

St Teresa & St John Southworth Churches, Cleveleys

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Sunday : The Baptism of the Lord

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Gospel: Mark 1:7-11

In the course of his preaching John the Baptist said, 'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

It was at this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised in the Jordan by John. No sooner had he come up out of the water than he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.'

Gospel Reflection : The Baptism of Jesus

There is evidence that some early Christians reflected on Jesus' Baptism with imagination and spiritual insight. They spoke of his baptism as a time when all the waters of the world joined with the waters of the river Jordan, and were sanctified, made holy.

Anyone, therefore, who drinks of the waters of the earth - any water, any time, anywhere in the world, mysteriously receives refreshment from the same holy waters.

Such a teaching leaves no room for racism or rivalry of any kind. All who drink of the united waters of our earth should themselves be united.

This week, on 15th January, would have been Martin Luther King Jr's Birthday, and Martin Luther King Day has been celebrated in the United States on the third Monday in January since 1986. He lived proclaiming the dignity and equal rights of all people. Some of his 'dreams' have come true. Perhaps this week we could each of us find a way of thinking that somebody we don't like is, maybe no better, but no worse, than we are. - and then another dream might come true too.

Notices:

We Remember In Our Prayers Chris Isherwood whose Funeral was last week, and the following whose Funerals are all at Carleton Crematorium : Jack Orrell on Wednesday, 13th January, Rita Blackburn and Les Thornton on Tuesday, 19th January, and Diane Bolton on Wednesday 20th January. We remember them and their families, and all those whose anniversaries are at this time. May they be in God's peace. ***NB. Because of the limitation of numbers at Funerals, permission to attend should always be made through the relatives of those who have died.***

From St. Teresa's Parish Pastoral Council

Once again, our whole nation has been placed in lockdown to try and prevent any further premature deaths from the Coronavirus.

This seems especially important now that we have a potential end to this sorry situation with the increasing availability of a working vaccine.

There are still many vulnerable people within our communities and our parish though - and that even includes our clergy. This is why schools, cinemas, restaurants, football grounds, gymnasiums, theatres and the like have been closed down. And this is why, with the understanding of our Bishop, and support from the Parish Pastoral Council, it has been decided that the Church will be closed during lockdown until further notice. The Sunday morning 10.30 streamed mass will still be available using Zoom, as explained in the bulletin.

Please Note

1. Although this message is from St. Teresa's Parish Council, after consultation with several members of St. John Southworth Parish, it seems only right that St. John Southworth church should also close after this weekend.

2. The Chairman of the Parish Council, Adam Bajkowski, had personal communication with Bishop Paul. In response the Bishop pointed out that the Catholic Church's Covid Regulations for our churches state that "individual parishes are under no obligation to open, and parishioners are still under no obligation to attend Mass. There may be good reasons not to open." Well, there is a very good reason, that in our current situation with Covid infections now soaring, almost out of control, we cannot firmly say that we can keep people 'safe' in our two churches. Each of us, and others, will only be safe if we follow the Government's current prime directive - Stay At Home. And, as we found last year, staying at home does not mean that we lose our Faith, or our spiritual and prayer lives go on hold. Many people last year discovered the opposite of that, however much we still would like to be together as a community.

Details of Live-Streamed Masses from St. Teresa's

This Sunday we are live-streaming Mass at 10.30 am. This is by Zoom from St. Teresa's. To attend this Sunday from your laptop/computer, first go to this Parish website :

www.st-teresas-church.co.uk

When the front page comes up, click on to the 'Newsletter' bar at the top. Then when you want to join the Mass at 10.30 am this Sunday, please click on to this following code. (You may have to wait a short while to be connected) :

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84778040744?pwd=NjQrSm02OFQ3SUFkGcHlXNlNpMGhZQT09>

Daily Reflections for this week

Monday (Fr. Richard Rohr)

The incarnation of Jesus demonstrates that God meets us where we are. It assures us that we do not have to leave the world or relinquish our humanity in order to know God. We may want the spiritual without the fleshly; we may want the cosmic without the concrete. But if the Word is ever to be loved and shared, we must risk embodiment, which is always concrete and ordinary. There God is both perfectly hidden and perfectly revealed.

Scripture (Matthew 3:13-17)

Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. John tried to dissuade him. "It is I who need baptism from you," he said "and yet you come to me!" But Jesus replied, "Leave it like this for the time being; it is fitting that we should, in this way, do all that righteousness demands." At this, John gave into him. As soon as Jesus was baptised he came up from the water, and suddenly the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. And a voice spoke from heaven, "This is my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on him."

Tuesday (Martin Buber, "Tales of the Hasidim)

A helper is needed. A helper for both body and soul, for both earthly and heavenly matters.....who can teach you to conduct your affairs so that your soul remains free, and he can teach you to strengthen your soul, to keep you steadfast beneath the blows of destiny. He has to mix with the people and, in order to raise them to the rung of what perfection they are capable of, he has to descend from his own rung.

Scripture (John 3:11-13,16)

Jesus said "In truth I tell you, we speak about only what we know and witness only to what we have seen and yet you people reject our evidence. If you do not believe me when I speak of earthly things, how will you believe me when I speak of heavenly things? No one has gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of man; for this is how God loved the world: he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

Wednesday (A New Catechism)

We must be careful not to start from our human ideas of God, as though apart from Jesus we knew God fully. Jesus is not for those who (think they) know who God is, but for those who seek to know who God is. All we can do is fix our eyes on the man Jesus. Only by thus paying attention to him can we begin to realise something of the God who reveals himself in him. God is much greater than all the ideas we have of "greatness." In Jesus' truly human knowledge, something of his likeness to God radiates. In Jesus, God has become accessible to us.

Scripture (Isaiah 42:1-4,6-7)

Thus says the Lord: Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom my soul delights. I have endowed him with my spirit that he may bring true justice to the nations. He does not cry out or shout aloud, or make his voice heard in the streets. He does not break the crushed reed, nor quench the quavering flame. Faithfully he brings true justice; he will neither waver nor be crushed until true justice is established on earth. I, the Lord, have called you to serve the cause of right; I have taken you by the hand and formed you; I have appointed you as a covenant of the people and light of the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to free captives from prison, and those who live in darkness from the dungeon.

Thursday (St. Teresa of Avila)

God is greatly pleased when He beholds a soul in its humility making His Son a mediator between itself and Him. I know this by experience. I have understood that the whole foundation of prayer must be laid in humility, and that the more a soul humbles itself in prayer, the more God lifts it up. I do not remember that He showed me any of His marvellous mercies at any other time than when I was as one brought to nothing. Moreover, His Majesty contrived to make me understand matters that helped me to know myself, but which I could never have even imagined of myself.

Scripture (Ephesians 1:17-20)

May the God of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give you a spirit of wisdom and perception of what is revealed, to bring you to full knowledge of him. May he enlighten the eyes of your mind so that you can see what hope his call holds for you, how rich is the glory of the heritage he offers among his holy people, and how extraordinarily great is the power that he has exercised for us believers; this accords with the strength of his power at work in Christ.

Friday (Bede Griffiths)

We do not overcome darkness by fighting it but simply by bringing it into the light. All the weaknesses we find in ourselves, and all the things that upset us, we tend to try to push aside and get rid of. But we cannot do this. We have to accept that 'this is me' and allow grace to come and heal it all.

Scripture (Luke 1:76-79)

And you, little child, you shall be called Prophet of the Most High, for you will go before God to prepare a way for him, to give his people knowledge of salvation through forgiveness of their sins, because of the faithful love of our God in which the rising of the Sun has come down from on high to visit us, to give light to those who live in darkness and to guide our feet in the way of peace.

Martin Bennett