

Read: Revelation 2:1-17*'I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance'* **Revelation 2:2a**

I find reading these words right at the beginning of Advent rather thought provoking. Especially considering how busy the next few weeks will become. To know that God sees my work and my toil, and that He sees my patient endurance, brings me much comfort in the middle of the chaos of this season.

And yet there is also a warning for us, because the passage goes on to say that *'you have abandoned the love you had at first'* (v.4).

How very easy it is for us, not just at this time of year, but throughout our lives, to get so caught up in the 'doing' of being Christian that we forget the God whom we worship. Many are the times when I sit down at the end of the day to read by Bible and pray, only to find myself falling asleep because the day's tasks have left me too tired.

Don't get me wrong, many days are spent doing lots of good works for the Lord, that is one of the privileges of being able to work full-time as a Priest. And yet, all the good works in the world are worth nothing unless I put Jesus at the centre of them. If not careful I can be guilty of doing just that; of focusing so much on the doing that I fail to find time to be with God.

This is a timely reminder to us, right at the beginning of Advent, not to let the business of Christmas divert our attention from the reason behind the celebration. The 25th December will come and go as it does every year, whether I am ready for it or not. But daily focus on Jesus cannot be put off.

As we travel through the book of Revelation let us turn our eyes towards Jesus, place Him first and foremost in our minds, give Him the best part of our days, remind ourselves each and every day of our love for Him, and then open ourselves to receive His love and care for us.

Let us pray: *Father, may we find your peace in the joy of the upcoming season. In the middle of the excitement, help us to focus on You as we prepare to celebrate the wonder of Your Son coming down to earth to live with us. Amen.*

The Revd Anne Beverley, Vicar of Christ Church, Wesham & Dean of Women's Ministry.