

Reverently Yours

Lay Minister Julie Jones writes:



Dear Friends

As I ponder on what to write for this article, the television is on and it seems to be bombarded with Christmas adverts for various supermarkets and department stores, media subscription channels, toys and gifts that if we buy into them, will make our Christmas just perfect.

But is the reality ever like that? Probably not, if its anything like my family, there will be chaos as, with lots of people forced together in close proximity, arguments are inevitable - especially if the monopoly board comes out! And someone will trip over one of the dogs at least once an hour! Lets face it, Christmas is rarely perfect, it usually comes with an element of messiness.

The story of the first Christmas is the story of a series of completely unplanned, messy events - a surprise pregnancy, an unexpected journey, a complete muddle over hotel accommodation..... not exactly a perfect holiday.

But, perhaps it does not have to be perfect. God doesn't say to us "Go and get yourself sorted out and then we'll talk." He comes to the world as it is - imperfect, frequently messy, often muddled. God can handle chaos and confusion and he seeks out those who are on the margins, excluded and despised.

A young friend of mine wrote on facebook today: I was just minding my own business when I was approached by a homeless man, he asked me if I had any money, I apologised and said I didn't carry cash. His response broke my heart, he was so apologetic that he had asked and had bothered me. I felt so angry and helpless. Later I saw him again, I asked if I could buy him a Subway and he was so emotional and grateful in his response. I brought him a sub and a coffee. He was so grateful, his name was Lee, he's been homeless for six months, and had been out of work for three months. Yes, he was homeless for three months while in work. We chatted for a while and then he went on his way. That encounter cost me £3.50 and five minutes of my time. As I walked away I thought about how I want to do more, make a real impact; but that small act of kindness will have made a real difference, a real difference to Lee. So lets try to listen more to the stories of people like Lee. Our lives are so busy, yet if we slow down, take five minutes out of our day to help others then we will see a real difference. (Alistair Bassett on Face book - remember that name, he could be Prime Minister one day).

So for those who feel like one of the outsiders, away from the mainstream and not part of the respectable crowd, there is a special place this Christmas. God shows us in the ordinary "Look, I am in the middle of this and if you just relax I will help you. It does not have to be perfect. I came here to help you." As soon as we recognise this, then we may enjoy Christmas a little more and we may find the love Jesus brings in our messy, muddled lives, or, even better, we might bring that love into someone else's mess and muddle as my young friend Alistair did for Lee.

If an imperfect Christmas was good enough for Jesus, surely it is good enough for all of us.

Wishing you all a happy, messy, muddled Christmas.

Julie