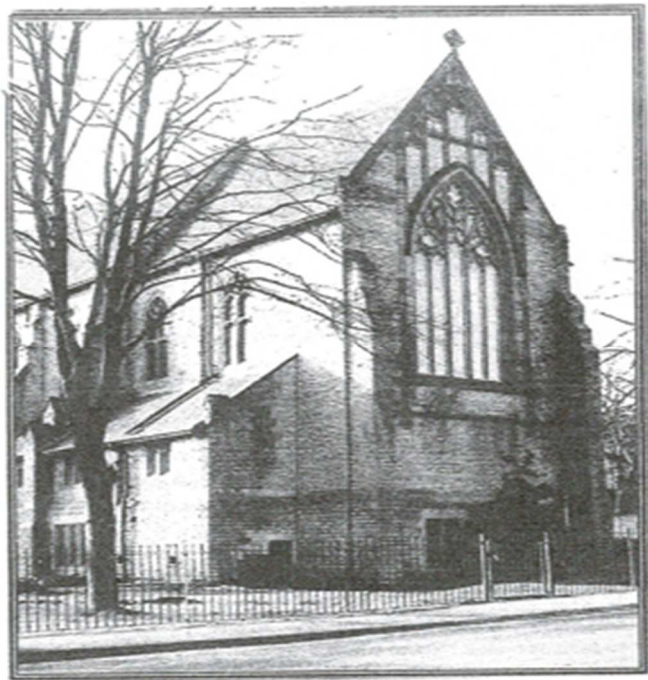


PARISH MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2021



**St. Augustine and St. Aidan
Tonge Moor and Hall i' th' Wood
30p**

Parish Priest - Father Tony Davies

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Dear friends

With the coming of the month of December, we find ourselves in the Church's wonderful season of Advent. It takes its name from the Latin for "coming", and refers, of course, to the coming of God-made-flesh, Jesus, at Christmas.

Advent is a time of preparation: the time for celebrations is not yet with us. We prepare for that celebration in many ways: presents are bought, houses are decorated (though hopefully not too early), food and drink are brought in for the festivities.

But an even more important preparation takes place within our hearts. The last Sunday of the Church's year was observed as Christ the King; Advent Sunday marked the beginning of the new liturgical year. Advent is an opportunity for us to take stock of ourselves, in readiness to welcome Jesus afresh into our hearts at Christmas as our King and loving Saviour.

The Incarnate Word of God came into the world as a human being not in the might expected by the Wise Men, nor in the power expected by the People; but in a cowshed behind an inn in a run-down village not far from Jerusalem. Amid the glitter and noise of our modern Christmas celebrations, it's worth recalling that the humble birth of our Lord Jesus was anything but glittery and noisy. God came into the world almost unnoticed, but that coming changed the world for ever.

Too often, the world assumes - and expects - that only brashness and loudness will change things, or get things done. The circumstances of God's coming challenges that notion and challenges us to reconsider our own attitudes. During this Advent we are challenged to put aside our ego and the masks which we often wear to kid the world (and sometimes ourselves).

This Advent, let us prepare ourselves to approach the coming celebration of Christmas with humility and - like the shepherds - with awe. May God show us how our lives can be amended so that our hearts provide a fitting throne on which Christ the King may

reign, and that we celebrate Christmas with true joy and happiness - glitter and noise included!

With my prayers for a peaceful and holy Advent, and - when it comes - a joyful and Merry Christmas.

Fr Tony

CHRISTMAS IN THE PARISH

Christmas Day is always a glorious and wonderful celebration of the Saviour's birth, but this year it falls on a Saturday, which - on a practical level - has led us to make a few adjustments to our usual calendar of events.

Service of Nine Lessons & Carols

Usually, this celebration of Christmas in scriptural readings and Christmas Carols is held actually *in* the Season of Christmas, on the first Sunday after Christmas Day. This year, however, this would be St Stephen's Day (better known by its secular title of Boxing Day). Since it is unlikely that many would wish to venture out twice that day (after fulfilling our duty to attend mass in the morning), it has been decided to hold the Nine Lessons and Carols on Sunday 12th December at the usual time of 3.00pm.

Christingle

This wonderful service of light, celebrating Christ, the Light of the World, and during which funds are raised to support the Children's Society, would normally have been held the afternoon we are now celebrating the Nine Lessons and Carols. This year, then, we are combining the Christingle with Messy Church on Saturday 18th December, beginning at 11.00am after the said mass at 10am.

Messy Church and Christingle are open to everyone, and this combined activity is also open to everyone. There are fun and engaging activities to begin with, and after we have been up into church for the Christingle celebration itself, we will return to the Parish Hall for some lunch.

Leaflet Distribution

We are delivering leaflets around the Hall i'th' Wood area as usual on Monday 20th December, meeting at St Aidan's at 7.00pm. The leaflets will advertise all the Parish's Christmas events, particularly.....

St Aidan's Carol Service

This is being held on the Wednesday before Christmas (22nd December) at 7.30pm, back again following its unavoidable cancellation last year. It is a more informal Carol Service than the Nine Lessons & Carols, and we often attract a family or two from the surrounding estates (hence the importance of the leaflet distribution). Join us singing Christmas Carols, and for the mince pies and mulled wine the follow!

Christmas Celebrations

Midnight Mass is at St Augustine's at 11.30pm on Christmas Eve. During the mass the Christmas Crib in the Lady Chapel is completed and the First Communion of Christmas is received.

Mass of Christmas Day will be celebrated at both St Aidan's (9.00am, when the Christmas Crib will be completed), and St Augustine's (10.30am).

All Christians should attend church and receive the Sacrament at least once on Christmas Day.

Holy Family The day following Christmas Day, despite being Boxing Day, is a Sunday and so is still a day of obligation for Christians. Sunday masses are as usual.

LITTER PICKING

Join us on Saturday 4th December as we venture out into the parish to clear litter from some of its streets, putting into practice our understanding of God's love for all people and our part in expressing that love. We meet in the Parish Hall at around 10.30am, following the 10.00 said mass, and return around 12 noon. All equipment is provided.

LIVING IN LOVE AND FELLOWSHIP

Society's understanding of Human sexuality is changing, and this is not going away. Whether we consider this to be a good thing or not does not change the reality. The Church is also having to grapple with what this means - both in terms of our relationship with the society within which we operate and which we seek to serve, and also in terms of those within the Church who feel their sexual identity is misunderstood, marginalised or even not recognised.

To help parishes engage with these issues a study course has been prepared, entitled *Living in Love and Faith*. This is not intended as a means of converting people to a more liberal or "woke" point of view, but making us more aware of the issues involved, and to recognise the pain that we - and the Church in general - may have inadvertently caused in the past. The subtitle to the course is: "Christian teaching and learning about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage."

Issues of human sexuality have always been sensitive, and are particularly so in today's social climate, which is why it is perhaps even more important that we engage with this process. We will be holding 5 sessions as we follow the course, at 7.00pm on Sundays 5th and 12th of December, and 2nd, 9th, 16th January. The course acknowledges that these issues are very personal, and that there are disagreements about them in the church today:

the course sessions will be conducted in a spirit of Christian generosity, and mutual respect and love.

The course booklet is available for £5. Please let me know if you would like one.

Fr Tony

COMMUNION BEFORE CONFIRMATION

It is some years since we had youngsters admitted to Communion before Confirmation, but this year we have four candidates who are being prepared for this important stage in their Christian journey over the past couple of months.

They will be admitted to Communion on Sunday 19th December, and as the name of the rite suggests, it is intended that they will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation at a subsequent date, usually in their mid-teenage years. Please pray for them as their preparations draw to a close and they prepare to receive the life-giving Sacrament of Christ himself.

Fr Tony

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

This Solemnity, commemorating the Our Lady's own conception, is on Wednesday 8th December, and will be celebrated with a Sung Mass at 7.30pm, which everyone is encouraged to attend.

Fr Tony

TOY SERVICE

Each year we support the work of the Bolton Lions in providing toys to the less-fortunate children in the town. We are inviting members of the congregation and others to consider donating one or more new toys to be donated to this very worthwhile cause.

Our Family Service on Sunday 12th December will double as our Toy Service, during which the toys so generously donated will be handed over to a representative of the Lions. Please leave the toys unwrapped, so that the age (and sex) of the recipient can be more clearly determined. Thank you.

Fr Tony

100 CLUB NEWS

The eighth monthly draw was in the Parish Hall on Sunday 7th November 2021.

First Prize Number 85 – Margaret Mullen - wins £25
Second Prize Number 49 – Colin Johnson - wins £15
Third Prize Number 16 – Elsie Hollinrake - wins £10

The ninth draw for this term will be on Sunday 5th December 2021, in the Parish Hall

If you are not a member contact David or Ruth Taylor to be allocated a number just £12 a year. Also to renew and/or take on a new number

Churches Together in Tonge Moor

There will be a meeting via Zoom on Tuesday 14th December, where we will plan the Service for World Prayer for Christian Unity set for January 23rd. We will also be setting some dates for services/events for next year. If you would like to join us at the meeting and would like the Zoom link, or if you have any idea of what you would like to happen over the next year do let Fr Tony, David or Ruth know.

Tonge with the Haulgh Community Choir



Christmas Concert

Tonge with the Haulgh Community Choir would like to present their Christmas concert, **Sunday 19th December at 3pm** at St Augustine's Church. They will sing the world premier of their very own song written by the choir's extremely talented pianist, the fabulous Helen Walker, called While we sing plus many other songs and there's even some audience participation carols at the end. Please join us afterwards for coffee and mince pies in the church hall. This is a free event and is the choir's first public performance since the pandemic started, please come along for an afternoon of fun. We kindly request that to keep everyone safe that you wear a mask when entering church and hand sanitizer will be provided.

Keep Tonge Moor tidy!
**Join us on the first Saturday of
each month**



**We will meet after the 10am Mass
approx 10.30am in St Augustine's
Parish Hall.**

**Grabbers, bags
High viz jackets provided.
Do as much as you feel able!
Meet back at The Parish Hall for Brew
& Bikkies approx 11.30am**

The next litter pick date is Saturday 4th December



CHRISTMAS
FAIR

Saturday 27th November 2021 11.00am - 2.00pm

At the time of writing this event hadn't taken place. An article with results will appear in the January edition.

CHURCH CLEANING

There is a small group of parishioners who give up a morning each month. Apart from the cleaning they have tea/coffee, biscuits and social chat as well,



The next date for cleaning is
27th December 2021.
Meeting at 10.00am.

Many hands make light work!

The date/time could be subject to change, but usually decided by the Sunday, the day before, and is coordinated by Lilian Schofield 01204 303137. Check with the church's Facebook group.

Mothers Union *Annual Christmas Meal*

Percivals the Caterers have been booked for our annual Christmas meal to be held at

St Augustine's Parish Hall

Wednesday 12th January 2022

7.00pm for 7.30pm



The cost is £23 for a 3 course Festive Dinner (Vegetarian option available)

Tea/coffee & After Dinner mints
Do feel free to bring your own drinks

Names and deposit to Ruth Taylor as soon as possible, also please let us know who you want to sit near so a seating plan can be arranged.



*Messy Church is back!
Do come and join us*

Build your own Christingle
and find out the story behind them

**Saturday
18th December
2021
11am - 1pm**



St Augustine's Parish Hall

- Whatever your age – come and enjoy being creative!
- Join us for activities, crafts, and a short period of worship then a simple meal.
- Children will need to be accompanied by an adult at all times.
- There will be a collection in aid of The Children's Society



Last month we held our AGM. Barbara Davis, Ruth Taylor and myself were elected unopposed as, Secretary, Treasurer and Branch Leader.

This month our meeting will be on Wednesday 15th December, at 2.00pm. This will be our seasonal afternoon when we will be watching a film.

The MU Diocesan Advent Service will be held on Thursday 2nd December at St. Ann's Church, Manchester. The service starts at 1.30pm and refreshments will be served afterwards.

MU subs will remain at £25 for 2022.

With the changes made to Deaneries we are now in the Bolton Deanery. Ruth Taylor is Bolton Archdeaconry President and Pauline Greenhalgh (St. Peter's Belmont) is Deanery Leader.

There will be one craft afternoon this month on Monday 13th at 1.30pm

Our Mothers Union Festive Parish Meal is on Wednesday 12th January 2022.

The MU Christmas film afternoon is back!



We will be watching the Miracle on 34th Street, at our meeting on 15th December.

We have a choice of the 1947 original with Maureen O'Hara and Natalie Wood, or the updated 1994 version with Richard Attenborough and Mara Wilson.

If you have a preference of which version you would like to see do let Elsie or Ruth know.

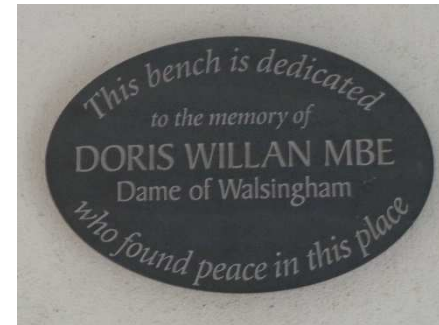
We will of course have light seasonal refreshments and tea/coffee or a glass of wine.

Everyone is welcome to join us. We hope to see you there.



Walsingham News

The memorial plaque for Derek and Doris Willan in our Lady Chapel was blessed at the end of October and looks very splendid indeed.



Since we had our Parish Pilgrimage at the end of August, a plaque has been placed above the seat, given by Doris' family, in the Shrine garden tower. I'm sure everyone will agree the wording couldn't be more appropriate.

The 'Pilgrimage Season' at the Shrine has really come to an end for 2021 although the accommodation remains open for several more weeks. A small group of us were "down there" for a few days at the end of November and we coincided with the week-end Adoremus Pilgrimage, which is for young adults (age 18 – 35), with many coming to Walsingham for the first time. We may have felt significantly over the age-limit but it did mean we had a Saturday evening outdoor Candlelight Procession of the Image of Our Lady of Walsingham – almost unheard of at the end of November. We were also very fortunate to coincide with the Solemn Mass of Thanksgiving at St Mary's Parish Church for the 100th Anniversary of Fr Alfred Hope Patten's Induction as Vicar of Walsingham in 1921. In addition Bishop Norman Banks, former Vicar and now

Bishop of Richborough, was the Chief Celebrant and Preacher at the 11am Sung Mass on the Feast of Christ the King. Not bad for our five day visit!

I handed £78.00 to Sr Carol for the Priory's Charity of the Year from sales of the calendar and notelets which many of us bought. She and Sr Angela were delighted and they send their thanks to us. The designated charity changes from the beginning of Advent so it will be interesting to see how much money has been raised for Tariro and what they choose next.

Our regular pilgrims have known Carol Wake, part of the Refectory staff, for many years. She retires later this month and will be very much missed by colleagues and pilgrims alike. She is a very hard act to follow.

The list for our special 75th Anniversary pilgrimage next year will be at the back of our churches very shortly (if not already!). Dates and anticipated cost are on them so do get your initial deposit paid to have a place on the list. Elsie will be delighted to be contacted if you want more details. Cheques made payable to 'Walsingham Fund' or cash in an envelope (ideally marked with your name and the amount inside) may be handed to Elsie or Linda.

We don't have a formal Cell meeting in December but there will be light refreshments following the 7.30pm Sung Mass on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Linda Parkington

First Impressions of General Synod

I had packed our ancient copy of the London A-Z "just in case", and, having arrived at Euston station I set out to walk to Russell Square. Google maps was doing something strange, so I resorted to peering over the top of my glasses at the A-Z under a rather dim street light.

I found the hotel eventually, telling myself to remember that it's all a lot further on foot than it looks on the map.

Monday 15th was an Induction Day. I attended a session on 'A church which is younger and more diverse' led by a group of 12-17 year-old teenagers that had been dropped in it as the team meant to be leading it were stuck in traffic.

After lunch, we had an introduction by the Secretary General, were taken through the role of a Synod member, and were reminded that we are representatives, not delegates. Helpful directives were given regarding speaking etiquette, and that a request to speak has to be submitted on-line with an outline of what you intend to say. We were also cautioned on the use of social media, not that I really understand what 'tweeting' is.

There was a presentation on "Living in Love and Faith", followed by one on the Synod legislative process where we were told about the differences between Measures, Canons, Secondary Legislation and Acts of Synod. We were then introduced to the electronic voting system, which involves a handset rather like a bank card reader. There was an entertaining mock debate in which we had to vote, followed by a session on how to stand and ask questions. After an act of worship, we all left.

I had been invited to a service and a meal at Our Most Holy Redeemer in Clerkenwell. Looking in the A-Z it wasn't far from the hotel. After some time, I arrived at the church, again reminding myself that it's all a lot further...! When I asked

someone how they had got there, the answer was “we took a taxi”.

Tuesday 16th was Inauguration Day at Westminster Abbey. The most I could see in the flesh was the top of a couple of mitres and the processional cross. Back in the Assembly Hall, the Archbishop of Canterbury welcomed the Duke of Wessex with the words “Welcome, Your Royal Highness ... Welcome, Your Royal Highness, well I guess I have welcomed His Royal Highness”.

There followed various other welcomes, the Presidential Address, a report by the Business Committee, a request from the Bishop of Sheffield regarding generosity between dioceses, and then questions. Another important point to remember is that if you have to leave the hall during questions, check what letter is above the exit *before* you leave. The hall is round and most of the doors look the same.

Wednesday 17th started with worship, followed by the Loyal Address given by Archbishop of Canterbury. There followed a Diocesan Synod motion regarding the Wealth Gap between the Rich and the Poor, the budget apportionment for 2022, a Vacancy in See report, and an appointment to the Archbishop’s Council.

After lunch there was a Vision and Strategy presentation, followed by a report from the Governance Review Group. Farewells were made to four retiring members and Synod was then prorogued until January 2022.

Pam Davies

How Father Christmas got where he is today

One person you are bound to run into this Christmas season is Father Christmas. If he looks tired, just remember that he has been around a long time and gone through a lot of transformations.

Father Christmas wasn’t always the red-suited, white-bearded star of the retail trade that he is today. He began life as Nicholas, born way back about AD260 in Patara, an important port on the southern coast of what is now Turkey. When his parents died and left him a fortune, Nicholas gave it away to the poor. He became a bishop of the nearby city of Myra, where he almost certainly suffered persecution and imprisonment at the hand of the Roman Emperor Diocletian.

Nicholas was a serious theologian: he was a participant at the First Council of Nicaea, which formulated the Creed which we still say today. He even, reportedly, slapped another bishop in a squabble over the exact nature of the Trinity.

Nicholas died in Myra about AD343, but the stories of his generosity and kindness were just beginning. One enduring tale tells of the three girls whom he rescued from certain prostitution by giving them gold for their dowries. When the father confronted him to thank him, Nicholas said he should thank God alone.

In the UK, Nicholas became the basis for Father Christmas, who emerged in Victorian times as a jolly-faced bearded character. Meanwhile, Dutch and German settlers had taken him to America with them as Sinter Klaas and Sankt Nicklas.

It was in America that Nicholas received his final two great breaks into real stardom. The first was when the Rev Clement C Moore, a New York Episcopal minister, turned from his lifework of writing a Hebrew/English lexicon, to write a fun poem for his children

one Christmas. His 'The Visit of St Nicholas' is now universally known by its first line: 'T'was the Night Before Christmas'.

From Clement Moore we discovered that St Nicholas is round and pink-cheeked and white-bearded, and that he travels at night with sleigh, reindeer and a sack of toys on his back. It was Clement Moore who also revealed that St Nicholas enters houses down chimneys and fills children's stockings with toys and sweets.

So how did we find out that Father Christmas wears red? That was the US Coca-Cola advertising campaign of 1931, who finally released the latest, up-to-date pictures of Father Christmas: wearing a bright red, fur-trimmed coat and a large belt.

These days, it is good that Father Christmas uses reindeer and doesn't have to pay for petrol. In order to get around all the children in the world on Christmas Eve, he will have to travel 221 million miles at an average speed of 1279 miles a second, 6,395 times the speed of sound. For all those of us who are already exhausted just rushing around getting ready for Christmas, that is a sobering thought.

Christmas throughout the Christian world

For nearly four weeks leading up to Christmas Christians recognise a period called Advent. It means 'coming'. It is a time of spiritual preparation. 'Coming' refers to Jesus' first coming as a baby, but it also looks forward to a day when Jesus is expected to return in triumph at His 'second coming' to establish perfect justice and a new order of peace.

Originally Christians marked Advent as a time when they refrained from excessive eating and drinking. Then Christmas Day reintroduced them to the joys of feasting. Christmas celebrations lasted for 12 days, with gifts exchanged as a climax at Epiphany

(6th January). Today, however, Advent is more likely to be associated with accelerating festivity, with the days following Christmas something of an anti-climax until 'twelfth night', on which decorations are removed. Many Christians worldwide are trying to revive the spirit of Advent by setting aside time to pray and address global poverty.

Christmas Day is celebrated as the anniversary of Jesus' birth, although the actual date is not known. Most Christians celebrate it on 25th December. However, the Orthodox Church (the ancient churches in Eastern Europe and parts of Asia) follows a different calendar and celebrates on 7th January. Christians make a point of taking communion on Christmas Day. Many make it the first thing they do as the clock strikes midnight.

On 6th January the Christmas festival continues with a celebration of Epiphany, which means 'the appearance'. Christians remember the visit of wise men (magi) to Jesus, bringing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. The Christmas tradition of exchanging gifts originally honoured these men, who were the first non-Jews (Gentiles) to worship Jesus. It forms a reminder that in Jesus God was giving Himself for the benefit of the entire world.

Orthodox Christians use this day to recall the baptism of Jesus as a grown man. The significance of Jesus being baptised was that He identified Himself with human beings in all their need. They mark the day by praying for God's blessing on rivers, wells and water sources.

Christmas has never been just an escapist festival for Christians. Those who treat it seriously recognise that not all the world is able to face the days with frivolity or joy. The day after Christmas, Boxing Day, was historically marked as the feast of St Stephen. He was the first man to be put to death rather than give up his belief that Jesus was God.

And two days later a day remembering the Massacre of the Innocents recalls Herod's attempt to destroy Jesus by killing all male babies in Bethlehem. Although not so widely marked as Christmas Day, it gives Christians the opportunity to pray for children in today's world who suffer as a result of the actions of adults.

And there were shepherds...

Luke's story of the birth of Jesus is brilliantly told - the angel's visit to Mary to tell her she would be mother of the long-promised Messiah, the old priest in the Temple told by another angel that his wife would have a son to be called 'John', who would prepare the people of Israel for that event, and then Mary and Joseph making the 60 mile journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, as required by the Roman census. When they got there, no room at the inn, and they settled instead for a convenient stable, where Mary gave birth to a boy child.

Suddenly, Luke changes the tone. 'And there were shepherds ...' - that's what he actually wrote, just like that. 'And there were shepherds', doing exactly what shepherds do, looking after their flocks by night. But this night was different: yet another angelic message - a call to abandon their sheep and go into Bethlehem to see the baby Messiah. They were given directions and a 'sign' to identify Him. He would be lying in a feeding trough. Well, at least they would recognise that.

And why the shepherds, in this glorious story of our salvation? Because the event needed witnesses, and the chosen witnesses would be this bunch of scruffy, smelly shepherds straight from the sheep-pen. Nothing could speak more eloquently of God's purpose than that. This was not a Saviour for the strong, rich and powerful, but for everybody. The carpenter and his wife guarded the Saviour of the world, and the very first witnesses were not kings or priests but a handful of shabby shepherds.

Why the world was ready for Christmas

Ever wonder why Jesus was born when He was? The Bible tells us that "when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son..." The Jewish people had been waiting for their Messiah for centuries. Why did God send Him precisely when He did?

Many biblical scholars believe that the 'time had fully come' for Jesus because of the politics of the time. The Roman Empire's sheer size and dominance had achieved something unique in world history: the opportunity for travel from Bethlehem to Berwick on Tweed without ever crossing into 'enemy territory' or needing a 'passport'.

For the first time ever, it was possible for 'common' people to travel wide and far, and quickly spread news and ideas. And all you needed were two languages - Greek to the east of Rome, and Latin to the west and north. You could set sail from Joppa (Tel Aviv) and head for any port on the Med. And the Roman roads ran straight and true throughout the empire.

So, the Roman Empire achieved something it never intended: it helped spread news of Christianity far and wide for 400 years. After that, the Empire crumbled, and the borders shut down. Not until the 19th century would people again roam so freely. The time for Jesus to be born, and for news of Him to be able to travel, had indeed 'fully come'.



How do you know when
it is time to give up driving?



When your dog has this look
on his face!

Catch and Release

A Short Story based on Luke 5:1-111

by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson

<http://www.jesuswalk.com/luke/catch-and-release-luke-5.htm>

[Audio \(7:51\)](#)

Crowds on the stony beach at Capernaum are listening intently. Not a sound except the gentle lap-lap of the water, and Jesus' strong voice carrying across the water from his position in a fishing boat bobbing slightly, twenty or thirty feet from shore.

Now the teaching is over, and the people are beginning to disperse. Jesus turns to Peter, who owns the boat, and makes a request, almost a command: "Put out into the deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

What? What does this landlubber know about fishing? Peter says to himself. The best fishing on the Sea of Galilee is done is at night. And lately, even night fishing has been a disaster! But Peter bites his tongue and replies evenly:

"Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

Peter pulls the anchor that has held them just off shore, and hoists the sail so that it catches the breeze. The ship slowly picks up speed until they are out in the deeper parts.

Now the sail comes down and Peter becomes the paragon of efficiency. He'll show Jesus how *real* fishermen do things -- even if they don't catch anything. One end of the net goes over the side, and Peter and his crew play out the long net until it is extended full length, floats bobbing on the surface. Now he fastens the other end of the net to the far end to the boat.



James J. Tissot, 'The Calling of Saint James and Saint John' (1886-94), gouache on gray wove paper, 7.6 x 5.75 in., Brooklyn Museum, New York.

All off a sudden they feel a jolt, the lines become taut, and the boat leans over at a dangerous angle. Jesus grabs the gunwale to keep from going overboard. A whole school of fish has hit the net and is pulling hard against the boat. Peter is instantly alert. He shouts orders to pull in the net to bring it closer to the boat. Carefully, ever so carefully Snap! He can hear the nets are beginning to break under the strain of so many fish. Carefully, men! Carefully.

Now Peter steadies himself by the mast and shouts at the top of his lungs across the water where his partners James and John are still mending nets.

"H-E-L-P U-S," he shouts into the wind. "C-O-M-E A-N-D H-E-L-P U-S!"

Far away on the shore, he can see that they've heard him and are scampering for their boat. Soon James' and John's boat glides alongside and they help to pull fish out of the net into their boat, flapping, flopping on the boat bottom. Jesus, too, is pulling fish aboard as fast as he can. The men work noiselessly until the last of the huge catch is into the boats, so heavy that the gunwales of the boats are now dangerously close to the waterline.

Carefully, oh, so carefully, they row the laden boats ashore, not relaxing until they can hear the prow crunch on the beach. It is the biggest catch they have ever brought in. And not at night, but in the middle of the day!

Jesus steps out into the shallows and up onto the dry shore. Peter sees him, leaps over the side of the boat and falls on his knees before him. For a moment he can't speak, overcome by emotion and recent exertion. Jesus waits.

"Depart from me, Lord," Peter finally gasps out. "I am a sinful man." Jesus puts his hand on Peter's shoulder and looks down at him. "Don't be afraid," he says. **"From now on you will be catching men."**

You can see Peter nodding his head. He knows it is true. Finally, he lifts his eyes to meet Jesus' eyes. "Yes, Lord, if you'll show me how. But wait just one minute until we get these boats pulled all the way up. It'll just be a moment. We don't want to lose a catch like this."

James and John help Peter and Andrew as they pull first Peter's boat, and then their own boat up onto the shore. And then they leave everything where it is and begin to follow Jesus.

Old Zebedee is on his feet, cupping his hands, ready to shout to his boys about leaving before the work is done. But then he drops his hands, and gazes after them as they follow Jesus down the road from the beach into town. Wouldn't it be wonderful, he thinks, if he too could leave everything and follow the Master?

Zebedee sends word to town for help in unloading the amazing catch and preparing it for sale. The proceeds will feed their families for many days hence. He'll have to mend the stressed fishing nets with his other boys. They'll have to pull out the weeds and debris, wash the nets, and put them out to dry so they'll be ready for tomorrow night's fishing. Life goes on -- the daily chores of a fishermen.

But James and John, Peter and Andrew have left it behind. They have a new challenge, a new skill to learn. It is called "catch and release." Jesus will teach them to become fishers of men, to "catch men," and then set them free to flourish in Jesus' kingdom. What joy!

The Rectory

St. James Least of All



My dear Nephew Darren

After all these years, I now understand why the non-conformist denominations sit down, rather than kneel, to say their prayers. That way, no decisions have to be taken over the number, size, shape, colour, material and design of kneelers in church.

Our present set was donated by a retired Major-General in 1899 to celebrate the Relief of Mafeking, and after more than a

century of use by the pious and not-so-devout has taken its toll. Like certain members of our congregation, they now look a little worse for wear. Many have sprung leaks, so that when used, a jet of flocking is emitted all over the clothes of their neighbour, who then leaves Mattins looking like a Yeti.

Other kneelers have been occupied by grateful mice, who find them most congenial for nesting and who leave in high umbrage, creating chaos as Miss Mapp chases them down the aisle with her umbrella; that this provides her with the perfect excuse to leave before the sermon is, I am sure, entirely coincidental. The final straw came when my own, by some quirk in its design, now sounds like a whoopee cushion every time I kneel. It may cause the choirboys much amusement, but it lends nothing to the dignity of our worship.

So, we have decided to have a completely new set - and therein lies the problem. Who makes them? What will be the designs? Who co-ordinates the whole project? There is enough here to occupy the combined minds of our Church Council for the next Millennium and there will be enough scheming, manoeuvring, signing of non-aggression pacts and formation of tactical truces to make the United Nations look like amateurs. Unfortunately, we do not have the ecclesiastical equivalents of the blue berets to enforce peace.

The more patriotic members of the congregation have suggested they all show the Union Jack - presumably so they can be waved at appropriate moments in our services; one belligerent individual wants to see depictions of St Michael slaughtering the dragon, John the Baptist's head on a platter and other such tasteful scenes; on the other hand, dear Miss Timmins wants them all to depict doves or small fluffy creatures, which would make the church look more like pets corner.

Cutting through these vital issues, I have suggested that the entire congregation converts to Roman Catholicism.... and then we could stand for our prayers and do without kneelers entirely.

Your loving uncle,

Eustace

December Evening Train Journey

Passing the slag heaps in the evening light,
Covered with the first powdering of snow,
I imagine the screes and the mountain lakes,
Each curving shape holds new significance.
Then in the station light, the squalid houses show,
The old tin can, the heap of bricks and stone,
The mortar chippings - the abandoned motor car.
The rust seems blood against the snow,
Telling of toil and sweat and tears.

Jocelyn Darbyshire



With Christmas entertaining in mind...some very light-hearted observations

The family is the place where the most ridiculous and least respectable things in the world go on. - Ugo Betti

There are some people who want to throw their arms round you simply because it is Christmas; there are other people who want to strangle you simply because it is Christmas. - Robert Lynd

His father had a weak heart and habitually threatened to drop dead if anybody hurt his feelings. You may have noticed that people with weak hearts are the tyrants of English married life. - George Bernard Shaw

Be kind to your mother-in-law, and if necessary, pay for her board at some good hotel. - Josh Billings

Parents are people who bear children, bore teenagers, and board newlyweds. - Anon

Loneliness is to endure the presence of one who does not understand. - Elbert Hubbard

You talk about your pleasures to your acquaintances; you talk about your troubles to your friends. - Fr Andrew SDC

Some people use one half their ingenuity to get into debt, and the other half to avoid paying it. - George D Prentice

The only way to entertain some folks is to listen to them. - Kin Hubbard

There are few wild beasts more to be dreaded than a talking man having nothing to say. - Jonathan Swift

Never the time and the place and the loved one, all together! - Robert Browning

The greatest pleasure I know is to do a good action by stealth, and to have it found out by accident. - Charles Lamb

Drive carefully this Christmas. It's not only cars that can be recalled by their maker. - Anon

FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

November 7th HOLY BAPTISM
Bethany Rose McMinn

PARISH DATES

Sat	4th	10.30am Litter-picking in the parish
SUN	5th	3.00pm: Baptism preparation Class 4.00pm: Confirmation before Communion class 7.00pm: Living in Love and Faith course
Tue	7th	Home Communion in the area
Wed	8th	Immaculate Conception of the BVM: 7.30pm Sung Mass
Thur	9th	Home Communion in the area
SUN	12th	10.30am: Family Service and Toy Service 3.00pm: Service of Nine Lessons & Carols with Benediction (<i>amended</i>) 4.00pm: Confirmation before Communion class 7.00pm: Living in Love and Faith course
Mon	13th	1.30pm: Crafts Group (Parish Hall) All welcome
Sat	18th	11.00am Messy Church Christingle
SUN	19th	10.30am: Admission to Communion before Confirmation during Sung Mass Tonge & The Haulgh Community Choir Christmas Concert in church
Mon	20th	7.00pm: Distribution of Christmas Leaflets in Hall i'th' Wood area
Wed	22nd	7.30pm: Carol Service at St Aidan's
Fri	24th	11.30pm: Midnight Mass, with Completion of the Crib
Sat	25th	CHRISTMAS DAY 9.00am: Mass of Christmas Morning, with Completion of the Crib (St Aidan's) 10.30am: Sung Mass (St Augustine's)
SUN	26th	HOLY FAMILY: Masses as usual 12.15pm: Holy Baptism
Tue	28th	Christmas Home Communion in the area
Wed	29th	Christmas Home Communion in the area
Sat	1st	10.30am: MARY, MOTHER OF GOD: Sung Mass

Calendar and Intentions for December 2021

Wed	1	feria: Artists and musicians
Thu	2	feria: Bolton Deanery, its churches and congregations
Fri	3	S Francis Xavier: Overseas missions
Sat	4	feria: All who care for our parish and its environment
SUN	5	2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT: The Parish and the People of God
Mon	6	feria: Those engaging with the Living in Faith & Love process in the parish
Tue	7	S Ambrose: The work of ACS and Vocations to the Sacred Priesthood
Wed	8	THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BVM: The Parish and the People of God
Thu	9	feria: Those receiving the Blessed Sacrament in their homes this month
Fri	10	feria: Our PCC and Church officers
Sat	11	feria: Those sharing in our Christingle activities today
SUN	12	3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT: The Parish and the People of God
Mon	13	S Lucy: All who suffer for their fidelity to the Gospel
Tue	14	S John of the Cross: Christian contemplatives and mystics
Wed	15	feria: Our local Councillors and Borough officials
Thu	16	feria: The Bishops of the Society
Fri	17	feria: The fire, police and ambulance services
Sat	18	feria: The work of local hospitals and hospices
SUN	19	4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT: The Parish and the People of God
Mon	20	feria: Those who live in the Hall i'th' Wood area of the parish
Tue	21	feria: All expectant mothers, especially those far from home
Wed	22	feria: Those attending the Carol Service this evening
Thu	23	feria: The work of Social Services
Fri	24	feria: Confessors and their penitents
Sat	25	CHRISTMAS DAY: The Parish and the People of God
SUN	26	HOLY FAMILY: The Parish and the People of God
Mon	27	S JOHN: Evangelism
Tue	28	THE HOLY INNOCENTS: The Children's Society
Wed	29	S Thomas Becket: Right relations between Church and State
Thu	30	Sixth Day in Christmas Octave: Those who have no-one to share Christmas with
Fri	31	Seventh Day in Christmas Octave: The homeless, and those who care for them

CHURCH WARDENS

David & Ruth Taylor: 31 Wisbeck Road. Tel: 01204 396409

OFFICERS AND ORGANISERS

email addresses can be completed by adding "staugustinestm.org.uk"

PCC Secretary: Katherine Taylor Tel. 01204 531053 - email: pccsec@

Treasurer: Sue Loftus Tel 01204 302051 - email: treasurer@

Walsingham Cell: Elsie Hollinrake Tel: 07486 982586

Church Flowers: please contact the wardens for the time being

Child Protection: Margaret Mullen Tel: 01204 695964 - email: safeguarding@

Brownies: Nichola Smith Tel: 07748 188215 - email: brownies@

Sunday School: Ruth Taylor Tel: 01204 396409

Mothers' Union: Elsie Hollinrake Tel: 07486 982586 - email: mu@

Organist: (St Augustine's) Mike Cheetham Tel: 01204 391963

Organist: (St. Aidan's) Peter Pemrick Tel: 01204 527699

Parish Hall Bookings: Sandra Anderson Tel: 01204 383158
- email: hallbookings@

Wednesday Morning Coffee Shop: John Harrison Tel: 01204 792691

Caretaker - St Aidan's Hall: Andrew Settle Tel: 01204 450321

Parish Paper: Mike Cheetham - email: magazine@

