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Well done, good and faithful servants

Another New Year, and another New Year's Honours list. Between this and the Queen's Birthday list around 3.500 people from all ranks of our society will this year be selected to receive a medal or some higher award, such as a knighthood. For some it will have been for important work well done; for others for some exceptional achievement in sport or the theatre.

The majority, however, will become Members of the British Empire (MBE), often for voluntary involvement in their community or for giving that something extra as they go about their routine daily work. And many of them will be saying, "Why me? What have I done to deserve this? Lots of others have done as much, and more." Their friends and colleagues obviously think otherwise since some of them would have been involved in the nomination. Yet in many ways these are the 'people next door'.

Once again we can read about the latest local additions. This is the time to be proud of them and honour them in our own way. Maybe too it will remind us to acknowledge all those others who may not have received a medal but who also deserve our thanks and appreciation,

I can't help thinking of a parable told by Jesus about a King who called some to a place of honour beside him, to their great surprise. They had not realised that, as they helped their neighbours in need, they were serving their King himself. Similarly those who had thought only of themselves had failed to recognise their King in the people they ignored. (You can read it in St Matthew's gospel chapter 25).