



ESGOBAETH TYDDEWI
DIOCESE of ST DAVIDS



The Bishop's Letter.

Llys Esgob - Christmas 2024.

Dear Friends,

It has been said that the church is the extension of the Incarnation. However, this can only be true when the members of his Body (the Church) makes him a reality in their own lives and in the life of the world. God did not just say he loved the world, he became a part of it to show that he loved it.

“Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see! Hail the Incarnate Deity!”

Next year we will commemorate the 1,700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea and at every Eucharist we recite the Nicene Creed, it is the defining statement of our belief, confounding those false doctrines which undermined the truth of the Godhead, and giving a foundation on which to base our Christian faith and mission.

The Nicene Creed and the season of Christmas reminds us of the truth that God who cared so much for humanity came to share in the frustrations and pain of the world.” *The Word became flesh...*” Jesus was born into the home of a poor village carpenter, he was born into a real world of human need and suffering, a need that is the same today as it was then. War, terrorism, homelessness, starvation, lives lived aimlessly, and the threat of being engulfed by greed and selfishness has not changed since that night when the angels proclaimed his birth and presence in the world.

There is a tendency for us to sentimentalize the message and the love which Christmas brings. However we must appreciate the grittiness behind the Gospel narrative of the Nativity. Christmas is all about the love of Divine Sacrifice, for we cannot separate the manger from the cross, the Jesus who was born in Bethlehem, was the same Jesus who died for our sins on Calvary. *“The holly bears a berry as red as any blood, and Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ, to do poor sinners good”*. God reaches out to us in the Infant Christ. He is offering new life, new hope and everlasting joy. It is that same Jesus who reaches out to us from the cross offering us a hope and light which transforms our darkness and brings us into the life of God. If we let Jesus into our lives to be born anew in our hearts the fullness of God dwells in us, *“pleased with man with man to dwell”*, the implications of these words from the carol are immeasurable and holds an eternal truth which we are called to share with all people.

“God of God, light of light”, In the light of his presence in our lives we are called to assess our personal commitment as individuals and as church communities. As a Diocese we must be seen as a reality in our communities, playing a part in the life of where we live and witness, reaching out in the name of Christ, supporting one another in our LMA’s and what we are trying to achieve. If we truly believe in the Christmas message and the statement of our creed that God was made man in Christ, we cannot evade being involved with people and the world. We must seek every opportunity of outreach and service. When we are asked “what is the church doing?” we should be able to answer by saying look at how actively involved and engaged our church is in our communities, supporting the aims of charitable organizations, and being a source of encouragement furthering the aims of changing people’s circumstances. Plant Dewi, Tir Dewi and church-based Food Banks are some of the ways through which our involvement becomes a witness. It shows that the church cares and is part of the society in which we live and work. This is how we give **“Glory to God in the Highest”** and enable **“Peace and Goodwill”** to become a reality amongst all people.

As we prepare for our Diocesan Mission in 2026, I want us to realize that our involvement is essential in our Christian witness and Evangelism. We are not only being challenged to do “good works” but to be more positive and committed in proclaiming our faith in God who in Jesus, fully entered our life of humanity. We are called to make him incarnate in our generation; as clergy and congregations we have the opportunity to meet people in the marketplace or factory floor, in social gatherings, business meetings, and in a host of other ways. When we are involved in these ways, we show that Jesus counts in our lives and that he can make a world of difference in theirs.

As a Diocesan family I want us to resolve to aim to live Christian lives engulfed in the love of Christ. Let us be committed to cooperating in the context of our Local Ministry Areas, let us not concern ourselves with things beyond our control which we cannot change, but rather concentrate and work on those things which we can. It is important for us to be influences of good and set apart all negativity within us. Let us be thoughtful, show concern for others, be positive and cheerful in our outlook, and look for good in others rather than find fault. When we acknowledge Jesus in this way, he lives in us and reaches out in love through us. Fulton J Sheen wrote, ***“There are two births of Christ, one into the world in Bethlehem; the other in the soul, when it is spiritually reborn. People think of the former much more than the later and celebrate it every year; but the spiritual Bethlehem is equally momentous.... It is the second birth that St Paul insisted on when he wrote from prison to his beloved people, the Ephesians, asking that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith and that they be rooted and grounded in love. This is the second Bethlehem, or the personal relationship of the individual heart to the Lord Christ”***.

All of us have been shocked by the horror and destruction seen in Ukraine and Gaza. It is easy to say, “how terrible”, and ignore the next moment what is happening to our world. It seems we have become immune to the world’s sufferings and adopt an attitude of indifference. Even the church cannot stand unaccused in the light of the abuse of children. Such accusations of the church detract from the true meaning and expectations of the church. Is there any wonder that people turn away from the church when we fail to meet the needs of the vulnerable and fail in our duty to children? The attitudes of our society question us if our care and protection of children are found wanting, be that in the bomb craters of Kiev, the ruins of Gaza, or the scarred lives of children sexually abused. Someone said to me the other day that “Christmas is for the children”, I agree, it’s about extending to the children of this world and our society a hope for

the future, a love that is genuine and safety from all harm. God's purpose for his children was revealed to us in the Incarnate Babe of Bethlehem. Jesus is the only true light of the world, he is the only answer which will turn our darkness into day It is only when this light comes into our heart, fear will depart and his Kingdom draw near and we will be guided into the way of peace, his peace.

As we go forward together may our prayer be that the peace and joy of the Incarnation be ours, and that we share that knowledge of God's good Grace for the peace of the world, the dignity of humanity, the future of our church, diocese and Province and with all people with him whom he *"dwelt among us, full of grace and truth"*.

My thoughts and prayers are with you this Christmas and as we look forward to 2025.

Yours in the Love of Christ

+ Dorrien Tyddewi