



God in Ordinary

The cathedral had a new Christmas nativity of photographs that looked like a huge painting. The people in it were from the local community. Christmas celebrates God among us. Like the shepherds and the wise men we came to the crib to wonder and worship but when we went away to get on with the rest of our lives, what happens next?

One answer is that the Church's year continues to tell the Christian stories of God in Jesus who teaches, challenges, heals and gives life to us. Christmas gives way to Epiphany; on 2nd February we remember the Presentation of Christ in the Temple and his being recognised by the elderly Simeon and Anna; and this year at the end of the month, on 26th February, Ash Wednesday is the start of Lent and our preparation for Easter.

Other answers are also needed in trying to find what it means for God to be among us. How do we respond in our daily lives? What difference does it make to the way I understand myself and how we live together? We have often used Lent for those reflective questions.

This year, instead of Praying Together as we have done for the last three years, I hope that as a diocese we will use the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book by Ruth Valerio, 'Saying Yes to Life'. "As people made in the image of God, we are entrusted to look after what he has created: to share in God's joy and ingenuity in making a difference for good." Using the story of the days of creation in Genesis 1 she, "relates light, water, land, the seasons, other creatures, humankind, Sabbath rest and resurrection hope to matters of environmental, ethical and social concern." There are small, cheaper booklets for kids and adults to go alongside it, 'A 40-Day Challenge to Live Lent and Care for God's Creation'.

Asking what it means in our ordinary lives that God is among us is a good way to keep Lent. There is no single settled answer because we keep deepening our response to God come among us. What do we pray for? Whom do we serve? How will we grow? Living in response to those questions renews our hope.

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