



St Philip's Come & See

Sunday 8 January 2017

The Baptism of our Lord

Dear Friends

Gradually routines and rhythms are being established! The Offices of the Church – morning and evening prayer are being said in church at 0800am and 0530pm (Tues-Fri). You are very welcome to join me. These occasions frame our day and in turn Sundays frame our week. This is known as the 'Sanctification of Time' and it can be best understood by our use of the Lectionary as we journey together through the liturgical year, each season with its own emphasis, fasting and feasting, joy and sorrow, expectation and celebration all offered to God, all sanctified.

We are continuing in our Liturgical cycle to celebrate the season of the incarnation. In these weeks after the Feast of Epiphany the emphasis continues on revelation - who is it whose birth we have celebrated with such joy, who is this person and who is the God that he reveals? As we heard last Sunday this begins with the coming of the Magi who in their giving of Gold Frankincense and Myrrh reveal Jesus to be Prophet, Priest and King. In today's celebration we hear the voice of God declaring Jesus to be 'My Son, with whom I am well pleased' and next Sunday we will hear John the Baptist declaring Jesus to be the 'Lamb of God' it is period of time when we consider who it is who has been born; who has been revealed to us.

This great season of 40 days concludes with the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple or Candlemas on Thursday 2 February at the Eucharist on that day we will hear those words of Simeon at the Temple when Jesus is presented. 'Lord, now let your servant depart in peace your word has been fulfilled...' We know these words as the 'Nunc Dimittis' one of the evening canticles from the Book of Common Prayer. Simeon also speaks prophetically to Mary that Jesus

will be 'the cause of the rise and fall of many in Israel, he will reveal the secrets of many hearts' and then he tells her that 'sorrow like a sharp sword will break your heart' and it is with these words that our focus changes. Candlemas is a pivotal feast in the Church, from then on our focus will change from the person of Jesus towards the work of Jesus; towards Lent and his Passion and death. Our crib and Advent Candles will be removed for another year. For your diary...Candlemas will be celebrated with the Eucharist at 10.00am on Thursday 2 February.

Another important diary date is Ash Wednesday which this year falls on 1 March. Plans are afoot to mark this important opening to our Lenten season. Lenten studies will be held during this period to help us prepare fully for Holy Week and Easter.

I hope many of you are enjoying some rest and recreation during this holiday time. Every blessing.....

Martin

