

16th December 2021

Delays

**“Prepare the way!” This is our part as Advent days slip past,
to meet our God in human form, the Love that’s made to last.
Rise up! Be tested by the call! Don’t dither or delay!
For Christ will come! He’s born for you! So come! Prepare the way!”**

Tom Gordon, Prepare the Way

On a recent trip from London, my train was delayed. At the first station out from Kings Cross, after we’d been stationary for 10 minutes, an announcement told us: “The relief driver hasn’t turned up for the change of crew.” So we had to take a detour to Lincoln (look it up and see how crazy that is!) to pick up a relief driver before returning to our journey north. The train was seventy minutes delayed into getting to Edinburgh.

I don’t know whether that’s a common occurrence with LNER or not. But it reminded me that sometimes we have to face delays, even the ones attributable to the absence of a driver.

I don’t cope well with delays. If I could have driven the train myself, I would gladly have offered. Like many of you, I’m sure, delays that are beyond our control are frustrating. But what about the delays we cause ourselves? Putting off doing a repair, only to find that, by the time we get round to it, the problem is worse? Our lack of preparation, and last-minute rushing, which causes us to miss our appointment or connection? If delays out with our control are hard to bear, what about the ones we cause?

We’re ten days away from Christmas, and we’ll still have a million things to do. As a result, we delay thinking about the meaning of it all, and perhaps we put it off till it’s too late. Or maybe there are so many other things that take up our time that that we miss the meaning altogether. We cause our own delay in finding the meaning of Christ’s Incarnation.

So “don’t dither or delay” this year. Give time to reflect on the meaning of it all. Advent is moving along quickly. Christmas won’t be delayed! So why should the meaning of it be delayed by our dithering and lack of awareness? If you don’t get the meaning of it, you can’t blame it on someone else – like the non-appearance of train driver. It’s up to you. Are you ready? Don’t dither or delay on the journey this time around ...

A prayer for today

Yes, I have time ... No rush ... To think ... To pray ... To wonder ... Amen

An original reflection by © Tom Gordon

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