

TRINITY NEWS

December 31, 2023
Christmas 1

THE HOLY FAMILY

A Reading from *The Light of Christ* by Evelyn Underhill

The new life grows in secret. Nothing very startling happens. We see the child in the carpenter's workshop. He does not go outside the frontiers within which he appeared. It did quite well for him and will do quite well for us. There is no need for peculiar conditions in the spiritual life. Our environment itself, our home and job, are part of the moulding action of God. Have we fully realized all that is unfolded in this? How unchristian it is to try to get out of our frae, to separate our daily life from our prayer? That third-rate little village in the hills with its limited social contacts and monotonous manual work reproves us, when we begin to fuss about opportunities and scope. And that quality of quietness and ordinariness, that simplicity with which he entered into his great vocation, endured from the beginning to the end.

The child Jesus grows as other children, the lad works as other lads. Total abandonment to the vast divine purpose working at its own pace in and through ordinary life and often, to us, in mysterious ways. I love to think that much in Christ's own destiny was mysterious to him. It was part of his perfect manhood that he shared our human situation in this too.

We often feel we ought to get on quickly to a new stage like spiritual mayflies. Christ takes thirty years to grow and two and half to act. Only the strange dreams Joseph and Mary had, warned a workman and his young wife that they lay in the direct line of God's action, that the growth committed to them mattered supremely to the world. And when his growth reached the right stage, there is the revelation of God's call and after it, stress, discipline and choice. Those things came together as signs of maturity and they were not spectacular things. It is much the same with us in our life of prayer: the Spirit fills us as we grow, develop and make room.

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We get notions sometimes that we ought to spring up quickly like seed on stony ground, we ought to show some startling sign of spiritual growth. But perhaps we are only asked to go on quietly, to be a child, a nice stocky seedling, not shooting up in a hurry, but making root, being docile to the great slow rhythm of life. When you don't see any startling marks of your own religious condition or your usefulness to God, think of the baby in the stable and the little boy in the streets of Nazareth. The very life was there which was to change the whole history of the human race. There was not much to show for it. But there is entire continuity between the stable and the Easter garden and the thread that unites them is the will of God. The childlike simple prayer of Nazareth was the right preparation for the awful privilege of the cross. Just so the light of the Spirit is to unfold gently and steadily within us, till at last our final stature, all God designed for us, is attained.

[Source: Celebrating The Seasons]

January- February 2024:

- January 1, Feast of the Holy Name, 10:00 a.m.
- January 6, Wedding, 4:00 p.m.
- January 7, Wedding, 3:00 p.m.
- January 18, Wedding, 2:00 p.m.
- January 18, Thursday. Healing service. (every 3rd Thursday of the month)
- January 20, Wedding, 2:00 p.m.
- January 21, Wedding, 3:00 p.m.
- January 28, Annual General Meeting, 11:00 a.m.
- January 28, Wedding, 2:30p.m.
- Confirmation Class
- February 13, Shrove Tuesday/Pancake Supper, 5:30 p.m.
- February 14, Ash Wednesday

SAINTS:

John Wyclif, Reformer, 31 December. John was a member of the Wyclif family of Richmond in Yorkshire and was born in about the year 1330. He was a fellow of Merton College Oxford, and Master of Balliol, but his expulsion from the Wardenship of Canterbury Hall (later incorporated into Christ Church) in favour of a monastic foundation led to a lawsuit and a life-long hatred of things monastic. He was much in favour with members of the royal family and, when disputes arose owing to his attacks on the clergy of the day, he was protected by them from the otherwise inevitable consequence of deprivation of his posts. However, he went on to deny the Church's teaching of the presence of Christ at the eucharist, the doctrine known as transubstantiation, and it was this that lost him his royal protection. His opinions were formally condemned in 1381 and he was forced out of office by the university the following year. John had already moved to Lutterworth in 1380 and from there he gave his support to such projects as the translation of the Bible into contemporary English. He died on this day in 1384, whilst at Mass.

Seraphim, Monk of Sarov, Spiritual Guide, 2 January. Born in 1759 at Kursk in Russia, Seraphim entered the Monastery of our Lady at Sarov near Moscow when he was twenty years old. He lived as a Solitary for over thirty years but his gifts as a staretz, or spiritual guide, became more widely-known until he found himself sharing his gift of healing spirit, soul and body with the thousands who made the pilgrimage to his monastery. The 'Jesus Prayer' formed the heart of his own devotional life and he stressed the need for all Christians to have an unceasing communion with the person of Jesus. He died on this day in 1833 and is revered in the Russian Orthodox Church as 'an ikon of Orthodox Spirituality.'



Let it suffice that our love be God high and man wide.

[**Charles Henry Brent**, *Things that Matter*]

