

The Rectorial Benefice of the East Vale
Morning Prayer
Sunday 10th January 2021
The Baptism of Christ

Hymn

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Come unto me and rest;
lay down, thou weary one, lay down
thy head upon my breast."
I came to Jesus as I was,
weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in him a resting place,
and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Behold, I freely give
the living water; thirsty one,
stoop down and drink, and live."
I came to Jesus, and I drank
of that life-giving stream;
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"I am this dark world's light;
look unto me, thy morn shall rise,
and all thy day be bright."
I looked to Jesus, and I found
in him my star, my sun;
and in that light of life I'll walk
till traveling days are done.

The Collect

Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit: grant that we who are born again by water and the Spirit may rejoice to be called your children; 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 forever.

Amen.

First Reading (Genesis 1:1-5)

A reading from the book of the Genesis.

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he

called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

(Psalm 29)

R/ The Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace.

Ascribe to the Lord, you powers of heaven: ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the honor due to his name: worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. **R/**

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders: The Lord is upon the mighty waters. The voice of the Lord is mighty in operation: the voice of the Lord is a glorious voice. **R/**

The voice of the Lord breaks the cedar trees; the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon; He makes Lebanon skip like a calf: and Sirion like a young wild ox. **R/**

The voice of the Lord splits the flash of lightning; the voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness: The Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the Lord makes the oak trees writhe and strips the forests bare. In his temple all cry, "Glory!" **R/**

The Lord sits enthroned above the water flood: the Lord sits enthroned has king for evermore. The Lord shall give strength to his people: the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace. **R/**

Second Reading

(Acts 19:1-7)

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul passed through the inland regions and came to Ephesus, where he found some disciples. He said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?' They replied, 'No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.' Then he said, 'Into what then were you baptized?' They answered, 'Into John's baptism.' Paul said, 'John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.' On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied – altogether there were about twelve of them.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Alleluia! Alleluia!
Give thanks to the risen Lord.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Give praise to his name.

God has proclaimed the just reward:
'Life for all men, alleluia!'
Alleluia! Alleluia!...

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Listen to the gospel of Christ according to Mark.
Glory to you, O Lord.

John the baptiser appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptised by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, 'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptised you with water; but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.' In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptised by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Belovèd; with you I am well pleased.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Come, let us praise the living God,
joyfully sing to our Saviour.
Alleluia! Alleluia!...

The Homily

Fr David

'Prevention' and 'protection' have been key words in our approach to Coronavirus, and we hope the new vaccines will be the most effective form of prevention and protection for us against this invisible threat.

Methods of prevention and protection are important in many other aspects of our lives to ensure we have some level of security against any unforeseen threats and risks that may come our way, like insurances for example.

This approach is often adopted by some who seek baptism for their child. They will often want the child to be baptised as means of prevention and protection, like a

spiritual inoculation, 'just in case' anything should happen. Baptism is perceived rather superstitiously by some as though it functions like some sort of talisman or lucky charm to ward off evil and misfortune, or to ensure that the child's entry into heaven is assured should the worst happen. It's also often perceived to be a form of protection if something should happen to the parents too, due largely to the common misconception that godparents must take care of the child if it should end up orphaned!

As seasoned Christians we know baptism doesn't wholly work like that. Baptism isn't just a one-off event or an 'eternal life' cover that one can simply have in place with no further action required of us. Rather, baptism is a state of being, a way of life, it is a process of becoming - where we grow into the likeness of Christ; baptism is the beginning of a journey, the pledge of a life-long relationship with God.

Today we celebrate the feast of the baptism of the Lord, another epiphany event. An occasion where, like the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus, we are given deeper insight into who Christ is as the promised Messiah. In this instance, at his baptism, we also have particular insight into his relationship with the other two persons of the Trinity; God the Father, who voices his pleasure with Jesus, and with God the Holy Spirit, who descends on him in the form of a dove. The baptism of Jesus is referenced in all four of the gospels, which is a rare occurrence, revealing something of its importance for the early Church and so highlighting its importance for us today. Christ's baptism not only gives credibility to what John had been doing in preparing the way for the Messiah through preaching and baptising, but through his baptism, Jesus participates in and institutes the great sacrament of initiation that we continue to practise.

What Christ gives us through the sacrament of baptism is the opportunity to participate in his life and become a member of his body, the Church. Therefore, we are no longer individuals but members of a community of believers, which extends beyond this world into the next. Through baptism we are empowered to further the kingdom of God and to share in his saving work by making known the good news of his redeeming love for all creation. We are invited to wipe the slate clean and live lives free from sin through the continual practice of repentance and receiving the gift of forgiveness that God longs to give us through Christ. And we are given an inheritance; by baptism we become fellow heirs to the kingdom of heaven.

And so, through baptism we become an integral part of a community of faith, and we are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the Church, sharing in the life-giving and life-saving grace and mercy freely given to us, in love.

The beauty of baptism in the life of the Church is that it is a means by which everyone can belong and it helps us to understand that everyone has purpose, a baptismal vocation. Baptism is a means by which every person is shown their worth and value in God's sight as his beloved child and I would hope, that same worth and value is acknowledged and affirmed by the wider family of faith, their brothers and sisters.

Baptism isn't just a one-off event, it isn't a talisman or a lucky charm - it is so much more, and it should serve as a continual reminder of the commitment we have made to God, the commitment God has made to us and the commitment we have made to each another.

Hymn

**Take my life and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to thee;
take my moments and my days;
let them flow in ceaseless praise.**

**Take my hands, and let them move
at the impulse of thy love;
take my feet and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee.**

**Take my voice and let me sing
always, only, for my King;
take my lips and let them be
filled with messages from thee.**

**Take my silver and my gold;
not a mite would I withhold;
take my intellect and use
ev'ry pow'r as thou shalt choose.**

**Take my will and make it thine:
it shall be no longer mine;
take my heart; it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne.**

**Take my love; my Lord, I pour
at thy feet its treasure store;
take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee.**

The Intercessions

Lord you have called us by name, make us worthy of our calling that we may rejoice in your love and proclaim your glory in the world. Sure of your promise to hear us when we pray, we offer our prayers today...

In the wilderness and wild places O Lord, you call your church to proclaim your mercy. May your Holy spirit be poured into your church that all who profess

your faith may show forth your glory. We pray for our diocese of Llandaff, for Bp June; we pray for the churches and congregations in the Ministry Area and all who minister amongst us this day. Guide and direct us to the places of need within our communities. With our link parish of Lagunda we pray for their family services and our outreach to young people.

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

In the corridors of power, O Lord, you call all leaders, international, national and local, to affirm your peace in all that they do. Raise up for this world leaders that defend your values of justice, peace and equality for all people. We pray for all those suffering in this pandemic, thinking of those in places of war and violence. We pray for aid agencies who seek to alleviate the suffering.

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

Holy and mighty God enfold us in your peace; may your kingdom come in our hearts, in our home and in our land. We pray and give thanks for those who have guided us along this journey of faith, those who encourage us and keep us on the right path when times are tough or challenging. In a moment of silence, we name those people in hearts.

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

In sickness and in health, O Lord, you call us to sing your praises. Shine your light on those who are in need of your healing grace. We remember..... and all those known to us who are ill at home or in hospital, may your love and healing touch bring relief in their situation. We pray for all who care for them.

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

In our hour of death, O Lord, you call us to the place you have prepared for us. We commend to your loving arms all who have died this week.... and we remember our loved ones departed and all whose anniversaries occur at this time. May we know that we are yours and we are held in your love forever.

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

In a moment of silence, we bring our own personal prayers.....

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

Through your son's baptism your glory in him is revealed, allow us always to keep our eyes open to catch glimpses of your glory today and every day.

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

Hymn

**My God accept my heart this day,
and make it always thine,
that I from thee no more may stray,
no more from thee decline.**

**Before the cross of him who died,
behold, I prostrate fall;
let every sin be crucified,
and Christ be all in all.**

**Anoint me with thy heavenly grace,
and seal me for thine own;
that I may see thy glorious face,
and worship at thy throne.**

**Let every thought and work and word
to thee be ever given:
Then life shall be thy service, Lord,
and death the gate of heaven.**

**All glory to the Father be,
all glory to the Son,
all glory, Holy Ghost, to thee,
while endless ages run.**



Prayers for the sick this week

Elizabeth Thomas
Kath Loughor
Eunice Wood
Catherine Brynach
Margaret Price
Stephen Gray
Brendan

Betty Hicks
Colin Bailey
Sophie Sabit
Helen
Kevin Hurst
Orla Elizabeth O'Grady
Lorna Powell