

Our Lady and St Gerard's Lostock Hall

NEWS AND VIEWS

Christmas & New Year Services

Issue No 683 December 2024

Christmas Eve

The Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve at St Gerard's will be at 5:30 pm with carols from 5 pm.

The Vigil Mass at St Mary's Brownedge will be at 7 pm.

There will also be a Midnight Mass at St Mary's with Carols by Candlelight from 11:30 pm.

Christmas Day

At St Mary's Brownedge the Christmas Day Mass will be at 9:30 am.

At St Gerard's the Mass on Christmas Day will be at 10:30 am.

There will be no other Masses on Christmas Day at either Church.

Boxing Day (The Feast of St Stephen) Mass at both Churches will be at 10 am.



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Parish Diary

C.C. Lewis—A lost

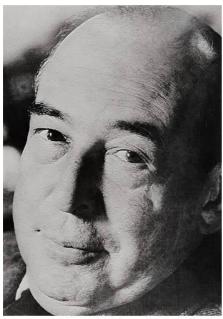
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Exmas and Crissmas:

A Lost Chapter from Herodotus by C. S. Lewis



C. S. Lewis, perhaps best known as the author of the Narnia books. was a committed Christian, who used his writing skills to describe the mysteries of Christian faith and the details of living a Christian life. In the 1950s, he wrote this little satirical essay about the way Christmas was observed in the country "Niatirb" which it doesn't take much wit to "Britain" realise is backwards! Herodotus was an ancient Greek author. who wrote the "traveloque/history" as he described his travels around Greece. Egypt and other parts of the ancient world. Here Lewis imagines how Herodotus would observe the mid-Winter practices of the northern island of Niatirb

And beyond this there lies in the ocean, turned towards the west and north, the island of Niatirb which Hecataeus (another ancient Greek historian, who produced a geographic guide to the world) indeed declares to be the same size and shape as Sicily, but it is larger, though in calling it triangular a man would not miss the mark. It is densely inhabited by men who wear clothes not very different from the other barbarians who occupy the north western parts of Europe though they do not agree with them in language. These islanders, surpassing all the men of whom we know in patience and endurance, use the following customs. In the middle of winter when fogs and rains most abound they have a great festival which they call Exmas and for fifty days they prepare for it in the fashion I shall describe. First of all, every citizen is obliged to send to each of his friends and relations a square piece of hard paper stamped with a picture, which in their speech is called an Exmas-card. But the pictures represent birds sitting on branches, or trees with a dark green prickly leaf, or else men in such garments as the Niatirbians believe that their ancestors wore two hundred years ago riding in coaches such as their ancestors used.

or houses with snow on their roofs. And the Niatirbians are unwilling to say what these pictures have to do with the festival; guarding (as I suppose) some sacred mystery. And because all men must send these cards the marketplace is filled with the crowd of those buying them, so that there is great labour and weariness. But having bought as many as they suppose to be sufficient, they return to their houses and find there the like cards which others have sent to them. And when they find cards from any to whom they also have sent cards, they throw them away and give thanks to the gods that this labour at least is over for another year. But when they find cards from any to whom they have not sent, then they beat their breasts and wail and utter curses against the sender; and, having sufficiently lamented their misfortune, they put on their boots again and go out into the fog and rain and buy a card for him also. And let this account suffice about Exmas-cards.

They also send gifts to one another, suffering the same things about the gifts as about the cards, or even worse. For every citizen has to guess the value of the gift which every friend will send to him so that he may send one of equal value, whether he can afford it or not. And they buy as gifts for one another such things as no man ever bought for himself. For the sellers, understanding the custom, put forth all kinds of trumpery, and whatever, being useless and ridiculous, they have been unable to sell throughout the year they now sell as an Exmas gift. And though the Niatirbians profess themselves to lack sufficient necessary things, such as metal, leather, wood and paper, yet an incredible quantity of these things is wasted every year, being made into the gifts. But during these fifty days the oldest, poorest, and most miserable of the citizens put on false beards and red robes and walk about the market-place; being disguised (in my opinion) as Cronos (the personification of time, as in "Old Father Time.") And the sellers of gifts no less than the purchasers become pale and weary. because of the crowds and the fog, so that any man who came into a Niatirbian city at this season would think some great public calamity had fallen on Niatirb. This fifty days of preparation is called in their barbarian speech "the Exmas Rush". But when the day of the festival comes, then most of the citizens, being exhausted with the Rush, lie in bed till noon. But in the evening they eat five times as much supper as on other days and, crowning themselves with crowns of paper, they become intoxicated. And on the day after Exmas they are very grave, being internally disordered by the supper and the drinking and reckoning how much they have spent on gifts and on the wine. For

wine is so dear among the Niatirbians that a man must swallow the worth of a talent before he is well intoxicated. (A talent was a very valuable Greek coin, which might have been worth £1000!)

Such, then, are their customs about the Exmas. But the few among the Niatirbians have also a festival, separate and to themselves, called Crissmas, which is on the same day as Exmas. And those who keep Crissmas, doing the opposite to the majority of the Niatirbians, rise early on that day with shining faces and go before sunrise to certain temples where they partake of a sacred feast. And in most of the temples they set out images of a fair woman with a new-born Child on her knees and certain animals and shepherds adoring the Child. (The reason of these images is given in a certain sacred story which I know but do not repeat.) But I myself conversed with a priest in one of these temples and asked him why they kept Crissmas on the same day as Exmas; for it appeared to me inconvenient. But the priest replied, "It is not lawful, O stranger, for us to change the date of Chrissmas, but would that Zeus would put it into the minds of the Niatirbians to keep Exmas at some other time or not to keep it at all. For Exmas and the Rush distract the minds even of the few from sacred things. And we indeed are glad that men should make merry at Crissmas: but in Exmas there is no merriment left." And when I asked him why they endured the Rush, he replied, "It is, O Stranger, a racket": using (as I suppose) the words of some oracle and speaking unintelligibly to me (for a racket is an instrument which the barbarians use in a game called tennis). But what Hecataeus says, that Exmas and Crissmas are the same, is not credible. For first, the pictures which are stamped on the Exmas-cards have nothing to do with the sacred story which the priests tell about Crissmas. And secondly, the most part of the Niatirbians, not believing the religion of the few, nevertheless send the gifts and cards and participate in the Rush and drink, wearing paper caps. But it is not likely that men, even being barbarians, should suffer so many and great things in honour of a god they do not believe in. And now, enough about Niatirb.

First published in Time and Tide, 1954

Children's Christmas Jokes

- •How did the reindeer learn to play piano? He was elf-taught.
- •What did the snowman say to the aggressive carrot? "Get out of my face "
- •What do you call an old snowman? Water.

CAFOD and COP29

Most of you will have seen TV coverage of COP 29 in Azerbaijan which took place two weeks ago in the middle of November. The decisions made at each COP are becoming critical as climate change is having such a catastrophic effect on our world.

Our daughter has been in Azerbaijan as the CAFOD delegate at the COP conference and has joined with other international aid agencies in trying to persuade world leaders to take the necessary actions urgently needed to mitigate against climate change.

We know that countries in the developing world are suffering the most from climate change despite them having done the least to cause climate change. These countries often have massive debts which mean they are unable to pledge the billions of dollars needed for them to transition to green energy.

Cafod have produced a paper 'Fair Finance for the climate fightback' which you can access on their website. This outlines where the money developing countries will need is to come from. To be honest I've read the paper twice and it's quite complicated and dry but I've spoken to our daughter and she's summarised it for us to make it more understandable for non mathematicians!

Apparently, if developing countries are to transition away from fossil fuels, and meet 2030 targets, it will cost approximately 5.9 trillion dollars! A staggering amount some of which will need to be met by the UK.

The paper outlines how UK contributions can be achieved without costing the taxpayer anything and without us having to rely on the aid budget!

It resolves around three principles:

1.Fix the broken tax architecture

This basically means that the countries who are major polluters, and the private companies who have profited the most from global emissions, must pay their share of these profits. Interest rates on private sector loans are severely limiting the ability of such countries to spend money on climate adaptation, health and education etc.

Suggestions for solving this involve the governments compelling private creditors to take part in debt resolution frameworks.

3. Reform of international financial institutions which include the world bank have the power to represent climate- vulnerable countries in putting people and planet first.

Pope Francis, speaking to COP 29 through his papal delegation, has urged world leaders not to allow new financial support for countries affected by the climate crisis to worsen their debts!

As committed Christians it is incumbent on us to do whatever we can to assist our brothers and sisters throughout the world who are suffering through climate change.

Margaret

<u>Press Release: Ofsted Inspection Success at Our Lady & St</u> <u>Gerard's Catholic Primary School – Lostock Hall</u>



Our Lady & St Gerard's Catholic Primary School on Lourdes Avenue in Lostock Hall is pleased to announce the findings of the Ofsted inspection recent conducted in October 2024 Following the previous inspection just two years ago, when some areas required improvement, their recent inspection highlights the

significant changes and improvements made.

Key Highlights from this latest inspection:

Outstanding Early Years Provision:

Our early years provision received an outstanding grade. Children settle 'exceptionally' quickly and thrive in an environment that encourages outdoor learning and emotional development.

Vibrant Learning Environment:

Pupils are enthusiastic about attending our 'nurturing' school. They enjoy positive relationships with their peers and staff, fostering a safe and supportive atmosphere for learning. They have 'positive attitudes to learning'.

High Expectations and Inclusivity:

The inspection praised our commitment to high academic standards and inclusivity. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are given the same learning opportunities with appropriate curriculum adaptations, leading to commendable achievements across various subjects.

Improved Standards:

Our 'ambitious curriculum' ensures pupils achieve well by the end of Year 6. Our teachers are dedicated and well-trained, ensuring effective teaching and reinforcement of learning.



Love of Reading: A priority at our school, the *'love of reading'* is instilled from an early age. The inspection noted our effective phonics curriculum and the enthusiasm of older pupils towards reading.

Holistic Education: Pupils explore important themes such as equality, diversity, and healthy relationships. They learn to protect their health and wellbeing and communicate with trusted adults when facing challenges.

Broad Opportunities: Our extensive range of extracurricular activities, trips, and musical instrument lessons enrich pupils' educational experiences and promote creativity.

Pupil Leadership: Pupils take pride in their leadership roles and make 'positive contributions to school life', engaging meaningfully with peers and the wider community.

Strong Governance: Our governors play a crucial role in the school's development, providing informed and constructive challenge while supporting staff wellbeing.

We are immensely proud of our outcomes and grateful for the continued support of our wonderful school community. The full Ofsted report is available on our website and the Ofsted website. https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50261239

For more information, please contact: Ms. K Harvey <u>01772</u> <u>335025</u> or <u>admin@ourlady-st-gerards.lancs.sch.uk</u>

Pope Francis: Love, not power, changed the world at Christmas. 24th December 2023



The message of Christmas is that Jesus changed the world through his love, rather than through worldly power, said Pope Francis as he marked the start of the holiday at the Vatican.

"He is not the god of accomplishment, but the God of Incarnation. He does not eliminate injustice from above by a show of power, but from below, by a show of love," said Francis during a Dec. 24 Mass in St. Peter's Basilica. "He does not burst on the scene with limitless power, but

descends to the narrow confines of our lives. He does not shun our frailties, but makes them his own."

"Tonight, love changes history," said the pope during his Christmas homily. "Make us believe, Lord, in the power of your love, so different from the power of the world."

The pope celebrated his 11th Christmas Eve at the Vatican by reflecting on the Incarnation — saying that by becoming flesh, Christ took on human frailty in order to demonstrate his love for the world.

"Why did he go to such lengths?," Francis asked. "Because he cares for us, because he loves us to the point that he considers us more precious than all else. Dear brother, dear sister, to God...you are not a number, but a face. Your name is written on his heart."

The pope went on to caution that Christmas should not be celebrated in "pagan" terms, "linked to power, worldly success and the idolatry of consumerism" or by mistaking God as a "powerful potentate in the sky."

God "waves no magic wand; he is no god of commerce who promises 'everything all at once," Francis insisted. "He does not save us by pushing a button, but draws near us, in order to change our world from within."

The pope was joined by some 30 cardinals, over a dozen bishops, more than 200 priests and an estimated 6,500 mass-goers. Francis, who turned 87 on Dec. 17 and recently recovered from a bout with bronchitis that forced him to cancel a series of public events due to an inability to speak, spoke with ease as he presided over the liturgy.

During his 12-minute homily, the pope repeatedly emphasized the closeness of God, as demonstrated through Christ's own humanity.

"God so greatly desires to embrace our lives that, infinite though he is, he becomes finite for our sake. In his greatness, he chooses to become small; in his righteousness, he submits to our injustice," said Francis. "This is the wonder of Christmas: not a mixture of sappy emotions and worldly contentment, but the unprecedented tenderness of a God who saves the world by becoming incarnate."

Many people, said the pope, feel inadequate or unworthy of receiving the love of God, especially at Christmas.

"Today, though, please, let Jesus take the initiative," he pleaded. "He says to you, 'For your sake, I became flesh; for your sake, I became just like you.' So why remain caught up in your troubles?"

"He became flesh," the pope continued. "He is looking not for your achievements but for your open and trusting heart. In him, you will rediscover who you truly are: a beloved son or daughter of God. Now you can believe it, for tonight the Lord was born to light up your life; his eyes are alight with love for you."

While the atmosphere at the annual Christmas Mass was festive — with red poinsettias and gold and white flower bouquets adorning the basilica, along with the sounds of bells and trumpets — Francis acknowledged that the shadow of war loomed large over this Christmas.

"Tonight, our hearts are in Bethlehem, where the Prince of Peace is once more rejected by the futile logic of war, by the clash of arms that even today prevents him from finding room in the world," said the pope.

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Earlier in the day on Dec. 24, during his weekly Sunday Angelus prayer from the window of the Vatican's Apostolic Palace, the pope asked Christians to mark the holiday with simplicity and in solidarity with those suffering from war, particularly in Israel, Palestine and Ukraine. "May the God who took for himself a human heart infuse humanity into the hearts of men," the pope prayed.

Gardening Tips for December from the RHS

- •Prune open-grown apples and pears (but not those trained against walls)
- Prune acers (Maples) birches and vines before Christmas to avoid bleeding





- Harvest leeks, parsnips, winter cabbage, sprouts and remaining root crops
- •Trees and shrubs can still be planted and transplanted
- •Take hardwood cuttings
- •Keep mice away from stored produce
- •Reduce watering of houseplants

LW having a rest this month.

Walking Route Cards

We usually publish monthly a list of Health Walks & Rambles in and around the Borough, but for the last few months these have not been happening. The walks of course are still there and the Walking route Cards are available via the South Ribble Website at https://www.southribble.gov.uk/content/walking-route-cards

Why not put your best foot forward and download one of these free Walking Route Guides?

The walks range in distance from 1.5 miles to almost 8 miles, with starting points to be found all over the borough.

Listed below are the walks you can download and the distances, the first four are very local and you probably know them

- 01. Farington Lodges Walk (1.5 miles)
- 02. Farington Lodges Walk (3.5 miles)
- 03. Hope Terrace Walk (5.5 miles)
- 04. Tardy Gate Walk (1.5 miles)
- 05. New Longton & Whitestake Walk (2.5 miles)
- 06. Longton Coastal Walk (5.0 miles)
- 07. Longton Brickcroft Walk (1.5 miles)
- 08. Hutton & Longton Coastal Walk (7.0 miles)
- 09. Penwortham Heritage Trail 1 (2.0 Miles)
- 10. Penwortham Heritage Trail 2 (2.5 miles)
- 11. Penwortham Heritage Trail 3 (4.3 miles)
- 12. Penwortham Heritage Trail Howick & Hutton Circular (3 miles)
- 13. Penwortham & Howick Riverside Walk (4.1 miles)
- 14. Old Tram Road & Walton-le-Dale Walk (5 miles)
- 15. Bamber Bridge & Walton Park Walk (5.5 miles)
- 16. Gregson Lane & Coupe Green Walk (3.6 miles)
- 17. Nabs Head Samlesbury Walk (5 miles)
- 18. Lostock Hall Heritage Trail (3.5 miles)
- 19. Lostock Hall and Farington Railway Heritage Trail (3.5 miles)
- 20. St Mary's Parish Boundary Walk (7.7 miles)
- 21. St Leonard's Parish Boundary Walk (5 miles)

Parish Clergy: Fr Mark Harold (Rural Dean & Parish Priest), Fr Colin Battell OSB.

The Presbytery
17C Brownedge Road
Lostock Hall
Preston
PR5 5AA

Tel: 01772 335387 Mobile 07442 385553 (9am-3pm)

In an Emergency please phone either St Marys Brownedge 335168 St Mary's Leyland 455955 St Catherine's Farrington 421174

Contacts The Primary School 335025

The Parochial Centre 339459

Weekly Services

Sundays: Saturday Vigil 5:30 p.m.

Sunday 10:30 a.m.

<u>Weekdays</u>: MASS - Tuesday and Thursday at 9;15 am Services of Word & Holy Communion - Monday 6:30 pm & Wednesday at 9:15 am

Reconciliation: Confessions - before Weekend Masses.

Baptisms

To arrange a Baptism please call the parish office on 01772 335387 between 9 -11.45 am. (Mon - Fri). Parents are expected to attend 2 Baptism Preparation meetings before a Baptism can take place. If people have not been in the practice of attending church regularly, they are asked to attend Mass for a period of six weeks prior to the Baptism to help them to be spiritually prepared for the sacrament and to get into the habit of practicing the Faith.

No Priest! What do we do?

If there is an Emergency and no Priest is available for the weekend Masses, the Eucharistic Ministers, particularly those who have been trained, will perform a Holy Communion Service and this will replace the Mass. Please note that this is **Only in an Emergency** and there is no time to arrange for another priest or no other is Priest is available

Marriages

At least six months notification of Marriage is required. Pre-marriage instruction is mandatory and organised by the Diocese. Please telephone 335387 to arrange Notification and Preparation.

Parish Organisations

CONTACT

Advertising	John Corrigan	07759 722309	
Altar Servers	David Walker	629701	
A.P.F.& Sacristan	Christine Flanaga	n 334723	
CAFOD	Margaret Cronin	336475	
Catechists & Sacramental Programme		335387	
Children's Liturgy Group	Lee McNulty		
Eucharistic Ministers & Readers	Michael Quinlan		
Flowers	Carole Hesmondh		
Football Club	Phil Tinsley		
Fund Raising Group		335387	
Gift Aid	John Robinson	335387	
News & Views, Website,	David Walker	629701	
Majella Companions		335387	
Marriage Registrars	Margaret Cronin	336475	
	Ann Quinlan	467306	
Parochial Centre			
Piety Shop	Vivian_Page	313910	
P.T.A.	Ross Free	339691	
Sacred Heart Guild			
Safeguarding Officer email: safeguarding@saintgerards.org.uk			
School (Staff, Ancillaries & Governors	,	335025	
Senior Citizens Organisers	Linda Walsh	311654	
	Gloria Duffell	339966	
Youth Representative	Lee McNulty	07478703414	

Items for News & Views can be left at the Presbytery or emailed to the editor at newsnviews@saintgerards.org.uk The last day for submissions is the 20th of each month.

www.saintgerards.org.uk

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St Mary's, Brownedge <u>Live Streaming Times</u> https://www.churchservices.tv/bamberbridge				
Sunday	Mass	09:30 am & 6:30 pm		
Monday to Friday	Mass	9:30 am		
Private Prayer	Tuesday Thursday	3:00 pm to 4:00 pm 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm		
Saturday	Mass	7 pm Vigil		
Sunday	Mass	09:30 am & 6:30 pm		

Parish Diary

1st	1st Sunday of Advent	22nd	4th Sunday of Advent
Dec	New Missals	23rd	St John of Kety
3rd	St Francis Xavier	24th	Christmas EVE
4th	St John Damascene	25th	Christmas Day
6th	St Nicholas	26th	St Stephen
7th	St Ambrose	27th	St John
8th	2nd Sunday of Advent	28th	The Holy Innocents
9th	The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	29th	The Holy Family
10th	Our Lady of Loreto	The PARISH OFFICE is open at the following new times:	
11th	St Damasus	NA.	andou to Eridou 0 am to 2
12th	Our Lady of Guadalupe	Monday to Friday 9 am to 3 pm. Office hours are now shared with St Marys Brownedge. AM at St Gerard's PM at St Marys Brownedge. Phone: 01772 335387 Mobile 07442 385553 (9am-3pm)	
13th	St Lucy		
14th	St John of the Cross		
15th	3rd Sunday of Advent		

21st

St Peter Canisius

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WHATS ON IN THE PAROCHIAL CENTRE

December 2024

Saturday 7th December - Paul J
Saturday 14th December - One Plus One Duo
Saturday 21st December - Kev Wright
24th December - Christmas Eve - Leon
Saturday 28th December - Adam South
31st December - New Year's Eve - Steve Hunter



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