

The Parish of Louth and Deanery of Louthesk

Weekly notes and information for

17th January 2021: The Second Sunday of Epiphany



www.teamparishoflouth.org.uk

In all we do, we seek to live out Jesus' command to draw close to the love of God in worship, and to share this by loving our neighbour

Collect Prayer at Daily Prayer during the week

ALMIGHTY and
everlasting God, who
dost govern all things in
heaven and earth:
Mercifully hear the
supplications of thy
people, and grant us thy
peace all the days of our
life; through Jesus Christ
our Lord. Amen.



Our churches: opening as places for prayer and reflection in our communities

The Parish Church of Louth St James will be open for private prayer between
10am and 1pm

Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays

*Please see pages 2 and 3 for details of other churches that are open for private prayer
across the Deanery of Louthesk*

DIARY OF PRAYER & WORSHIP THIS WEEK...

Services marked * are broadcast via www.facebook.com/louthchurch

Sunday 17th Second Sunday of Epiphany	10am	SUNG EUCHARIST at St James'*
		Psalm 139.1-5, 12-18 1 Samuel 3.1-10; Revelation 5.1-10; John 1.43-51
	10am	Holy Communion at North Thoresby
	10am	Holy Communion at Marshchapel
	10am	Holy Communion at Grainthorpe
	10 30am	Morning Service at Grimoldby
	11 15am	Eucharist at Legbourne
	6pm	PLAINSONG EVENSONG at St James'*
		Psalm 96; Isaiah 60.9-end; Hebrews 6.17-7.10
Monday 18th	9 15am	MATINS at St James'*
		Psalm 146; Amos 6; 1 Corinthians 6.1-11
	10am	Funeral at Alford Crematorium
	10am	St James' open for private prayer until 1pm
	1pm	FUNERAL at St James'
Tuesday 19th	9 15am	MORNING PRAYER at St James'*
		Psalm 132; Amos 7; 1 Corinthians 6.12-end
	11am	HOLY COMMUNION at St James'*
	11 45am	Praying with the Bible (Lectio Divina) Go to: www.zoom.us/join or 'phone 0203 481 5240, and enter the Meeting ID: 847 0617 4009 and Password: 562604.
Wednesday 20th	9 15am	MATINS at St James'*
		Psalm 81; Amos 8; 1 Corinthians 7.1-24
	10am	St James' open for private prayer until 1pm
	12 30pm	Outreach Post Office at Fotherby Church, which is also open for private prayer 'til 2 30pm
	7 30pm	COMPLINE online from Legbourne Rectory*
Thursday 21st	9 15am	MATINS at St James'*
		Psalm 76; Amos 9; 1 Corinthians 7.25-end
	11am	Mass at St Michael's
Friday 22nd	9 15am	MATINS at St James'*
		Psalm 27; Hosea 1.1-2.1; 1 Corinthians 8
	10am	St James' open for private prayer until 1pm
Saturday 23rd	10am	St James' open for private prayer until 1pm
	11am	Marshchapel open for private prayer 'til 12 noon
	12 30pm	MIDDAY PRAYER at St James'*

Sunday 24th Third Sunday of Epiphany	10am	SUNG EUCHARIST at St James’* Psalm 128 Genesis 14.17-20; Revelation 19.6-10; John 2.1-11
	10am	Morning Service at North Thoresby
	10 30am	Morning Service at Manby
	10 30am	Holy Communion at Grimoldby
	11am	Holy Communion at South Elkington
	11am	Morning Service at North Somercotes
	11 15am	Eucharist at Legbourne
	3pm	Evensong at Fotherby
	6pm	PLAINSONG EVENSONG at St James’* Psalm 33; Jeremiah 3.21-4.2; Titus 2.1-8, 11-14

JOINING IN WORSHIP

All our worship is being streamed on the Parish of Louth facebook page. You do not need a Facebook account to view these services – just click on ‘Not now’ when it asks you to sign up. www.facebook.com/louthchurch/live



Watch Louth CofE Services as live streams (and previously recorded) on Facebook. No account needed

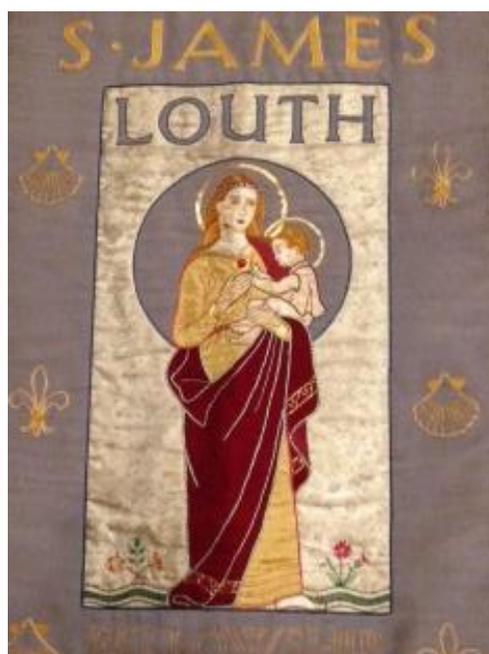
DETAILS OF CHURCHES OPEN

- Binbrook:** Please ‘phone the keyholder on 07778 316486 for access
- Covenham:** Please ‘phone the Churchwarden on 01507 363508 for access.
- Fulstow:** closed, please ‘phone 07825 293389 for access.
- Fotherby:** The Outreach Post Office is open on Wednesdays from 12.30pm to 2.30pm
- Great Carlton:** Please ‘phone the Churchwardens on 01507 328369 or 450527 for access
- Grimoldby:** Please ‘phone the churchwarden on 01507 328917
- Louth, St James:** Monday, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, 10am to 1pm.
- Ludborough:** Please ‘phone the churchwarden on 01472 840505 for access.
- Manby:** Please ‘phone the churchwarden on 01507 327199 for access.
- Marshchapel:** temporarily closed for Private Prayer
- North Thoresby:** Please ‘phone a churchwarden on 01472 840698 or 840160 for access.
- Utterby:** Please ‘phone the churchwarden on 07802 182756 for access.

WORSHIP RESOURCES FOR USE AT HOME

A range of spiritual resources remain available across the deanery as follows:

- **Parish of Louth on Facebook:**
All services are being streamed on Facebook Live (you do not need to be a registered facebook user):
<https://www.facebook.com/louthchurch>
- **Parish of Louth website:**
Downloadable resources (including this leaflet), an uploaded broadcast of Sunday Eucharist from St James, and regular video meditations:
www.teamparishoflouth.org.uk
- **Deanery of Louthesk: The Confraternity of St Herefrith**
Video and other prayer resources will be available from the confraternity's website, including a regular meditations by members of the clergy serving the Deanery of Louthesk.
<https://herefrith.org/confraternity-resources/video/>
- **'Praying with...'**
Online sessions, available live via Zoom (see Parish Notes for details) or as a video on the Parish of Louth facebook page.
- **St Andrew's Stewton Church Community** welcomes everyone. Since March 2020 we have produced an email 'Post' every Sunday morning to sustain the life of our church community on-line. You can access these Posts via the web site www.standrewsstewton.co.uk or have your email address added to our circulation list on request to windhover22@live.co.uk



An Order of Service for the Eucharist this Sunday

- *We open our hearts to God, that we might be transformed by his love*
- *We listen to God's Word, and seek to find out how we may grow to understand God's will for us more fully*
- *We gather around the table to share a symbolic meal, a meal that joins us with our brothers and sisters throughout the world; the saints who have lived in all times and places*
- *We pray that we go out as lights that shine with God's love wherever we might go*

The Gathering

The GREETING and PREPARATION

In the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Together we pray...

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.

As the Ministers enter, organ music may be played or a psalm sung.

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you
and also with you.

The PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

A Minister introduces the Prayers of Penitence.

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.**

The Priest pronounces Absolution.

May the God of all healing and forgiveness draw you to himself
and cleanse you from all your sins, that you may behold the glory of his Son,
the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

We say the GLORIA, a Song of Praise written by the early Christians

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 sin of the world: have mercy on 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 prayer

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.

Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

Old Testament Reading: 1 Samuel 3.1-10

A reading from the book of Samuel.

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread. At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. The LORD called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

New Testament Reading: Revelation 5.1-10

A Reading from the book of Revelation. 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."

Reader: This is the word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Reading: John 1.43-51

Reader: Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John. All: **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 toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get 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."

Reader: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

There will be a HOMILY and period for reflection, after which the service continues with the NICENE CREED:

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

The INTERCESSIONS, which may include the following bidding and response:

Lord, in your mercy

Hear our prayer

And may end with:

Merciful Father,

accept these prayers,

for the sake of your Son,

our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The PEACE

Our Saviour Christ is the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end. The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

A CHANT may be sung, or the organ played, as the altar is prepared.

PREPARATION OF THE TABLE

The prayer at this point may include the following response:

Blessed be God for ever.

The EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord be with you.

and also with you.

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.

The president praises God for his mighty acts, ending with:

Holy, holy, holy Lord,

God of power and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

[Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.]

The president recalls the Last Supper, after which the following acclamation may be used:

Great is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died:

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

The Prayer continues and leads into the doxology, to which all respond boldly

Amen.

We sit or kneel for the LORD'S PRAYER

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

The BREAKING OF THE BREAD

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ

Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread.

The GIVING OF COMMUNION

God's holy gifts for God's holy people.

Jesus Christ is holy, Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The AGNUS DEI

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, grant us peace.

Communion is distributed.

The PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION.

The priest leads the congregation in prayer:

God of glory, you nourish us with your Word who is the bread of life: fill us with your Holy Spirit that through us the light of your glory may shine in all the world. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Following this prayer, all join in:

We thank you, Lord, that you have fed us in this sacrament, united us with Christ, and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet prepared for all peoples.

Amen.

The Dismissal

We stand, and the priest proclaims God's BLESSING and we are sent into His world...

Christ the Son of God perfect in you the image of his glory and gladden your hearts with the good news of his kingdom; and the blessing of God Almighty: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

We stand as the Ministers leave.

Common Worship and New Patterns for Worship, material from which is included in this service, is copyright © The Archbishops' Council 2000 and 2002.

PASTORAL CARE NETWORK



- providing regular contact by phone
- delivering food and medication

Contact louthparishpastoral@gmail.com, or leave a message on 01507 605803 if you know someone in need

The Parish of Louth - served by the Louth Team Ministry and the Parochial Church Council of Louth
(Reg'd Charity No. 1132658)

Matins and Evensong: An Order of Service

*If used in the context of a family or household the words in **bold** are said by all. If said alone, all words are spoken by the individual praying.*

Along with this order of service you will need a Bible for the psalm and readings. Details of which psalm and readings to use are found on page 2.

If the service forms the only, or the main, act of worship on a Sunday in a parish church, then the Minister calls on everyone to reflect on those things that distance us from God and, after a pause for reflection, we join in the Prayer of Confession, which is followed by a prayer of absolution or forgiveness:

Almighty and most merciful Father; We have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; And we have done those things which we ought not to have done; And there is no health in us. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us miserable offenders. Spare thou them, O God, that confess their faults. Restore thou them that are penitent; According to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesu our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous and sober life, to the glory of thy holy name. Amen.

At other time the service may be begin with the opening responses:

O Lord, open thou our lips.

And our mouths shall shew forth thy praise.

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Praise ye the Lord.

The Lord's name be praised.

The Word of God

*Say or recite the **Venite, Exultemus Domino** (Psalm 95, at Matins) and the appointed **Psalm(s)**.*

The Psalm(s) end with the 'Gloria patri':

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

*A Reading from **The Old Testament**. (See page 2 for details)*

*Say or sing the **Canticle**; either the Benedictus (at Matins) or Magnificat (at Evening Prayer):*

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel: for he hath visited and redeemed his people; And hath raised up a mighty salvation for us: in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets: which have been since the world began; That we should be saved from our enemies: and from the hands of all that hate us; To perform the mercy promised to our forefathers: and to remember his holy covenant; To perform the oath which he sware to our forefather Abraham: that he would give us; That we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies: might serve him without fear; In holiness and righteousness before him: all the days of our life.

And thou child shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people: for the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God: whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us; To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death: and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded: the lowliness of his handmaiden. For behold, from henceforth: all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath magnified me: and holy is his Name. And his mercy is on them that fear him: throughout all generations. He hath shewed strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seat: and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away. He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.-

A Reading from The New Testament. (See page 2 for details)

*At Evening Prayer, we also say the **Nunc Dimittis**:*

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace: according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen: thy salvation; Which thou hast prepared: before the face of all people; To be a light to lighten the Gentiles: and to be the glory of thy people Israel. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

You may wish to stand to say the Apostles' Creed:

**I believe in God the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth:
and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead and buried.
He descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church;
the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

The Prayers

The Lesser Litany, Lord's Prayer and Prayers:

The Lord be with you.

And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us; And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. Amen.

O Lord, shew thy mercy upon us.

And grant us thy salvation.

O Lord, save the Queen.

And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

Endue thy ministers with righteousness.

And make thy chosen people joyful.

O Lord, save thy people.

And bless thine inheritance.

Give peace in our time, O Lord.

**Because there is none other that fighteth for us,
but only thou, O God.**

O God, make clean our hearts within us.

And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

These Prayers end with one or more Collects for the Day (see the front over) and the following morning or evening Collects:

O God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom; defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in thy defence, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day; defend us in the same with thy mighty power; and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger, but that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance, to do always that is righteous in thy sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed; give unto thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that both, our hearts may be set to obey thy commandments, and also that, by thee, we being defended from the fear of our enemies may pass our time in rest and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Amen.

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord; and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

A time for Reflection

After any further prayers, there may be a time for reflection including the singing of an anthem. If using this material at home, you may find this a good time to play a piece of recorded music or listen to one of the podcasts/video meditations.

The Conclusion

*The service ends with either a **Blessing**, or by praying the **Grace**:*

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with us now and evermore. **Amen.**

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THIS WEEK'S PSALM AND HOMILY

Psalm 139. 1-5, 12-18

- 1 O Lord, you have searched me out and known me; you know my sitting down and my rising up; you discern my thoughts from afar.
- 2 You mark out my journeys and my resting place and are acquainted with all my ways.
- 3 For there is not a word on my tongue, but you, O Lord, know it altogether.
- 4 You encompass me behind and before and lay your hand upon me.
- 5 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, so high that I cannot attain it.
- 12 For you yourself created my inmost parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.
- 13 I thank you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are your works, my soul knows well.
- 14 My frame was not hidden from you, when I was made in secret and woven in the depths of the earth.
- 15 Your eyes beheld my form, as yet unfinished; already in your book were all my members written,

- 16 As day by day they were fashioned when as yet there was none of them.
17 How deep are your counsels to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!
18 If I count them, they are more in number than the sand, and at the end, I am still in your presence.

Homily

“Jesus found Philip and said to him ‘Follow me’.”

But the first reading is about the call of the Prophet Samuel. The boy asleep in the temple at Shiloh. Although a favourite Sunday School story actually rather a frightening one for children who usually don't like the dark and being alone in it! The call of Samuel is presented in the readings today as a companion to the call of two disciples, Philip and Nathanael. It's actually a very different sort of call that comes to Samuel, although you only hear that if the longer reading is used. The call to Samuel is the call for a prophet. With a message of God's anger towards the sons of Eli whose conduct has been full of blasphemy in their ministry in the temple. The sufferings that will come to them will mean suffering for Eli, their father, too. He should have restrained their behaviour but did nothing. And this is only the first of the messages of God to Samuel, who will grow up to be a great prophet of the Lord. He will see to the making and unmaking of a king when it came to Saul, and the making of a new king in David.

The call to be a prophet is a hard calling. Prophets were frequently ridiculed, often exiled and as our Lord himself pointed out “stoned” or otherwise put to death. St John the Baptist was the last of the Old Testament style prophets and he paid for his calling, beheaded on the orders of King Herod. In the early Church it's clear that prophets continued and there are occasional Christians today who seem to exercise a prophetic ministry. But prophets, after the type of Samuel end with John the Baptist.

Instead in the New Testament there is the call to a different ministry for God. The call to be a disciple and an apostle. The call in the gospel for today is that of Philip and Nathaniel. Usually the details about Nathaniel under the fig tree and the angels ascending and descending mean that Philip's call is overlooked. So for a change, let's consider Philip instead. As well as being overlooked he doesn't even get commemorated on his own- he shares a feast day with the James who wasn't the brother of John. Philip is one of the Galilean Disciples, along with Peter, Andrew, James and John. We're told he was “From Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.” St John Chrysostom considered him as a thoughtful convert, someone who had been ‘seeking’. This would explain why when Jesus finds Philip and says to him “Follow me” he does just that. Earlier Andrew had been persuaded about Jesus when John the Baptist indicates he is the Lamb of God. In turn Peter had been persuaded about Jesus by Andrew. Philip however had not learned anything from anyone but Christ, who says only “Follow me” and immediately he obeyed. His calling is as a disciple but already he is an apostle because he goes at once to Nathaniel and says “We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote.” It shows says St John Chrysostom what a thoughtful mind he had, how carefully he meditated on the writings of Moses, expecting the advent, for the expression ‘we have found’ belongs always to those who are, in some way, seeking.”

So, something to reflect upon from St Philip- that he was a man who thought. To think about our faith is actually very important- but for most people, most of the time, thinking about our Christian faith is hardly done at all. Richard Challoner was an eighteenth century English Bishop who was concerned in his own age that Christians didn't think about their belief. He wondered how it was that most Christians who knew what their faith taught could still live like those who had no Christian faith at all. “Is it” he concluded “for want of consideration? It is because they don't think.” And how about the difference between good and bad Christians? “The great difference between them” he writes, “is that the first think well on the truths believed and lets them sink deep into the soul, and take root there and produce the fruits of all virtues: whereas the others do not think . . . so that their faith is asleep, or rather dead, for want of consideration.” Prayerful consideration, quiet thinking is so important. “Oh” says Bishop Challoner “that people would but think. What a reformation we should see in the world! It's thinking that is the true way to heaven; and not thinking the high road to hell!” Philip had considered well the writings of the law and the prophets; he had done much thinking. How good a thing it would be if all of us paused each day, for just a short time, to think about the great truths that relate to ourselves and our lives, to God and to eternity.

Homily Reflection

1. How often do you think deeply about what your belief should mean?
 2. At this time in particular many appear to be thinking about deeper issues of life and death, even seeking? Can we like Philip bring them to Jesus
 3. Can you think what a prophetic voice to the church today might say?
 4. Is there anything else from the passage not already discussed that speaks to you? What is it?
 5. What will you do this week in your Monday-to-Saturday ministry in response to what you have heard today?
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