

Sunday 17th January – Epiphany 2

John 1 v43-end

Welcome to Praying Together but Separately

Hymn Suggestions

[Will you Come and Follow Me](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o469PRLdbHU)

[Just as I am without one Plea](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gvPJMBzEPp8)

There are also hymns here from St Martin’s in the Field: <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/hub/asset/hymns-and-choral-music>

Prayer of the Day:

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.

Reflection

Breathe slowly and deeply.

Ask God to speak to you through the passage that you are about to read.

Bible Reading:

**John 1 v43-end**

**Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael**

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 towards him, he said of him, ‘Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!’ Nathanael asked him, ‘Where did you come 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.’

Some thoughts for further Reflection:

It perhaps needs no saying that we have all reacted very differently to the pandemic and lockdown 3.0 and news of the new strain and vaccine. Our range or responses and emotions are understandable and there seems no right and wrong way to process what is happening. My risk is not your risk. My needs for wellbeing and good functioning are not yours. Your anxiety and frustrations will be different from mine. So it seems to me that today’s Gospel reading from John is a real gift – a gift that gets us back to our fundamental roots of what it is to be a disciple – as the world chops and changes, ebbs and flows, erupts and calms – we, perhaps more than ever, rely and lean on our core calling and our core identity.

As Christians that is as adopted children of God – precious and unique members of God’s family, created and loved, forgiven and redeemed. Maybe we have been baptised into this glorious family of saints and sinners – maybe we are just thinking about it. Maybe we are waiting for our baptism until our churches can gather again in number and volume.

But knowing that we are created by God and loved by God is our core – and our response to that abundant love and grace is to follow. To follow that ‘Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my Soul, my Life, my All’ as the hymn writer Isaac Watts said in his hymn When I survey the Wonderous Cross. And that is what we read of today. Jesus, son of Joseph from Nazareth – the embodiment of God’s love for us and the world. Not an eldest son from some hic town near Galilee – where Nathanael jokes – can anything good come from there! You’ll no doubt have your own local jokes about ‘can anything good from \*\*\*\*\*\* and you name somewhere the wrong side of the tracks.

But this wasn’t some young lad who was helping in his father’s workshop – this was Love. Compelling and astounding love. Love that walked along the shores of Galilee and bid others to follow – and so extraordinary was that love and that grace and that wisdom and that power that people did follow. They did see Jesus and follow him. And Philip told his friend Nathanael – he was so convinced by Jesus he wanted his friend to be convinced too – and not just convinced but transformed and transfigured. And Jesus didn’t disappoint – he saw into Nathanael’s heart and life and let him know that truth. Nathanael was astonished that he was known by the Messiah – he was seen and known.

And that is true of us too – we are seen and heard and known and loved. And we are invited to ‘come, see’. See this Jesus who knows us and loves us. See this Jesus in scripture who heals and saves, teaches and transforms. See.

And what was Nathanael told he would see? ‘I tell you; you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man’. Jesus is echoing the image found in Genesis 28 where Jacob (having reached rock bottom and was fleeing his own underhand decisions and broken relationship with his brother Esau) had a dream. He laid his head down on a stone and dreamed that he was a ladder reaching up to heaven and on that ladder, there were angels ascending and descending and God himself stood beside him and called him to trust in him. Jacob, despite his messy life, his dishonourable actions and his broken relationships was called by God, was ministered to by God. And God met Philip and Nathanael too – and they recognised him and followed.

And God meets us too, as Rowan Williams once said (and I’m paraphrasing), the problem in prayer isn’t God not showing up, it’s me not showing up. He was referring to that ‘seeing of God’ that prayer allows and that being seen. God does this anyway God calls, and sometimes we need to get up and follow him, fully ourselves and fully present, not distracted and emotionally absent.

That is the gift of today – we can be fully ourselves with God and we are met with God’s complete love. And through that love we dare to follow – unsure of the days ahead but knowing however messy it gets (just like it did for Jacob) God sees us, hears, us, calls us and loves us. I hope you find as much strength and courage and comfort in that as I do.

Kate Peacock

SILENCE During this time of quiet invite Jesus into your hearts.

God of love

**hear our prayer.**

Father of all

**hear your children’s prayer.**

In faith we pray

**we pray to you our God.**

Lord, meet us in the silence

**and hear our prayer.**

OUR PRAYERS

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father.

For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of the Holy Church of God,

and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For *Alan, Michael and Richard* our bishops, for the leaders of our sister Churches,

and for all clergy and people, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For *Elizabeth our Queen*, for the leaders of the nations, and for all in authority, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For this community, in which I live for every city, town and village, and for all the people who live within them, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the sick and the suffering, for the NHS and key workers, for families who watch and wait and for all who are anxious, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Remembering all who have gone before us in faith, and in communion with all the saints,

we commit ourselves, one another,

and our whole life to Christ our God; **to you, O Lord.**

A prayer concerning the Coronavirus

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
in their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

An act of spiritual Communion

My Jesus,
I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.

Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

The Lord’s Prayer

**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.**

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