

St Luke's in the City

Celebrating at the Crossroads Christmas Day 2007

Dear Friends,

Darkness penetrated by Light - in the company of millions of christians across the global village we gather by candlelight on this sacred night, dancing once again the same simple liturgical steps we have taken many times before, to the christmas crib, to the feasting table of the Incarnate One, the Love who gives his life for the life of the world. Just how many christmas cribs, simple, gorgeous, stark or ornate will be blessed by the prayers and songs of christians tonight? How many candles are being held around the world this night, tentatively, hopefully, joyfully, tearfully, lovingly? How many faces are gazing once again (or for the first time, or the last time) into this strangest of all scenes, the Infinite willingly becoming finite in a frail and helpless baby? We join with a great company of hopeful, expectant and perplexed adorers of the Christ child - in darkness.

Darkness penetrated by Light. Life transforming death. Christmas and Easter. Christian symbols give no ground to one-sided triumphalism or naïve optimism. The potency of the christian symbols can never be comprehended by rational intellect alone, and are always evacuated of potency by our culture's bland expediency, by convenience and consumerism. As we know only too well from personal experience, the terrors of dreams and nightmares which bring us to a cold sweat in the darkness evaporate with the day's first light. It is perfectly understandable that we long for the day to dawn, but the desperate attempt to avoid our own darkness is one of our culture's great malaises. The denial of our own darkness, our unwillingness to risk the night journey, inevitably leads to unwelcome and often shocking eruptions into our otherwise carefully-constructed days. The christian tradition has always understood the potency and the profound importance of the darkness. That's why Christ's Mass is always celebrated in the darkness, in the middle of the night.

Darkness penetrated by Light, by the Divine efflorescence which transfigures all that threatens us, all that frightens us, all hopelessness and despair. For in spite of rising house prices, booming profits, and unprecedented consumption despondency and despair stalks the night of the Western world in appalling acts of violence, searing isolation, and apocalyptic visions of planetary doom. 'The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.' The Divine Star, the Son of Righteousness pierces the gloom which threatens to overwhelm us. 'And the glory of the Lord shone around them.' Darkness penetrated by the dazzling Love from the Heart of all creation, the Love which illumines the hearts and minds of all people: 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on the earth peace among people of good will.' May you and those you love be blessed by the fragile twinkling Christ light which penetrates this night.

With my love,
David