

## **A New Year Reflection from a St Mary's Churchwarden (Charles Wilson)**

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

After all the events before Christmas and the festivities of Christmas itself, I always rather like having some quieter days before, or after, New Year's Day to both recover and reflect. It is good to look back on the last year, and count blessings; or ponder sad times or missed opportunities. Resolutions can be helpful, if you're very determined. For me, I find that my "Resolutions" of yesteryear were actually more like a list of Aspirations - so I'll stay with them.

Aspirations are wonderful and to be enjoyed, aren't they? Many of us love thinking about warm, hot beaches on holiday at this time of year. Or family re-unions. Or a mug of Gluwein on a cold, high mountain in February. Holidays are booked. Plans are made.

Just recently, I've been dreaming about riding my motorbike to Istanbul, an idea I've had for many years, which needs to happen before I'm ruled out by Tempus Fugit, or some younger voices of sanity. Happily, my pillion is still up for it. It would be unwise for us to make a resolution to go on such a long journey. But as an aspiration? Why not!

I wonder if the star-gazing Wise Men, or Magi, made a resolution to find out an answer to astrological conundrums; or whether they set off with hopes and aspirations, on a journey of discovery?

I love seeing the amazing hopefulness of youth. The helplessness of a small baby soon turns into the eager hopefulness of a 5 year old. "I can climb that tree"; or "let's go to Mars next Sunday"! Or the confident interrogation we've all seen by a ten year old. Little is known of Jesus' life between baby and adolescence, but at twelve years old we see him questioning with great wisdom the learned Pharisees at the Temple.

I can see this in the local schoolchildren when we (St Mary's team) are helping with Assemblies. Limitless imagination and confidence. Very refreshing. Of course, parents know it may not be done that easily, but I love a child's capacity to dream, imagine and speculate. Like the Magi, maybe. (Come dressed as a King or Wise person, if you can, at our first Family Service of 2018 on 7<sup>th</sup> January!)

I've been reading recently the last book in the Bible, Revelation, and was greatly helped by Eugene Peterson (who also wrote the Message) pointing out that the book doesn't add substance to what we already know; but it finds a *new way to say it*. We don't look for more *information* in the book of Revelation, we just need our imaginations revived and stimulated.

A bit like the English Test cricket team in Australia. After two bad defeats, it might have been hard to recover their confidence and take a game off the Aussies at the WACA. Dawid Malan and Jonny Bairstow gave it a go. By now, you'll know if they succeeded!

So here's to a New Year, and faith for our hopes, aspirations or resolutions. And World Cup success - you can decide which sport!