

# Vicar's Pastoral Letter

**Date :** December 2009 & January 2010  
**Author :** Rev. Peter Holzapfel, St. Mary's Church, Kempsey, Worcester.  
**Subject :** The true celebration of Christmas

Dear Friends,

I've been recently watching that series "Christianity\*" on BBC 4 in which we have been beautifully reminded of what a magnificent and many sided faith Christianity is. It has spread throughout the world and takes so many different forms in its incredibly rich diversity. This diversity is something for which we give thanks and yet, whatever and wherever, it all begins with the birth of a baby in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago. This is our starting point that God's own Son was born as one of us to share our human life with all of its joys and sorrows and to die for us on the Cross and be raised to new life for the saving of us all. The gift of God to all of us was a baby who didn't arrive with trumpets and loud fanfares but insignificantly and unknown in a stable in a small town in the back of nowhere.

And this truly sets the scene for a perfect Christmas because it reminds us all of what this season is really all about. It is about God giving us life: not fame or fortune but life. It is also about God giving us new life through faith in Jesus and a life that will continue for eternity. Jesus said "I am come that you may have life in all its fullness."

And so as we enjoy our Christmas parties, opening our Christmas presents and eating our Christmas dinners let us all remember who it really is that we're remembering and what we're really celebrating: His birth into this world and our birth into a world and a life without end.

A VERY HAPPY AND TRULY BLESSED CHRISTMAS.

God Bless you,

*Peter*

Rev. Peter Holzapfel

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## **Tribute to John Lomax**

It was with great sadness that I heard of the recent death of John Lomax who was great supporter of the work of God here at St. Mary's and a good friend to us all, including myself. My image of John will always be having a cigarette at the Church door and warmly welcoming everyone as they came down the path in his capacity both as a welcomer and as Deputy Church Warden for many years. I always loved John because he was a down to earth man to whom there was no side and he spoke the truth as he saw it but always in love and with a deep love of God and respect for God's people. He was a man to be totally trusted, deeply respected and utterly reliable.

He was a big man with a big presence but with an even bigger heart who loved nothing better than seeing the church filled with people of all ages singing God's praises in a joyful way. He was a leading supporter of all that I have been trying to achieve at St. Mary's in terms of bringing the new life of The Spirit into our midst and I will sorely miss him as we all will. John's struggles are now at an end and I have no doubt that he has now received his heavenly reward in a far better and more beautiful place. And I look forward to the time when he meets us at the door of heaven with that lovely gruff laugh and perhaps even a cigarette in his hand. I would also like to thank Peter Fitzjohn and others for all the loving support they gave John in his final days and Peter for conducting what I know will have been a wonderful funeral service and a heartfelt tribute to our dear friend.

John, until we meet again, rest in peace dear friend and rise with Christ in glory: Amen.

## **Tribute to Barbara Locke**

Again it was with deep sadness that I conducted the funeral of our dear friend Barbara Locke. Barbara and Des have not been resident in Kempsey for very long but in their quiet and loving way have fitted in so well and we love them dearly both within the village and the church. Barbara's illness and death has been a great shock and a great sadness to all of us as we mourn the passing of a gentle loving lady and wonderful wife to Des.

Our thoughts and prayers are very much with Des and the family at this time who can count on our continued support and love. Barbara was a lady of great faith and a heart filled with God's love and I know that she now rests at peace with her heavenly Father. We look forward to that time when we are once more re-united in our heavenly home never more to be parted. In the meantime rest at peace dear friend and rise with Christ in glory to life everlasting: Amen.

*Peter*

Rev. Peter Holzapfel

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