

# **Worship at home**

## **The third Sunday of Epiphany**

### **23 January 2022**

*Please join us in worshipping 'together' wherever you are. However, if you can't use this material then, you can of course use it at any other time. We suggest that you prepare a suitable space for worship and have available a candle to light at the beginning and some suitable music to play at the end during the 'Offering of ourselves to God'*

*If you are joining in this service as a group please designate one person as the leader reading the normal print with everyone joining in the text in bold type.*

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## **Greeting**

## **Prayers of Penitence**

### *Epiphany*

The grace of God has dawned  
upon the world through our  
Saviour Jesus Christ, who  
sacrificed himself for us to purify a  
people as his own. Let us confess  
our sins.

**Most merciful God,  
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
we confess that we have sinned  
in thought, word and deed.  
We have not loved you with our whole heart.  
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.  
In your mercy  
forgive what we have been,  
help us to amend what we are,  
and direct what we shall be;  
that we may do justly,  
love mercy,  
and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.**

May almighty God,  
who sent his Son into the world to save sinners,  
bring you his pardon and peace, now and for ever. Amen.

## Hymn

1 Lord for the years  
Your love has kept and guided  
Urged and inspired us cheered us on our way  
Sought us and saved us pardoned and provided  
Lord of the years  
We bring our thanks today

2 Lord for that word  
The word of life which fires us  
Speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze  
Teaches and trains rebukes us and inspires us  
Lord of the word  
Receive Your people's praise

3 Lord for our land  
In this our generation  
Spirits oppressed by pleasure wealth and care  
For young and old for commonwealth and nation  
Lord of our land  
Be pleased to hear our prayer

4 Lord for our world  
When we disown and doubt Him  
Loveless in strength and comfortless in pain  
Hungry and helpless lost indeed without Him  
Lord of the world  
We pray that Christ may reign

5 Lord for ourselves  
In living power remake us  
Self on the cross and Christ upon the throne  
Past put behind us for the future take us  
Lord of our lives  
To live for Christ alone

## The Collect

Almighty God,  
whose Son revealed in signs and miracles  
the wonder of your saving presence:  
renew your people with your heavenly grace,  
and in all our weakness  
sustain us by your mighty power;  
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 Epistle

### **1 Corinthians 12:12-31a**

#### **One Body with Many Members**

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot were to say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear were to say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body', that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you', nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more

respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers; then deeds of power, then gifts of healing, forms of assistance, forms of leadership, various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But strive for the greater gifts. And I will show you a still more excellent way.

## Gospel Reading

### **Luke 4:14-21**

**The Beginning of the Galilean Ministry** Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

**The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth** When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,

to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.’

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, ‘Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’

### **Linton Epiphany 2    16 January, 2022**

How many of us have not at some time felt a sense of failure? Whether at work, amongst our friends, colleagues, or family members, there always seems to be someone who is better qualified, wittier, cleverer, better at flower arranging, has more friends, is more popular, knows more and so on and so on.

It is very easy to feel inferior.

Not that he says it directly, but Paul's letter to the Christian community at Corinth is about the problem of inferiority. Christians can be just as competitive as anyone else and that is certainly a major cause of inferiority and a sense of failure. It happens all the time. Such and such a church has so many more people joining the congregation; X is such a brilliant preacher; Y has amazing outreach to local children; Z is so prayerful and holy.

The danger Paul is addressing in this part of his letter is that we have a tendency to objectify our spiritual gifts as if they are things which can be bought and sold in a competitive religious market-place. But when we think in that way what we are doing is idolising them and forgetting that a spiritual gift is just that, a gift – a God-given gift. From God's point of view, all spiritual gifts have the same value, however meagre they might appear at first to oneself or even to others. As Paul says in his letter to the Christians at Corinth, 'Now there are varieties of gifts but the same Spirit.'

That's why Paul goes on to give us a long list of gifts of the Spirit - wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy and so on. But the list is not intended to be comprehensive; Paul simply selects a few to show that somewhere, even if it is not clear to us, we have a special spiritual gift.

So, how do we know what these gifts are? Well, oddly enough it is sometimes when we are feeling that sense of failure or inferiority that the process of discernment is beginning. The psychologist Alfred Adler regarded the place of inferiority as key to the development of our personalities. He said:

‘Everyone ... has a feeling of inferiority. But the feeling of inferiority is not a disease; it is rather a stimulant to healthy, normal striving and development.’

Many great Christian thinkers and leaders have found that in facing up to their sense of inferiority they have discovered their true gifts and calling from God. One of them was St Paul himself.

In his second letter to the Christian church at Corinth, he says, that his sense of his many failures was ‘given as a thorn in my flesh, a message of Satan to torment me.’ Throughout his letter he refers to his ‘thorns’ or failures which his critics, the highly successful ‘super apostles’ (as he calls them), point out to him. He can’t make up his mind (1:17); he is proud and boastful (3:1); he is not good at preaching (11:5); he is not eloquent at speaking (11:6) and above all he is physically weak (10:10). But from these weaknesses Paul has developed his own sense of identity and God’s calling *for him* and not in comparison with others. This is what he says:

Therefore, I will boast more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:10)

This is Paul’s epiphany moment, a moment of realisation which is that on reflection the experience of failure can, through trust in God’s grace, be transformative. This is captured in the words of today’s collect, that through prayer we ask Christ to transform the ‘poverty of our nature by the riches of his grace’.

All this is wonderfully illustrated by today’s Gospel story of the Wedding at Cana. The wedding of course is a symbol of hope and joy for all - the couple, the family, friends and the community. But then a disaster occurs, the wine runs out! The wedding looks like it is going to be a failure. We can imagine the embarrassment of the family and their sense of failure. But it is Jesus’ mother who takes the initiative, and she trusts her son to transform disaster into something totally unexpected. The transformation of water into wine, where the new wine symbolises the abundance of God’s loving grace, is intended to be a spectacular sign of what faith in God can achieve. You might note that John’s

Gospel hardly ever uses the term miracle to describe these transformations, instead he uses the word 'sign' because all seven spectacular moments of this kind in his Gospel are pointers to the abundance of the spiritual life.

But for most of us our transformations are likely to be far less dramatic, and known only really to ourselves. Superficially to the outside world no one might notice how from your sense of failure, through prayer and reflection a particular spiritual gift has emerged, grown and given you a sense of purpose. Paul's super-apostle critics failed to note that from his sense of failure Paul discovered his gift of writing, which led him to write the letters we still read today and find spiritual and moral nourishment.

As you ponder on your failings and weaknesses, reflect in faith and hope remembering Paul's words to the Christian church at Corinth, 'for when I am weak, then I am strong'.

Michael Wilcockson

## Affirmation of Faith

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,  
source of all being and life,  
the one for whom we exist?  
**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,  
who took our human nature,  
died for us and rose again?  
**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,  
who gives life to the people of God  
and makes Christ known in the world?  
**We believe and trust in him.**

This is the faith of the Church.

**This is our faith.**

**We believe and trust in one God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

## **Prayers of Intercession**

*Please pray in the way that comes most naturally to you, either in  
silence or out loud we end with the Lord's Prayer*

*These responses may be used*

Lord, in your mercy  
**hear our prayer.**

*And at the end*

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

## **The Lord's Prayer**

Rejoicing in the presence of God  
here among us let us pray as our  
saviour taught us to pray

**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 for ever. Amen.**

# Hymn or Carol

## Bind Us Together

*Chorus*

*Bind us together Lord  
Bind us together with cords  
That cannot be broken  
Bind us together Lord  
Bind us together Lord  
Bind us together with love*

1 There is only one God  
There is only one King  
There is only one body  
That is why we can sing

*Chorus*

Made for the glory of God  
Purchased by His precious Son  
Born with the right to be clean  
For Jesus the vict'ry has won

*Chorus*

You are the fam'ly of God  
You are the promise divine  
You are God's chosen desire  
You are the glorious new wine

*Chorus*



# Thanksgiving for Epiphany

The Lord is here.

**His Spirit is with us.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right,

it is our duty and our joy,

at all times and in all places

to give you thanks and praise,

holy Father, heavenly King,

almighty and eternal God,

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

And now we give you thanks

because you have revealed your eternal plan of salvation,

and have shown your Son Jesus Christ

to be the light of the nations.

Therefore with angels and archangels,

and with all the company of heaven,

we proclaim your great and glorious name,

for ever praising you and *saying*:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,**

**God of power and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

## **Offering ourselves to receive Christ's presence**

**Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have given me, for all the pains and insults you have borne for me. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart. O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.**

After the Prayer of St Richard of Chichester

### ***Epiphany Season***

**You have called us to be a light in the world,  
so that those in darkness come to you.  
May our lives shine as a witness  
to the saving grace you have given for all.  
Jesus, Light of the world, hear us. Amen.**

## **Hymn or Carol**

### **Lead Us Heavenly Father Lead Us**

1 Lead us heavenly Father  
Lead us o'er the world's tempestuous sea  
Guard us guide us keep us  
Feed us for we have no help but Thee  
Yet possessing every blessing  
If our God our Father be

2 Saviour breathe forgiveness o'er us  
All our weakness Thou dost know  
Thou didst tread this earth before us  
Thou didst feel its keenest woe  
Lone and dreary faint and weary  
Through the desert Thou didst go

3 Spirit of our God descending  
Fill our hearts with heavenly joy  
Love with every passion  
Blending pleasure that can never cloy  
Thus provided pardoned guided  
Nothing can our peace destroy

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## Blessing

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you,  
scatter the darkness from before your path,  
and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.

**Amen**

*Or*

Christ our Lord,  
to whom kings bowed down in worship and offered gifts,  
reveal to you his glory  
and pour upon you the riches of his grace;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.

**Amen**

