderful year,

Your Vicar,
Fr D.