

Thought for the week
4th Sunday of Advent (C)
23rd December 2018

God of hosts, bring us back; Let your face shine on us and we shall be saved!

This Sunday's psalm response sounds just so right for this time of year.

Amongst all of the glitter and the tinsel; the lights (flashing or not) and the decorations (not forgetting a well-known story that speaks of a bright star in the East): the image of our God's face shining on us is so powerful. Imagine the joy in a beaming, smiling face (as children have when opening their presents on Christmas day): an infectious joy that unconditionally shares the love it proclaims. This is the sort of face that I imagine that the psalmist is calling out to God to shine on us.

He also has a total conviction that God, as a shepherd king, will turn to help us if only we call on him. We are offered a love that wipes away our faults and failings; a love that gives us strength and a life that gives us confidence to "*call upon your name*" knowing that our prayers will be heard.

That "*shining face of our God*" is not just that of the smiling baby in our cribs or on our Christmas cards. It needs to be your face and my face as we go about our daily lives, so that we can show and share that same unconditional love with those we meet.

Our God is also in the faces of everyone we meet from the, perhaps slightly scary, rough sleeper, to the fraught shop assistant. Recognising God made man in them will help each of us to make Christ present in ourselves, not only for Christmas, but for ever.

May the peace and the joy of Christmas be with you all.

A parishioner