

White Eagle's Christmas Message

A184 Sunday Address 21st December 1947 St Mary Abbots Place, London Christmas Carol Service

The text of this address is as issued in the magazine Angelus after it was given, apart from correction of errors

Text: from Angelus, December 1948, where it is headed 'White Eagle's Christmas Message (given at the Carol Service last year.)'

*Context: as was customary, the address is shorter than most, because the Christmas service was so dominated by the carols. On this occasion White Eagle speaks of actually visiting some of the carol practices. He also mentions the toys under the Christmas Tree, collected, by tradition, for disadvantaged children. A note in Angelus for the January following the service states that no less than 1215 toys were given. There is a much longer account of the service in the February 1948 magazine, including a list of the carols sung, which is of sufficient interest to be reproduced under the address as a further clue to context.**

General Notes: for the third time (the others being 6 July and 7 December) White Eagle mentions the 'material problems, personal, national and international' that have his congregation worried – the wider ones probably being the economic situation and the developing Cold War.

References: there are some submerged references. White Eagle speaks of a carol focusing on 'days of old' – looking at the list, though, he may have meant the comment generally rather than specifically. 'Only truth shall set men free' obliquely refers to John 8 : 32: 'Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free'. 'And a little child shall lead them' is Isaiah 11 : 6, but behind the thought here is Matthew 18 : 3: 'Except ye become as a little child'.

White Eagle's Address:

Beloved brethren, we cannot find words in which to welcome everyone of you with a great tender love to this Christmas Service. We would also congratulate our choristers and organist and would like them to know that we have been present at some of the rehearsals to which so much time, patience and effort have been given.

It matters little what we say tonight. What is more important is the spirit of brotherhood we see engendered in your hearts, because a great spiritual light and power is concentrated upon these gatherings at the White Eagle Lodge. The brethren in the spirit depend upon you to be their channel. We would stress this, and ask you on this Christmas night to open your consciousness at all times – in your daily life and work, in your daily contacts with humanity – remembering that through you the light of brotherhood and love can reach some of the shadowy corners of men's minds and lives. Therefore, when sorrow, fear and anxiety take possession of men and women, through you a light may flow. You can help us to raise your fellow creatures from darkness into the light of spiritual happiness and realisation of the continual closeness of the Great White Spirit.

We would also thank all of you for the loving service expressed in the gifts brought for the Christmas tree. This expression of your love will give much happiness to the children who will receive your gifts. Through such acts you are reaching the hearts of the young people. This is of utmost importance. We do not think that adults always remember the influence they can exert upon young souls. Children look to the adult for an example, for a manifestation of the gentle spirit of the Saviour. To us the Saviour represents that glorious spiritual essence

White Eagle's Christmas Message

A184 Sunday Address 21st December 1947 St Mary Abbots Place, London Christmas Carol Service

which flows to man from the very heart of the Deity, and from which man receives and can manifest in his daily life a childlike simplicity, gentleness and loving kindness.

At this time of the year the Christ-Mass is celebrated on the earth and in the heavenly spheres: the festival of the Christ who is the Son. We have told you many times that this festival is not confined to orthodox Christianity but has been celebrated throughout the ages. We of the ancient world were always accustomed to worshipping the risen sun. For us this meant more abundant life, happiness, love and brotherhood. To our lives it brought peace and plenty, comfort and all the bounty of the earth; and more than all this, it stimulated all that was highest within us. At this present Christmas Festival, a like outpouring of love flows from the highest heaven down through the spheres of spirit life to the earth. You also celebrate Christmas in a spirit of peace and joy. Well done! We enjoy seeing your happiness, seeing your spirits raised in thanksgiving. In heaven even a great celebration is held. From the highest this light, this stimulation descends to the hearts of the people, endowing them with goodwill, brotherhood, kindness and thankfulness.

You at the present time are somewhat troubled about material problems, personal, national and international. If you open your hearts to this inflow of the glorified Christ you will find that your problems rapidly solve themselves. You are getting nearer to this solution when you draw nearer to the spiritual life.

We would speak at length on this subject, for angels and planetary beings draw closer at this season, waiting for you to catch their message of guidance. As in days of old (of which you have been singing) so it is today. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. There is no new truth; truth is the same yesterday, today and for ever; and only truth shall set men free; that truth is that man is here on earth in a body to learn to arise in spiritual power until he overcomes – what? Call it what you will; call it sin if you like. What then is sin? Sin is when the soul turns away from the prompting of its own conscience – and there are many people today who do this. When all men learn to listen to and obey this still small voice a solution of all cares and problems will come. For the purpose of man's life is that he shall rise above his lower nature and manifest the Christ's love, one to another. 'And a little child shall lead them' – the spirit of the gentle Christ child. Therefore, be as children in heart; be simple and childlike; for men and women can only become truly great when such a spirit enters in and possesses them.

With these few words we close. Our gratitude to all for your spiritual companionship; our gratitude to all servers and workers in the Lodge, and to our choir; to its conductor and organist, for all the joy you have brought into our service.

My beloved family, we wish you a very happy, sweet and peaceful Christmas. May the Christ Child abide in your hearts. Peace and goodwill be unto all men. God bless you, God bless you, everyone. God bless you.

*Description of the service, from Angelus, February 1948:

White Eagle's Christmas Message

A184 Sunday Address 21st December 1947 St Mary Abbots Place, London Christmas Carol Service

The Christmas Carol Service

It is not generally known that when it becomes necessary a balcony can be built around three sides of the main chapel in the Lodge without any major reconstruction of the building. Such a necessity was very much to the fore during the Carol Service on December 21st when the attendance overflowed into the annexe chapel and the existing balcony. Despite the extra chairs hired, some people were standing. More people than ever before were accommodated. The Christmas tree was there in all its glory of lights, toys, tinsel and frost, and the Lodge was beautifully decorated with holly and evergreens. It is plain that the Carol Service is becoming an institution which draws a bigger attendance each year.

The service opened with the distant sound of carolling voices calling us to worship with 'O Come all ye faithful' and growing louder and more joyous as the choir in their processional reached the main body of the Lodge and the whole congregation rose to join in the cry, 'O Come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord!' The choir's first group of carols was an Alleluia Round by the 18th century composer Boyce, and the Old Gloucestershire carol 'The Seven Joys of Mary' (a tour de force for our young organist no less than for the choir. Did the kindly spirit of Walford Davies hover over the singers as they sung with so much feeling his beautiful arrangement of the old English melody to the 'The Babe in the Manger'?

The congregation were not to be outdone and left the choir in no doubt at all that they too could sing as they lifted up their voices in 'Hark! the herald angels sing'. Choir and congregation each took their part in the service which followed; the choir with such old favourites as 'When the crimson sun had set' with its joyous *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* and the well-loved Czech lullaby 'Rocking', and the congregation in their turn with 'The First Nowell' and 'It came upon the midnight clear'. These carols and the aspiration and worship expressed in prayers and reading all prepared the way so that we were ready with hearts full to greet White Eagle as he came to talk and give his Christmas message to 'My dear family'.

This account would pay tribute to the quality with which these carols were rendered and happy spiritual atmosphere of the whole service. The choir sang with enthusiasm and evident enjoyment but also with musical and spiritual understanding. It was indeed a festival of thankfulness at which it was a joy to be present – thankfulness for the many blessings which have accrued to the Lodge and to those who worship therein during the year, and for the fact that at long last the service was held in a building which now promises to belong to those who worship within its walls; and most of all, thankfulness to those spiritual powers which have brought the Lodge into being by constant service and devotion, and have upheld it during the troublous years.

Programme of Carols

Alleluia Round – Boyce

The Seven Joys of Mary – Old Gloucestershire Carol arranged and harmonised by Basil Harwood

The Babe in the Manger – Old melody by Corner, harmonised by Walford Davies

When the crimson sun – French traditional arranged by Greatheed

In the bleak mid-winter – Holst

Ding Dong! Merrily on high – French traditional, harmonised Charles Wood

Children's Song of the Nativity – English traditional arranged by Vaughan Williams

White Eagle's Christmas Message

A184 Sunday Address 21st December 1947 St Mary Abbots Place, London Christmas
Carol Service

Rocking – Czech traditional

When the herds were watching – Old English melody

O little town of Bethlehem – Walford Davies

The search matches with either words and phrases, which appear in the text, or the following 'key' words and phrases, which are similar in meaning to those in the document:

ageless festivals, Christ Mass, eternal celebration of the rising sun, manifesting the Christ Light, stimulation of the highest good, joy, importance of music

