

Fred`s Thoughts December

What does Christmas really mean?

I was brought up in a Christian household where Christmas was a time of great celebration and family. The Christmas lunch was a time for all the family to come together and feast in style. But Christmas would not have been Christmas unless we started either at Midnight Mass or the early morning Christmas service. We prayed together and we fed together. But is it the same now?

I perceive a difference. A lessening of family and a diminishing sense of the Christ in Christmas. People are more concerned with the basic facts of life than the religion that underlies the celebration. Who can blame them. We have enough difficulty feeding ourselves without the added complication of having the whole family round for lunch. We can not put the lights on the Christmas tree and turn the central heating up without wincing at the likely increase in the electricity charges or the gas bill. The cost of buying a Turkey for the Christmas dinner and all the other trimmings could mean that post-Christmas we will all be on a starvation diet.

We should turn to the Bible and ask what Jesus would have said. How could God comfort us in our time of need?

2 Corinthians 1:3 *Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.*

Ah perhaps in comforting others in our hour of need we are comforted by God. Perhaps by looking to help others we are helping ourselves? But if we do not have enough for ourselves, how can we comfort others who are also in need?

At Christmas we recognise the birth of our saviour perhaps that is our answer. John says in 3:16–17 *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son,*

that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

To God nothing is impossible. Nothing cannot be achieved. In him we have the ultimate hope that we will one day meet our maker and be reunited in his eternal presence. The birth of his son and saviour of the world is truly a time to rejoice and be happy. What else do we need. Rather than hunger for what we do not have why don't we praise God for what we do have. We have a hope and love in our Saviour Jesus Christ. What greater warmth and food do we need. We are called to spread the word, his hope and love, to all his peoples. That is why we should comfort all of those who are suffering and show them by our example that even during their darkest hours God is with them as he is with us.