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## GOOD NEWS

### CHRISTMAS STAMPS

Again this year our UK Christmas stamps are depicting the true meaning of Christmas. The second class stamp says "O hear Angel voices" with an image of an elegant angel, with a yellow halo and rainbow wings, hovering above the darkness in the star studded night. The overseas £2.20 stamp is more colourful with the three kings following the "star of wisdom, star of night".

### CHILDREN AND CAROLS

This morning I wandered into our church for a short time of prayer and had a surprise. About 50 children were there from our parish school rehearsing for our carol service in December. They were all ages, lively and exuberant. Among them were children with disability and special educational needs. The performance was amazing, the children sang with such enthusiasm, and it was a very special moment for me to see them all happy and with such caring teachers. At the end of their performance they formed a walking bus, each child with their bright yellow visibility jackets. As they sang of "Peace on earth", this was a moment of hope for the future and for our young people and for us to preserve planet Earth for their future.

### A MOTHER'S LOVE

I had the experience this week of spending an hour in a hospital outpatient clinic waiting area. There were only a handful of us there, including a young mother with her little daughter of about four years old. The little girl was in a large pram and unable to stand, use her hands normally or communicate by normal speech. But there was such love and joy visible between mother and child as they played together as she gurgled, laughed and expressed herself in her own way. I thought of Jesus and his mother Mary and what a prophetic witness to love and joy that mother and her child are to us in the frenetic haste and bustle of our world today.



## FOR REFLECTION AND PRAYER

### RUSSIANS TOOK 2,400 CHILDREN TO BELARUS

Yale University's Humanitarian Research Lab has said "Russia's systemic effort to identify, collect, transport and re-educate Ukraine's children has been coordinated by President Putin and his Belarusian counterpart".

### COP 28

The UN's climate change talks start on November 30th in Dubai. At last year's talks in Egypt, countries agreed to the creation of a Loss and Damage Fund to help vulnerable countries rebuild after climate damage. This fund has not been created and the money has yet to reach the people who need it most as they continue to suffer. The UK government has backtracked on its climate change commitments and fossil fuel companies are making eye-watering profits. Tonight, the BBC main news stated that the Dubai host for the UN talks in its preparatory talks has made energy deals with other countries including Canada. This is illegal.

### ISRAEL/GAZA

A further two-day truce has been negotiated in Qatar. We pray that this may be extended even more and for a ceasefire, and the release of all the Israeli hostages and more aid be allowed in for the stricken and hungry people of Gaza.

### BETHLEHEM CUTS CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES

The main churches in Bethlehem have cancelled Christmas celebrations this year in protest at the violence in Gaza. The town will only host religious ceremonies, with the annual Nativity scene and Christmas tree deemed "inappropriate".

### ALARM IN ARGENTINA

Missionaries have voiced alarm at the victory of Javier Milei in the recent Presidential election. Milei plans to replace the Argentinian peso with the American dollar, reduce the number of government ministries from 18 to 8 and "progressively remove social benefits". The President of the Argentinian RC Bishops Conference said "We value the democratic day we experienced yesterday and pray the Lord will enlighten the newly elected authorities that they may work for the common good of our people".

Mary Bradley