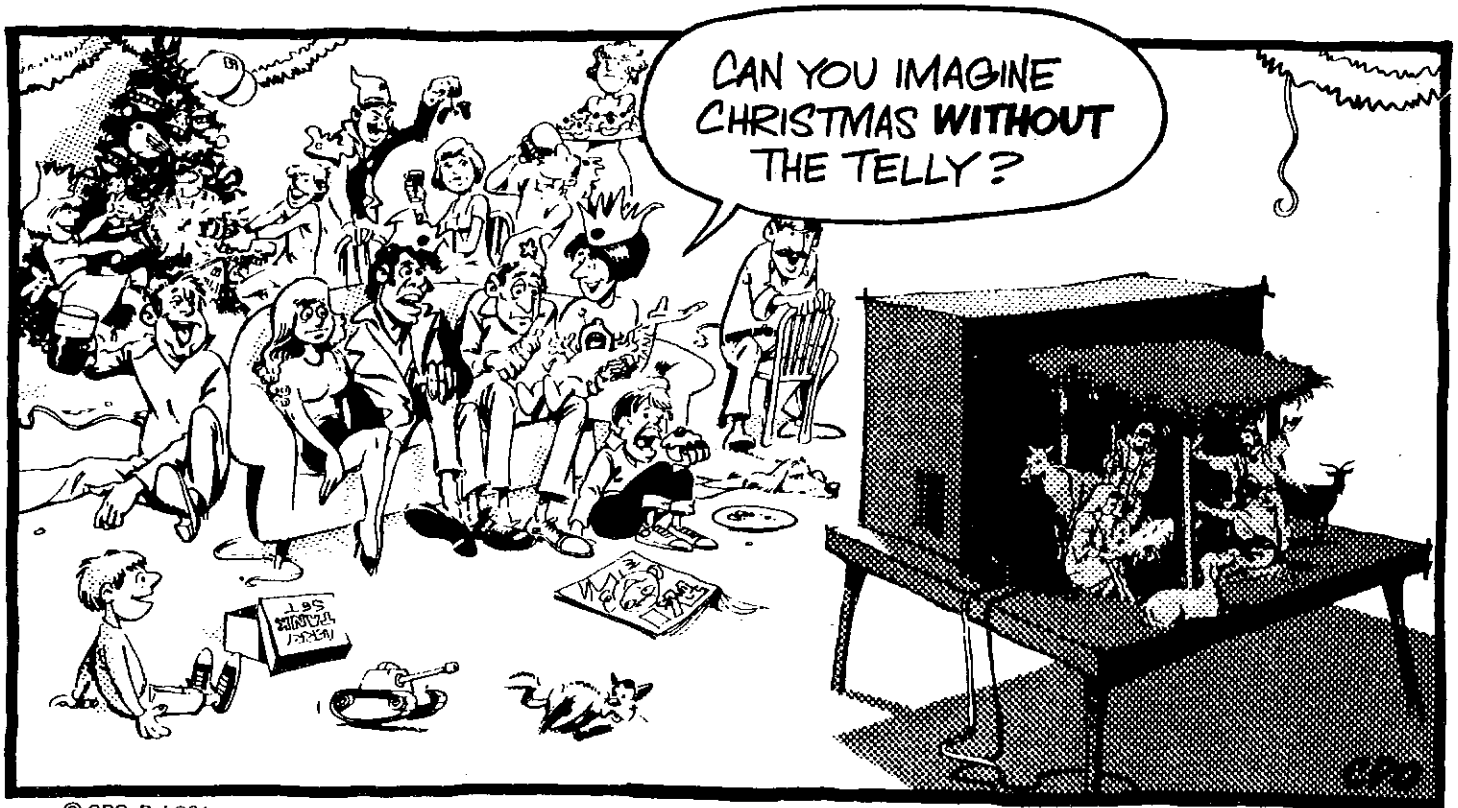


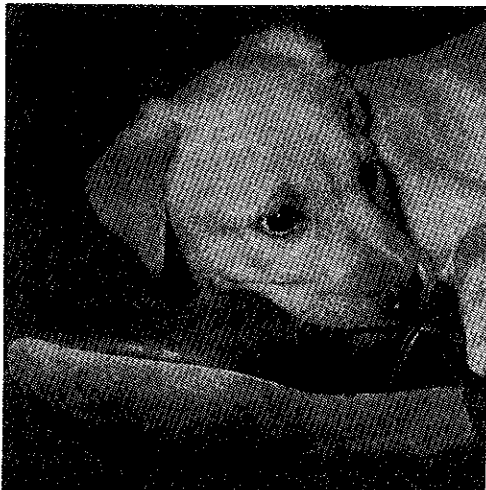
Mustard Seed

ST. THOMAS' CHURCH BRAMPTON, St. John's Walton, St. Peter's Holymoorside
Free throughout the Parish
December 1991



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Not just for Christmas - but for life!



Have you seen the car sticker, "A dog is for life, not just for Christmas"?

It is no good wanting a dog as a present if you are not prepared to take it for walks, regardless of the weather, and clean up after it. Yet each New Year sees more dogs abandoned as unwanted gifts.

God's Christmas present to us all is Jesus Christ. The baby born in Bethlehem all those years ago was God in human form. He came to show us how much God loves us, and to make it possible for us to enjoy a new relationship with God.

Yet every year millions treat him like an abandoned dog - the idea is nice for Christmas, but he is forgotten even before the decorations come down.

Jesus said that he had come to bring life - life in all its fullness. He came to bring peace in place of anxiety, forgiveness in place of guilt, purpose in place of emptiness, and a new relationship with God.

Jesus' name means "God to the rescue". He came to rescue us from our selfishness and sin - a rescue that took him to the cross, and beyond.

Jesus is not just for Christmas - but for life!

Sunday Club

Christmas - Unfair to Parents! by "Disgruntled" of Brampton

One of the things that really gets up my nose about Christmas is when someone says "Well it's nice for the kiddies, anyway". Usually this is an excuse for some dreadful party or concert or something when the same boring old thing that was done last year is done again.

I mean it's bad enough during the rest of the year. You seem to spend half your time rushing round as a sort of kids taxi service. When they are at home they grab a sandwich from the kitchen and sit in front of the T.V. The only time they notice you is when their favourite T shirt hasn't been ironed, or they need some money.

Christmas just about puts the top on it. You rush around buying presents, slaving away over Christmas meals, sorting out all the arrangements and what happens? The kids open their presents, play with them a bit, forget who gave them and then complain about being bored. Meanwhile the house is full of relatives, monopolising the television and disappearing conveniently when there is washing up to be done.

KIDS DON'T REALISE

The kids just don't seem to realise what we have done for them all year, but especially at Christmas. I think if they thought about it they would realise. If only they would just slow down a bit, stop with us for just a minute and perhaps just drop a hint that they do like us and are thankful for what we have done. That would be a real Christmas present.

If parents feel like this, and they do, how do you think our Heavenly Parent feels as we (his children) rush around at Christmas time? Could we not also slow down a bit, spend some time with God, and thank Him for all the things He has done for us, all the tokens of His love and especially the gift of His Son.

God would love you to spend some time with him. He's got all the time in the world and beyond for you.



In a family pulling crackers after their Christmas Dinner, members of all ages enjoy being together. They all belong - but there's a bit of a bias towards the children.

There's a place for everyone in the family of the Church - and it's the children who make that family extra special. Their enthusiasm, their questions, their demands that life mustn't be boring, their sharp and often funny observations..... Jesus said we must all be like children, learning from them. But, if we cause just one of them to stumble, it would be better to have a large millstone hung round our necks.

Children belong in our churches. They are every bit as important as the adults. So, we have Sunday Clubs at St. Thomas' and St. John's - and in both churches building projects are planned to accommodate them better. In St. Peter's Holymoorside, chil-



dren have their own activities as part of the regular Communion Services. We have Family Services which aim to cater equally for all ages. We have youth groups - Pathfinders and CYFA - for them to progress to.

Please complete the reply slip if you would like more information.



Recently over 50 people have been involved in our first series of Christian Basics groups. A few more groups will start in the new year. The groups are especially suitable for people enquiring about Jesus.

The groups last for six weeks and cover the following themes:

- How do we know about God?
- Has science made religion unnecessary?
- Can we trust the bible?
- How can we believe in a God of love when there is so much suffering?
- How can we know God for our selves?
- Do you have to go to church to be a Christian?

Each session includes video material and a look at parts of the Bible. There is also plenty of opportunity to discuss other questions raised by group members.

For further details send in the form on the back page, or contact one of the clergy.

MUSTARD SEED

MUSTARD SEED is our way of saying: "We want to keep in touch with those who live locally". It goes free to all homes in our parish.

Mustard seeds are proverbially tiny things which can grow and grow. We trust something worthwhile will grow out of this MUSTARD SEED.

We are not competing with other local churches. We encourage readers to go along to any of them. We hope increasingly to be working together with all the churches of the neighbourhood.

CONFIRMATION COURSES

The next confirmation service will be around Easter time. Courses will start for adults and teenagers over 14 in the New Year. They are suitable for anyone wanting a "refresher course" as well as for those considering confirmation.

For further details send in the form on the back page, or contact one of the clergy.



The rainbow man

If people were categorised by the colours they wear, Jim Crawley would be at the brightest end of the spectrum.

From his spectacle frames - sometimes red, sometimes green - to his striking shirts and sweaters, Jim's appearance frequently takes in most colours of the rainbow.

But it's for his outgoing and caring personality, as much as his bright apparel, that Jim has come to be known by many, many children at St. Thomas' Church and right across the parish.

Now into his fourth year in overall charge of the children's work at the church, he is a familiar figure to dozens of youngsters who come to the popular Sunday Club week by week and to others perhaps with no links to the church who visit for special events like the annual Summer Club or the Rainbow Party, a positive alternative to Hallowe'en.

CRUCIAL TASK

Parents, too, appreciate the sheer energy and enthusiasm Jim brings to his work with their children. But perhaps that verve is all the more remarkable when you consider that his job for the rest of the week is ... teaching in a Chesterfield secondary school.

So how is it that, after five days' work in the classroom, he still finds a freshness and the necessary patience to do it all over again as a volunteer on Sunday mornings?

"I have to say that my strength and inspiration come from the Lord," he told Mustard Seed.

And after a recent sabbatical period of a few months, taking time to think over and pray about his role in the church, Jim is now more convinced than ever that God

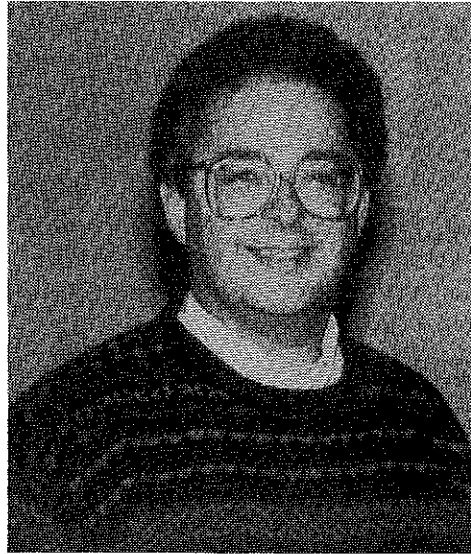
"... I opened my mouth to speak to the children and felt this wonderful warm glow from head to toe - and I knew that this was where the Lord wanted me."

wants him heading up the crucial task of teaching children about their Heavenly Father.

"That first Sunday morning after my sabbatical, I opened my mouth to speak to the children and felt this wonderful, warm glow from head to toe - and I knew that was where the Lord wanted me."

That occasion was one of a number Jim can look back on and say he has been aware of God guiding him and helping him to make important decisions.

Another was when he had been teaching in Kent for six years after leaving college



Jim Crawley

and, although he was enjoying life and his job, he began to feel it was perhaps time to move back to his native Chesterfield.

"I was very conscious that my sister was bearing the responsibility of looking after our parents, and when I started looking for jobs, I seemed to have no trouble at all in finding one.

"But within months of me moving, the jobs situation up here became very tight, which would have made it very difficult to move. In hindsight, I can see God was guiding me into making that move at that specific time."

COMMITMENT

It was during his time at teacher training college in Cheltenham that Jim made a conscious decision to follow Jesus.

Brought up in a Christian family background, he sang in church choirs and was confirmed at the age of 16.

"I thought I was a Christian then. But it was not until I was at college that I realised that you had to commit yourself to Jesus. Then one evening in a service I felt the call. There was no evangelistic appeal - it was just during the prayers.

"I felt I had been pussyfooting about, so there and then I made my commitment. I believed in Jesus, but this was the final step of committing my life."

Ever since, he says, he has known that his life was in God's hands. The whole of his

"As a Christian teacher, you are constantly trying to see the kids as individuals."

life. So when Jim goes into the classrooms at Newbold Community School, he is aware of God being there alongside him.

"It's sometimes difficult as a teacher when you see different groups of children not just to see them as an amorphous mass rather than individuals with individual needs.

"Each of us can go to Christ as an individual and He knows the innermost detail of every one of us - we can't hide anything from Him. So as a Christian teacher you are constantly trying to see the kids as individuals. And when a child comes to you with a problem, even if you are feeling hardpressed, the instinctive reaction is to care for them."

The school has a strong nucleus of Christian teachers and Jim is sure that God brought them together as a group, following the upheaval of the secondary school's reorganisation.

This was yet one more occasion when Jim was very aware of God's help during what, for many teachers, was a traumatic period.

"I learned during the time of reorganisation to put my complete trust in the Lord, so whichever school He wanted me to go to, I would go there. I still prepared and

One Solitary Life

He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman.

He grew up in another village, where he worked in a carpenter's shop till he was thirty. Then for three years he was an itinerant preacher.

He never wrote a book. He never held office. He never had a family or owned a house. He didn't go to college. He never visited a big city. He never travelled two hundred miles from the place where he was born. He did none of the things one normally associates with greatness.

He had no credentials but himself.

He was only thirty-three when the tide of public opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. He was turned over to his enemies and went through a mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While he was dying his executioners gambled for his clothing, the only property he had on earth. When he was dead he was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen centuries have come and gone, and today he is the centre-piece of the human race and the leader of mankind's progress. All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the parliaments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of mankind on this earth as much as that ONE SOLITARY LIFE.

ENQUIRIES

The administration of our Churches is now based in St. Thomas' Church office and general enquiries should be made there. It is staffed each day, Monday to Friday, 9.00am. to 12.30pm.

Office Telephone: 558461

If you want to enquire about a wedding or baptism or just have a word with one of the

clergy, please come to the office on a Monday between 6.30pm. and 7.15pm. (through the door opposite Church View, not the tower end).

The Clergy are:

| | | |
|---------|-------------------|-------------|
| Curates | Brian Porter | Tel: 569106 |
| | Jonathan Jee | Tel: 231089 |
| Rector | Christopher Frith | Tel: 232717 |

CUT HERE

Please complete this and return it to Philip Herrick, St. Thomas' Church Office, Chatsworth Road, S40 3AD

I would like to receive information about

- CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES
- PARENTS AND TOTS GROUPS
- CHRISTIAN BASICS GROUPS
- ADULT CONFIRMATION COURSE
- YOUTH ACTIVITIES
- TEENAGE CONFIRMATION COURSE (minimum age 14)
- COMMUNION AND CUPPA (Thursday 2.00pm., monthly, lifts available)

I would like a VISITOR from the Church.

NAME

ADDRESS

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

**ST. THOMAS',
CHATSWORTH ROAD**

Sunday 22 December
6.30pm. Carol Service (and mince pies)

Christmas Eve
6.00pm. Family Carol Service
11.00pm. Midnight Communion

Christmas Day
8.00am. Holy Communion
10.00am. Family Communion
(children: bring a present to open)

**ST. JOHN'S,
WALTON BACK LANE**

Sunday 22 December
8.00pm. Carol Service (and mince pies)

Christmas Eve
6.00pm. Family Carols at the Crib
11.30pm. Midnight Communion

Christmas Day
9.00am. Family Communion
(children: bring a present to open)

ST. PETER'S, HOLYMOORSIDE

Sunday 22 December
6.00pm. Carol Service
(with Holymoorside Choral Society)

Christmas Eve
7.00pm. Carols around the tree
(in the recreation field)
11.30pm. Midnight Communion

Christmas Day
9.30am. Family Communion
(children: bring a present to open)

THE RAINBOW MAN

continued from previous page

planned to the best of my ability but at the end of the day, His hand was on where I would go.

"Yes, I was nervous about interviews but had a wonderful sense of peace about the whole situation."

