

27 January 2010: Ann Saunders St Laurence Catholic Church

All the good we mean to do

I was sad to see the snow go. Like many, I was tied to the house and it was great to catch up on some admin, tidy cupboards and do some long overdue mending. I also loved the absolute silence on the first night of the heavy snow. When I did manage to venture out on foot, it was warming to witness the cheeriness, openness and goodwill of other people out and about. We read about many unsung heroes in the press and I know some carers who walked seven miles to get to work at a local Residential Home and friends who were only too pleased to help out neighbours who had power cuts, mulled wine included!



Our Parish Priest said, 'Christmas is for life and not just for Christmas.' Just as the spirit of Christmas can be forgotten, that same convivial spirit we felt during the snow can soon be neglected in sunnier times. In the snow, we seemed to have more time for one another; the pace of life had slowed down dramatically. 'Loving thy neighbour as thyself' means finding time all year round to offer a listening ear when a friend is feeling down, to visit someone who is housebound or in hospital and even to take in a neighbour's wheelie bin, one of the thoughtful services an old neighbour of mine used to do for several of us.

I have learnt over the years how important it is to act quickly on a thought of ringing or going to see someone. How often do we fail to listen to that inner thought and then hear that particular person has been ill or in need of help?

I almost phoned, I almost spoke.
I almost invited the next door folk.
Oh what a pity no one knew
All the good I meant to do.

As I come across a surviving needle of our Christmas tree or a forgotten decoration see the last remains of snowmen I am reminded of the spirit of Christmas and of those snowy weeks and hope that they may not be forgotten, and that we shall continue to reach out practically and compassionately to those in need. Christ said, 'When you did it for the least of these bretheren, you did it for me.'