

### **The Circumcision of Christ – 3.1.16**

Paul to the Ephesians speaks of the Christian call – and says, “This is a great mystery”. He goes on, “I speak of Christ and the Church” (Ephesians Ch.5.v.32). And to the Corinthians on another occasion, “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (Isaiah). Words worth pondering – both that great mystery – and, on how we discover what God is doing. But we fall short of pondering – and put off the things that have happened through that first Christmas.

We concede that we have neither seen nor heard, at any great depth, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. In a word – with George Herbert – our hearts are shrivelled.

Luke can help us.

The shepherds make known abroad the things they have heard and seen – they are excited. But Luke surely means us to note – and compare, Mary keeping all these things and pondering them in her heart.

There is a difference. The shepherds (and those hearing them) are caused to wonder. And like them we too wonder. We wonder at all sorts of things. But often no more than wonder – wonder which is fleeting – wonder for the most part which doesn't include pondering.

Modern life doesn't have time nor inclination to consider closely things beyond the immediate.

Not to ponder things – not to meditate on the shortness of our life on earth. This is to conceal ourselves from ourselves – and we come to a kind of gentleman's agreement – and often literally shake hands with another who is also not pondering. A kind of Amen to our wonder – as though that is as far as we can go.

But it isn't. Mary is the proof of otherwise. She reminds us of quietness and longing – and of the Word of God.

When faced with the calling of her son – she, Mary, knows there has to be more than the eye can see – or the ear hear.

And she knows that our hearts may recover greenness.