

My best wishes to you all for a prosperous new year.

As usual, my new year will come with the intent to lose weight, do more exercise - which means getting out more. Just to prove that I need to, I'll tell you that I find etymology - the study of the origins of words - a most fascinating subject. (Yes, you now agree that I need to get out more.)

I'm not an expert by any means; however, prosperous is defined as "successful in material terms" in an American dictionary I have. In the shorter OED, however, there is a greater openness of meaning towards the original Latin, meaning, "doing well."

Did we do well last year? Some of us were bereaved, or married, or baptised - one of us was confirmed (well done, Jack!); some changed or gained or lost employment, some lost money, others made it. Some of us made great educational advances, some of us - quoting almost all my old reports - could have done better!

But in all this what did we gain in spirit? I have met both globally and locally people with almost nothing to speak of materially, or have not had momentous careers, yet are the happiest of souls. In fairness, I've met many people who *have* had the riches and success of this world and still been the happiest of souls - but they are always the ones who carry it with humility and gratitude.

My hope for the new year is that we will all prosper - do well - in being whatever it is we are meant to be as children of God; that we will all have souls full of contentment and love; that this community will be a utopia of good-will beyond Christmas and the New Year parties. I know this can happen, for I have seen it blossoming everywhere. Jesus has given us the means to do this: the power of the Holy Spirit. (If you don't know how: ask!)

Again I say, as St John says in his 3rd letter (King James Bible): Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.