

Signs of Christmas

It's only 4th November and this morning on the radio (Key 103 if you're interested!), the discussion is already... wait for it..., "What are the signs to you that Christmas is on its way?"

The answers were pretty broad, ranging from red mugs being used at Starbucks, a chicken, bacon and cranberry sauce delicacy at Gregg's, and a succession of children's birthdays that meant the next stage of Christmas could be allowed.

At church, we very often get very defensive about Christmas and its "real meaning", some churches not allowing carols to be sung until Christmas Day - where's the fun in that? How wrong has the rest of the world got it, though?

If Advent is a time focussed on Christ's coming, of signs and preparation, then should we not be getting on board and making sure that at least some people are able to respond to the question with; "For me, I feel Christmas is on its way when the church...."? Answers on a postcard please!

Perhaps the moments are already there. Maybe we should make more of them. "I feel Christmas is on the way when I wrap a shoebox and fill it with toys" or "When I collect up all the best toys I can find and bring them to church to make someone else's Christmas that little bit happier and easier."

The "true" meaning of Christmas? That Christ came among us. Our true response? That we follow Him. So let us do just that; journey with our neighbours and families and friends into the hustle and bustle of the season, perhaps struggling to find a place or a moment to lay down our weary heads, but in it all, knowing that we celebrate the greatest birth ever known. "But the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over Jacob's descendants for ever; His kingdom will never end.' "

God bless you all this Christmas, and all with whom you celebrate.

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