

KYRLE PROBUS CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2015

Kyrle Probus Club invited Rev. Michael Fass to give the annual Christmas Message at their meeting on Thursday, December 17th.

The talk was later hailed by the club's president Martin Barr as 'one of the most entertaining and interesting' given to members.

Mr Fass related how the Christmas Crib tableau was vividly recreated by St. Francis of Assisi in a remote and rugged Italian village in the 19th Century.

St Francis, the patron saint of animals, was born in 1181 amidst a bitter dispute between Church and the state ruled by the Holy Roman Emperor Henry 1. He spent his early years as a rebellious youth at the height of the Crusaders' turbulent invasion of Palestine.



But he also became increasingly renowned for giving to the poor and developing an aim for a better society, helping people to realise their dreams.

Mr Fass described how St. Francis responded during a pre-Christmas storm to a plea for help after a village had been attacked by brigands, forcing starving and fearful villagers suffering from a poor harvest to hide behind shutters, one mother nursing a sick new-born baby bereft of milk.

St. Francis defied packs of wolves to ride his mule through deep snow to rescue villagers with food and blankets, and summoned them to open their shutters and view his famous tableau. It depicted the classic mother-and-child scene around the manger that served as a bed for the new-born Christ. The vote of thanks was by Mr Barr.

Mr Fass, who was ordained in 1995, is team priest of an area including Hope Mansell, Weston-under-Penyard, Lea, Aston Ingham and Linton.

