



EPIPHANY 2 - SUNDAY 17th JANUARY

As we are unable to meet together in church, this service will give you an outline of a service you can do at home. If you have them, gather a few things that will help you create a sacred space – we suggest a cross, Bible and candle.



INTRODUCTION

Church will remain closed during this national lockdown crisis as will all the team churches but Peter and the St. Anne's team are doing their virtual service online including other members of the team. We will continue with this "Worship at Home" service for as long as it is required. Many thanks to Peter who has written the reflection this week and Robin has agreed to do next weeks, so it is making my job easier and you are getting some different points of view and learning from the "experts". Hope you are all keeping well vaccines are now being rolled out which hopefully will give a lot of you peace of mind. It's early days yet but we have come this far so there is lots of hope to come and so much to look forward to. (Did you spot last week's mistake?)

Stay safe.

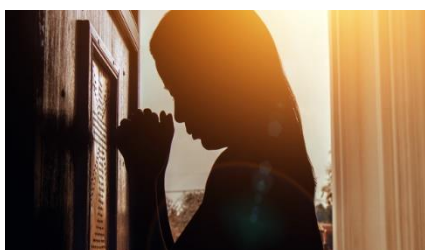
Jan B

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen

CONFESSION

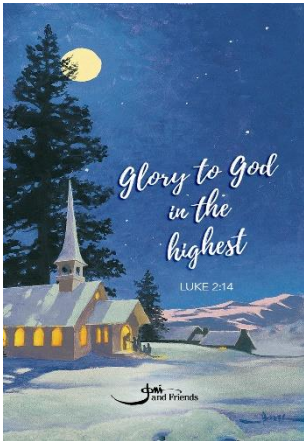
Let us take time to reflect on the last week and say sorry to God for the things we have done or not done.



Almighty God our heavenly Father we have sinned against you and against our neighbour in thought word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ who died for us, forgive us all

that is past and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen

GLORIA



Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ only Son of the Father, Lord God Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world: have mercy upon us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father : receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One , you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

THE COLLECT

Almighty God, in Christ you make all things new: transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

THE OLD TESTAMENT READING - PSALM 139 1-6, 13-15

O LORD, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it completely. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.

For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well

This is the word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God**

THE NEW TESTAMENT READING - Revelation 5.1-10

Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll written on the inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals; and I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?' And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it. And I began to weep bitterly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. Then one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep. See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.'

Then I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders a Lamb standing as if it had been slaughtered, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He went and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who was seated on the throne. When he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell before the Lamb, each holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. They sing a new song:

‘You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slaughtered and by your blood you ransomed for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation; you have made them to be a kingdom and priests serving our God, and they will reign on earth.

This is the word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God**

THE GOSPEL READING - JOHN 1, 43-51

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John – **Glory to you O Lord.**



The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, ‘Follow me.’ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.’ Nathanael said to him, ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’ Philip said to him, ‘Come and see.’ When Jesus saw Nathanael coming towards him, he said of him, ‘Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!’ Nathanael asked him, ‘Where did you come to know me?’ Jesus answered, ‘I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you.’ Nathanael replied, ‘Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!’ Jesus answered, ‘Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.’ And he said to him, ‘Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord – **Praise to you O Christ**

REFLECTION

This is a strange and quite difficult passage. It is not clear why seeing Nathanael under a fig-tree might be significant, though the prophets described peace as being able to sit under one's own fig-tree.

The reference to the angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man links back to the famous dream that Jacob had in Genesis 28 but there the angels descend on a ladder, not on the Son of Man; There is already a link to Jacob, in the description of Nathanael by Jesus. Nathanael is described as one without deceit, but Jacob was one who was full of deceit and trickery. Ultimately, we do not know quite what the fig-tree means, nor quite what the image of the angels ascending and descending means nor when Nathanael would see it.

In short there are passages where the full meaning is beyond our certainty, but that does not mean there is nothing in them for us.

In this chapter, John describes the call of some of the disciples. Andrew calls Peter to Jesus, and now Philip having followed Jesus, goes to Nathanael and invites him to meet the one about whom Moses and the prophets wrote. Although he is dubious, he goes with Philip, he is astounded by what Jesus seems to know about him and he becomes a believer and follower. From an ordinary place under his fig-tree, he has found the Son of God, the King of Israel, the Son of Man, the one about whom Moses and the prophets wrote. That is some summary of titles and names for Jesus.

First of all, **have we discovered** and are we discovering more about this "person", about God incarnate, or have we become a bit blasé and unconcerned about Jesus; and second, **how do we invite others** who we know to discover this truth for themselves, and when we do invite do we invite them in words that they can understand and relate to, and do we do so with conviction? Philip persuaded Nathanael, because ultimately Nathanael trusted Philip.

Some further thoughts.

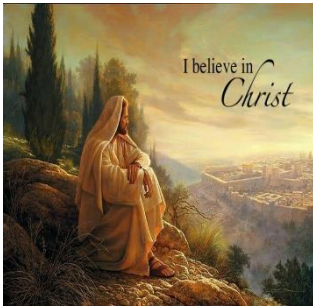
Jesus is approachable, and in many ways very ordinary. He lived with the people around him, and saw people as they sat under trees. His conversations are not sermons from churches but discussions with people, but his conversations are laced with deep and provocative truths.

Belief matters: what we believe matters, and the awful events in America in the last couple of weeks highlight the danger to society when falsehoods are so promoted and encouraged. The danger is not just to the immediate, but to the foundations on which we rely. And in a polarised or polarising world, we will both have to stand firmer for what we believe and be ready to find ways to engage and respect people even when we are convinced their views are erroneous.

There is a **richness of imagery and metaphor** in John's gospel, which prevents simplistic reduction, but there is a **simple strand through the gospel**, which should give us confidence. In Jesus, the Word became flesh; God so loves the world that he gave his only-begotten Son; Jesus is the Light, the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Good Shepherd, and in believing in him, we have eternal life. How do we share that

news with others in the ordinary places like under a fig-tree or wherever the modern equivalent is?

By the Rev Canon Peter Reiss.



THE CREED

I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Amen,

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION



During the intercessions, we pray for the church, our country, our government, people in difficulty and those who have died. You can use your own prayers or if you *prefer here are some on today's theme.*

Blessed are you, Lord our God, creator of all life. We thank you because we are wonderfully made. You have given us the gift of communication, eyes to see, ears to hear and lips to speak. Teach us not only to speak to you but to listen, to be quiet in your presence and know that you are God.

We pray for our churches, for David and Mark our bishops, Peter, Carol, Chris and Robin our team clergy, and all from our church and the team who are putting services and worship together. We pray for our congregations that they can still feel your love and work even though we can't get into our church buildings. We pray for all who are helping the vulnerable by keeping up communications.

Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

Guide the leaders of nations in the ways of justice and peace. Keep our ears open to the cry of the poor and the oppressed; let us always be sensitive to the needs of others. We pray for charities, relief agencies and all who are working to relieve suffering.

Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

Lord in our homes; help us to listen to each other with undivided attention. Teach us to be sensitive to various calls for us to share and to care for each other. We ask you to protect our homes and our loved ones.

Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

We remember before you all whose voices are not heard, people who feel neglected or unwanted. We pray for the lonely and those who have no helpers. We remember also those who are ill at this time at home or in hospitals. We ask your blessing and pray for all hospital and care workers under extreme pressure at this time.

Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

We rejoice that you hear us and offer us eternal life. We pray for our loved ones departed and all who have served you faithfully on earth.

Merciful Father – **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER



Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread; forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.

Amen.

THE BLESSING

The Lord bless us and watch over us, the Lord make his face shine upon us and be gracious to us. The Lord look kindly on us and give us peace and the blessing of God almighty the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among us and with us all always.

Amen.

