

21st December 2020

Best

“The best is the best, though a hundred judges have declared it so.”

Arthur Quiller-Couch, Oxford Book of English Verse (preface)

From *Strictly* to your local Dog Show, measuring what is “the best” is a matter of personal judgement. Unless there is a definitive measurement – such as in a long-jump or a Grand Prix – choosing what is best is always subjective. We might have widely differing judgements of the same thing. Christmas is no different. What has been *your* best Christmas might not be the best for someone else. It depends on what’s happening to you. Only you can measure “good, better, best” for your Christmas.

This year, much of the talk is about Christmas being “the worst”. The announcements this past weekend of tighter restrictions on Christmas gatherings and travel go a long way towards confirming that. Someone said yesterday, “Covid-19 has ruined my Christmas.” I can understand why they would say that. Indeed, it might be something you would say too, and I’ve shed some tears this weekend over the changing of our own family arrangements. It’s just awful – and it could well be “the worst”.

But wouldn’t it be better to stop measuring Christmas, placing it on a scale, working out whether this year’s is better or worse, the best or the *very* worst, of the Christmases we’ve known? It can still have your input and turn out to be an adventure. It will be what you make it. And at its centre is something beyond measurement or evaluation. “Love shall be our token, love be yours, and love be mine”, a familiar carol assures us. No need to measure that, is there? And doesn’t that mean that *every* Christmas – even the worst one – is *always* the best?

A prayer for today

*It’s the best Christmas ever when someone gets a gift
beyond their wild imaginings and dreams.*

*It’s the best Christmas ever, when expectations shift,
and spirit-songs have hope among their themes.*

*It’s the best Christmas ever – the Gift above all else
is offered now from God’s own treasure-store.*

*It’s the best Christmas ever as Love comes down for all,
to fill our homes, to bless our lives once more.*

Adapted from *A Blessing to Follow* by Tom Gordon