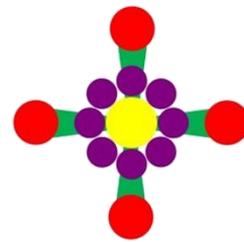


**The Benefice of
Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme
Sunday 24 January 2021
The Third Sunday of Epiphany: Zoom Service**



Preparation

The Lord is here

All **His Spirit is with us**

All **Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and 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.**

The Greeting

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.

All **Father eternal, giver of light and grace
We have sinned against you and against our neighbour
In what we have thought,
In what we have said and done,
Through ignorance, through weakness,
Through our own deliberate fault.
We have wounded your love,
And marred your image in us.
We are sorry and ashamed,
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 lead us out from darkness
To walk as children of light. Amen**

The God of all healing and forgiveness
Draw you to himself
And cleanse you from all your sin
That you may behold the glory of his Son,
The Word made flesh,
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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. **Amen.**

The First Reading: Revelation 19:6-10

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunder-peals, crying out, 'Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God
the Almighty reigns.

Let us rejoice and exult
and give him the glory,

for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and his bride has made herself ready;
to her it has been granted to be clothed
with fine linen, bright and pure'—

for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

And the angel said to me, 'Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And he said to me, 'These are true words of God.' Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, 'You must not do that! I am a fellow-servant with you and your comrades who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God for the gift of His word

The Second Reading: John 2:1-11

Hear the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

All Glory to you, O Lord

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the

steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

The is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you, O Christ

Reflection from Richard

It must have been quite a party!

It must have been quite some party, even before Jesus did his miracle of turning the water into wine.

Weddings, like the one in Cana, were big community celebrations and the feasting and drinking would have gone on and on! And in preparation for this, the family hosting the celebration would make sure that there was plenty to eat and lots to drink. It was very bad hospitality if there was not enough.

So for it to run out so soon means either very bad planning, or some very heavy drinking - it must have been quite a party!

We imagine that Jesus wasn't particularly well known at the time of the wedding, although the reading does tell us that he is there with his mother Mary and with his disciples.

When the wine runs out, it is Mary who gets Jesus involved. I've always wondered why the issue was such a worry to Mary. I can only think that the person hosting the party was someone she knew well and didn't want to see embarrassed.

Mary believes that Jesus can do something. She must have known already that he was able to deal with situations like this with authority and wisdom. She clearly knew from experience that he had very special abilities.

But Jesus did not wish to be involved and to do anything publicly. “My hour has not yet come.” Mary doesn’t argue, but tells the servants to do as Jesus says. She assumes he will still act.

And of course he does - but this miracle is really quite secret. Only the servants will know what happened. But it must have been a story they told many times over to everyone they knew.

And what a story they had to tell. The water jars each held between twenty or thirty gallons and they were filled to the brim. That means from the six jars up to 180 gallons which is 900 bottles of wine! And not just any wine, but fantastic and glorious wine ... the best!

John tells us in his gospel that this is the first of the signs that Jesus did to reveal who he was. He would indeed do many more miracles. His disciples would see him walk on water, feed great crowds and heal many people. Some of his miracles would bring him to the attention of people who really didn’t appreciate his powers. Sometimes his miracles would be for the benefit of surprising people.

I wonder which of the miracles you particularly remember as you think of the story of Jesus. Which ones stand out for you? I wonder if you believe that they really took place or if you think they can be explained in rational ways or if you think they were done with sleight of hand like a magic trick.

For myself, I’ve always felt that the gospel writers were pretty convinced about how inexplicable they found the things they saw ... and they were there at the time!

And I sometimes think that in my prayers I am like Mary in this story. There are times when I speak to God asking him to show himself in a particular situation. Sometimes I realise that what I’m asking seems pretty impossible and I guess that I am asking for a miracle. And while there have been times that the answer has not come as I expected, there have also been times when the outcome has brought me amazement when something quite miraculous has happened.

Like this story, there has been no great proclamation or publicity. But each time a few have known, been amazed and rejoiced.

So when you talk with Jesus in your prayers, what do you believe about the things he can do? What have you asked and what have you seen? It doesn't need to be something you shout from the rooftops. But let the thrill of it give you joy and courage.

And if you've never believed, then maybe this is the day to give it a go!

Affirmation of Faith

Let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

All **Though he was divine,**
He did not cling to equality with God,
But made himself nothing.
Taking the form of a slave,
He was born in human likeness.
He humbled himself
And was obedient to death,
Even the death of the cross.
Therefore God has raised him on high,
And given him the name above every name:
That at the name of Jesus
Every knee should bow,
And every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord,
To the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession led by Astrid Hansen

We praise you, Lord and give thanks that we are able to join together in worship in our different ways and different places, bringing our needs and our worries to the God who has promised that he will hear us.

We pray for people in need throughout the world, remembering the countries where recent disasters, ongoing wars and economic hardship add to the impact of the pandemic.

Take a few quiet moments to remember situations in the recent news and those that have slipped out of the headlines but where needs are still as great.

We pray for our own country and for others in the developed world, that politicians and those they influence may be able to put differences aside for the common good.

As measures to combat covid impinge more and more on the economy, we pray for thoughtful and compassionate measures to alleviate hardship.

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for those who use their skills in medical research and for all who work in our health services, in hospitals and in the vaccination centres. We give thanks for the development of vaccines and for the medical teams and volunteers bringing hope to growing numbers of people.

We pray for those in our communities, known or unknown to us, who are suffering, from covid or from postponed treatment of other conditions, for those struggling with lockdown, for parents who must combine home education with work commitments, for children missing contact with friends, for those who are coping with loss, that they may find support and comfort.

Lord in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Because we can do nothing in our own power, we pray for each other and ourselves. Lord teach us to serve where you have placed us, guide us and help us to share the good news of your love.

Be with us Lord in all our prayers, and direct our way toward the attainment of salvation, that among the changes and chances of this mortal life, we may always be defended by your gracious help; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

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.

All And also with you.

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray
All **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.

Closing Prayers

Almighty Father,
Whose Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world:
May your people,
Illumined by your word and sacraments,
Shine with the radiance of his glory,
That he may be known, worshipped and obeyed to the ends of the earth.
For he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Blessing and Sending Out

Christ the Son of God
Perfect in you the image of his glory
And gladden your hearts with the good news.
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.

