



The Parish of

Saint Helen's Tarporley

Saint John's Cotebrook

Saint Thomas' Eaton

Welcome to our Sunday Service at Home

17th January 2021 The 2nd Sunday of Epiphany

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with us all

Prayer of Preparation

**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.**

Prayers of Penitence

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**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.**

And hear again words of forgiveness:

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and keep us in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord **Amen**

Today's Collect may be said here

Eternal Lord, our beginning and our end:
bring us with the whole creation to your glory, hidden through past ages
and made known in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

The Liturgy of the Word

Gospel Reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark... **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Mark 1:43 - end

The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me."

Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

"Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip.

When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, "Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit." "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you."

Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel."

Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that." He then added, "Very truly I tell you, you will see 'heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on' the Son of Man."

This is the Gospel of the Lord **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon *Written by Rev Julian Osborne*

When I was working for the Bank, there was a constant stream of little witticisms that would arrive by email. Cynical little funnies such as:

- If you think nobody cares about you, try missing a couple of mortgage payments.
- He who hesitates... is probably right.
- No one is listening... until you make a mistake.
- 42.7 percent of all statistics are made up on the spot.
- If at first you don't succeed, then skydiving definitely is not for you!

These little sayings may be funny, but beneath them lies a current of sadness, a sort of disappointment with the reality of life that whoever wrote them is actually living. It is perhaps not the life they had hoped for and so eventually cynicism sets in. Few in life get to live their dream. Right now, that number is even smaller for obvious reasons. Well in this week's Bible passage on our Epiphany journey, we meet Nathanael, who has also tasted disappointment and who has turned cynical. But Nathanael comes face to face with Jesus Christ, and his life was never to be the same again.

The passage starts off with Jesus starting to gather or call his disciples. The day before he had recruited (if that is the right word) Andrew and Simon Peter, and then the next day he travelled to Galilee to recruit Philip. We aren't given many details but Philip responded in faith and then immediately set off to find Nathanael who presumably was a good friend, or perhaps a fellow activist, and full of enthusiasm, he says, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote – Jesus of Nazareth." Nathanael was unimpressed and came back with a cynical witty reply, "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?"

Well maybe Nazareth was that bad, but I suspect there was more to it than that. I believe that Nathanael was passionate about Israel, about the promised Messiah who would restore its fortunes. Prophets, the latest of whom was John the Baptist had promised time and again that the Messiah was coming, yet Israel was still under Roman occupation. Nathanael had become cynical and jaded, worn down by disappointment. Fortunately, Philip ignored the put down and carried on with his invitation saying, "Come and see for yourself."

Jesus completely disarms Nathanael, calling him "a true Israelite, in whom there is no deceit". He is not actually complimenting Nathanael, but is instead making a joke of his own, a pun referring to the patriarch Jacob. Jacob was a man in whom there was lots and lots of cunning and guile. He would have made a great banker, but God nevertheless blessed him hugely, even changing his name to Israel to reflect the great nation he would found.

Nathanael is intrigued. He is listening now, and then Jesus carries on with the word-play, talking about seeing Nathanael sitting under a fig tree. Jesus was in effect quoting old prophecies about God restoring Israel's fortunes, and in the process giving everyone their own fig tree to sit under. So what Jesus was really saying to Nathaniel is "I know what's on your heart and mind. I know you've been praying for the Messiah. I know you want God's kingdom to be restored. Follow me and I will show you far more than that. I will show you heaven opened up and the inner workings of creation, set up by me for me, the Son of Man." Jesus was in effect saying, "I am a much, much bigger king than you ever expected."

And we, all these years later, knowing how it all turned out, think of course! Who else can understand our deepest yearnings except the one who was present at the beginning of creation? Jesus knows our heart's desire even better than we do and as we walk with him, and grow deeper and wiser in faith, he'll teach us. He promises that his yoke is easy. Jesus will indeed be a king of a totally different sort. Hallelujah!

But that is not quite Amen and the end of the sermon. For where did this story start? Where did Nathanael's faith begin? A faith that would involve him witnessing Christ's resurrection and ascension? It all started with a friend coming to him and saying "I have found the one

Moses wrote about in the law. I have found Jesus! A friend who ignored the cynical little put down and carried on with "Come and see for yourself" Without Philip there would be no Nathanael. And the day before that, without Andrew going to get Simon, there would be no Simon Peter on whom Jesus built his church.

Who was your Philip? Who was your Andrew? Maybe your faith was a slow awakening over a period of years as you were raised in a Christian family. I remember my Philip. He was a friend at school called Simon Coward. I have no idea where he is now or what he is doing, but I would love to say thank you one day. He was 13 years old, with just a rudimentary knowledge of Jesus that he wanted to pass on. Maybe we can all be Philips or Andrews or Simons one day? Watch this space. **Amen**

Prayers of Intercession

Lord, you have shown us how Jesus became known, loved and worshipped. Guide us your Church as we try to show the light of Jesus, as we try to bring people to meet Jesus. Build in us individually and corporately the desire to introduce others to come and see Jesus for themselves. Give us courage to accept set-backs and failures. Fill us with the power of your Holy Spirit.

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

Help all countries, and their leaders, to understand the need for peace and for justice. Guide those with power to use it wisely and honestly for the common good. Show us any selfishness and prejudice we still have within us, and grow in us an enthusiasm for what is right and good.

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

Father, the world you made was good, but we often misuse it. Teach us to use it properly, so that everyone may share the good things you provide. Help us to love one another, and unite us in the service of your kingdom.

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

Strengthen, bless and protect all who give their energy and skill, and sometimes even their very lives, for the healing and care of those who are sick in body, mind or spirit. Bless our struggle against Coronavirus. Set free, we pray, all who are bound by illness, fear or despair. In the silence we remember before you those individuals who are on our heart today

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

Father we give you thanks for all those whom we love but see no more. We pray for those who mourn however recent or distant their loss. We pray for those families who have suffered loss through Covid; for those who were unable to say goodbye, for those who faced limits on a funeral, for those who's loss was unexpected, sudden and brutal. May we be there to weep with them, to comfort them.

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

We and all the saints around the world, bring our prayers and petitions to you, saying together, Merciful Father, **accept these prayers, for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

The Creed



I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Peace

Blessed are the peacemakers: they shall be called children of God.
We meet in the name of Christ and share his peace:

The peace of the Lord be always with us all

Eucharistic Prayer

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 right to praise you, Father, Lord of all creation; in your love you made us for yourself. When we turned away you did not reject us, but came to meet us in your Son. **You embraced us as your children and welcomed us to sit and eat with you.**

In Christ you shared our life that we might live in him and he in us.

He opened his arms of love upon the cross and made for all the perfect sacrifice for sin. On the night he was betrayed, at supper with his friends he took bread, and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to them, saying: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me. **Father, we do this in remembrance of him: his body is the bread of life.**

At the end of supper, taking the cup of wine, he gave you thanks, and said: Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,

which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins; do this in remembrance of me. **Father, we do this in remembrance of him: his blood is shed for all.**

With your whole Church throughout the world we offer you this sacrifice of praise and lift our voice to join the eternal song of heaven:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

We join all our prayers, those said here by us and those said by our congregation scattered in this Parish, together in the prayer that Jesus taught us: 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.**

In this time of dispersion, you are invited to make a Spiritual Communion, using this prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, life-giver and good physician, here you meet us in our need. In a world marred by corruption and marked by death, draw me into true life. By your selfless sacrifice, help me to live for others and not myself. May I, who cannot now receive you sacramentally through bread and wine, embrace you more fully spiritually in my heart, mind and soul. Help me unite myself to you in spirit, so that I may be drawn closer to those from whom I am isolated in body. Through sharing your life given up in death for us all, may we grow together in love into a richer and more profound communion of life.

Blessing

May God give to you, and those you love, his comfort and his peace, his light and his joy, in this world and the next; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you and remain with you always
Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

Hymn: *A well known hymn to sing out as though no-one's listening! Jesus is still calling in these tumultuous times.*

<https://youtu.be/idAoS7at3nQ?t=62>