

Christmas Morning 2020

We couldn't have Midnight Mass last night because we couldn't deep clean the church between then and now. And that means that this service is our Christmas Communion service and therefore, by its very nature, somewhat less frivolous than our usual Christmas morning family service. But there are some traditions that are simply too good to let go. And one of those is Christmas cracker jokes!

The problem is, though, I haven't been to any Christmas dinners to collect them. Normally, it's a perk of my job to graze my way through Advent, from Christmas dinner to Christmas dinner, and everybody knows that I want cracker jokes for Christmas morning, so they're passing the little bits of paper down the table, and by Christmas Day I've got a pocket full.

What we do have this morning, though, is the TV channel 'Gold's' Top Ten Cracker Jokes 2020. So here they are, in reverse order:

10. Which Christmas film was 30 years ahead of its time? Home Alone.
9. What do the Trumps do for Christmas dinner? They put on a super spread.
8. Why can't Boris Johnson make his Christmas cake until the last minute? He doesn't know how many tiers it should have.
7. Why couldn't Mary and Joseph join their work conference call? Because there was no Zoom at the inn.
6. Why is it best to think of 2020 like a panto? Because eventually it will be behind you.
5. Why did the pirates have to go into lockdown? Because the "Arrrr" rate had risen.
4. Why are Santa's reindeer allowed to travel on Christmas Eve? They have herd immunity.

The Revd Matthew Pollard, Rector of Bridlington Priory

3. Why didn't Mary and Joseph make it to Bethlehem?
All Virgin flights were cancelled.
2. Did you hear that production was down at Santa's workshop? Many of his workers have had to Elf isolate.
1. What is Dominic Cummings' favourite Christmas song? Driving home for Christmas.

So let's have a jolly, jolly Christmas; not just a jolly careful Christmas, but a genuinely jolly one, full of laughter and fun. There will be time enough after Christmas to get our heads round the mind-blowing theological significance of Christmas: that God shares his life with us, isn't just a remote old man in the sky who needs placating, but fully identifies with the human condition; that God interrupted the time/space continuum and put the end in the middle so we already know how the story ends and therefore can live with confidence and hope. We'll sort all that out later.

For now, let's just pause and gaze in awe and wonder at the Christ-child lying in the manger and hear once again the message of the angels: peace on earth and goodwill to all people. Take a deep breath. Let those words drop from your mind on to your heart. And let

it be our prayer, that with Jesus in our hearts, that's the way we'll live throughout the New Year.

Amen.