

## Special Days

I recently made the connection of Candlemas with 40 days after Christmas and the presentation of the baby Jesus in the temple as required by Jewish tradition of the day. Candlemas being the last day of the Christmas season, my educator was going to pack their nativity scene away until the start of the next Christmas season. This is the longest I've heard someone have a nativity scene out other than in shops/displays advertising nativity scenes and our own house.

Our nativity scenes stay out all year. It started as a way to enjoy them at a time we were away from home for Christmas a few years on the trot. But soon it came to reflect more than that. They mark each day as special, a new start.

Festivals, special days and remembrance days have been part of our lives for ages. Introduced to mark an occasion someone has felt significant. Not least are birthdays and anniversaries and New Year. They all present an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on what has gone before and what is to come.

But have you ever wondered how limiting these days can be? How many people have you known to embrace getting older rather than bemoan or fear the fact? How often have you decided a change is necessary but will wait until the new year to affect it? And how many arguments and disagreements develop because someone forgot an anniversary? Where's the love and understanding?

These days are meant to be special but what about other days? Are they any less special? How about if we treated every day as special? These days you can get hot cross buns any day of the year in supermarkets as well as oranges thanks to cold storage and flights to move goods across the globe.

How limiting is restricting our demonstrations of love to specific days/times of the year? And how much do we put our lives on hold pending that new year's resolution or giving something up for Lent or Eid? Why put off for tomorrow what we can start today? I don't recall Jesus saying, 'I'll heal you but only tomorrow or next week etc'. Certainly, some of the prophets tried to delay things but were soon encouraged to get on with it.

Many of our special days were determined before the days of marketing experts and allowed time out for good reason. But in today's chaotic and inclusive societies where special days are dominated by commercial opportunities and expectations, I can't but help wonder how treating every day as an anniversary, Christmas, Eid, Lent or birthday would change our thinking and approach to life.



AS 7/2/2020