

# Swaythling Parish

## Sunday 10 January 2021

First Sunday of Epiphany  
The Baptism of Christ

### Welcome

*Below is a service sheet for you to use at home. You can also find our Sunday morning reflection on YouTube channel, available at 10am on Sunday, (and afterwards). Please search for "Swaythling Parish" on YouTube to find and view it.*

### Introduction from Rev Peter Dockree

Welcome to our service today, however you are joining us.

This Sunday is the first Sunday of Epiphany, when we reflect on the baptism of Jesus.

### Greeting

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

**And also with you.**

The Lord be with you

**And also with you**

### Prayer of Confession

My brothers and sister, not out of dread and fear  
but believing that God is faithful to forgive,  
let us rid ourselves of what we need to carry no longer.

**Eternal God, maker of the skies above,  
lowly Christ, born amidst the growing earth,  
Spirit of life, wind over the flowing waters,  
in earth and sky, you are there.  
O hidden mystery, sun behind all suns,  
soul behind all souls,  
in everything we touch, in everyone we meet,  
your presence is around us, and we give you thanks.**

**But when we have not touched  
but trampled you in creation,  
when we have not met but missed you in one another,  
when we have not received but rejected you in the poor,  
forgive us, and hear now our plea for mercy.**

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May the God of love  
Bring us back to himself,  
Forgive us our sins,  
and assure us of his eternal love  
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### The Collect

Heavenly Father,  
at the Jordan you revealed Jesus as your Son:  
may we recognize him as our Lord  
and know ourselves to be your beloved children;  
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

### Hymn: Meekness and Majesty (This is your God)

1. Meekness and majesty,  
Manhood and Deity,  
In perfect harmony,  
The Man who is God.  
Lord of eternity  
Dwells in humanity,  
Kneels in humility  
And washes our feet.

*O what a mystery,  
Meekness and majesty.  
Bow down and worship  
For this is your God,  
This is your God.*

2. Father's pure radiance,  
Perfect in innocence,  
Yet learns obedience  
To death on a cross.  
Suffering to give us life,  
Conquering through sacrifice,  
And as they crucify  
Prays: 'Father forgive.'
3. Wisdom unsearchable,  
God the invisible,  
Love indestructible  
In frailty appears.  
Lord of infinity,  
Stooping so tenderly,  
Lifts our humanity  
To the heights of His throne.

## Reading

### Mark 1: 4-11

*Jesus receives God's Spirit at his Baptism.*

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, *'The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.'*

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, *'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'*

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

## A Reflection from Rev Peter Dockree

Years ago when we lived in Nigeria, we ran a launch event for our project, a disability project that was being formed as part of an existing mental health charity, which some of you will know by name as Amaudo, as it is our church link overseas charity.

This event as was normal was a few months after we had actually begun, so we had staff and had begun work. We asked one of our young members of staff, a lady called Uzoma to introduce a song from some of the young people we were working with. We did not ask her to say anything else. At this event, the Deputy governor of the State was there (who was quite a significant figure). Uzoma stood up with the microphone and spoke about the collective failure of government and society to treat those with learning disabilities with dignity and respect. As she spoke, I couldn't believe the words that she said, partly I was in awe of her courage and clarity, partly I was worried about if there would be consequences to these words. So when a few weeks later we were summoned to the Deputy governor's office I was nervous and when he mentioned the girl who spoke at the launch, I was even more nervous, but actually what he said was how blown away he had been by her words and her courage and he appeared genuinely humbled by the experience. Apart from breathing a sigh of relief I was also struck myself by this response, and it has lived with me to today.

It is this story that came to mind when I read today's Gospel reading. In a passage which begins with talk of Jesus being so much more powerful than John to the point that John feels he is not worthy to untie the thongs of his sandals, to Jesus then being baptised by John. John's gospel misses out the bit found in Matthews Gospel where John remonstrates with Jesus and suggests it should be the other way round, but the difference between who John saw Jesus to be and what then happened is clear in all the accounts. The fact is that Jesus knew that whoever he was he was still not above succumbing to another. He was not above ultimately behind laid bare before God, but through the hand of another.

We may not all be important people, but we all have power over others, we all have influence over others and we all can hold ourselves above another if we so choose. If Jesus, God's son, needed to bow before John and before his God, then so do we. We too need to be reminded that we are not beyond being taken down a peg or three. Like the deputy state governor who I spoke of at the beginning, there is no situation and no person from whom we can not learn and grow.

So let us acknowledge our need for humility at times, acknowledging those times when we need to submit to others and submit to God.

## Prayers

*Let us pray for our world, our community and those in need around us.*

You may want to find a map and pray for places that you know and recognise and situations of which you are aware. Pray too for places that are less familiar, and situations of which you know little.

Reflect on people in our own nation and situations you are familiar with. Pray too for things about which you know much less, but which you know exist. For people who you meet and those whom you will never meet.

**Circle us, Lord**

**Circle this world with the joy of your  
Salvation**

**Where there is sickness and disease  
bring healing**

**Where there is hunger and despair  
bring hope**

**Where there is torture and oppression  
bring release**

*(Silent prayer)*

**Lord of creation, Lord of Salvation**

**Circle this world with the light of your  
presence**

*(Faith and worship)*

## Hymn: Come down, O Love divine

1 Come down, O Love divine!  
seek out this soul of mine  
and visit it with your own ardour glowing;  
O Comforter, draw near,  
within my heart appear,  
and kindle it, your holy flame bestowing.

2 There let it freely burn  
till earthly passions turn  
to dust and ashes in its heat consuming;  
and let your glorious light  
shine ever on my sight,  
and make my pathway clear, by your illuming.

3 Let holy charity  
my outward vesture be,  
and lowliness become my inner clothing;  
true lowliness of heart  
which takes the humbler part,  
and for its own shortcomings weeps with  
loathing.

4 And so the yearning strong  
with which the soul will long  
shall far surpass the power of human telling;  
for none can guess its grace  
till we become the place  
in which the Holy Spirit makes his dwelling.

Jubilate Hymns version of *Discendi, amor santo* Bianco da Siena (fl.1367 - 1434) adapted by Richard F Littledale (1833 - 1890) © Jubilate Hymns Ltd

## Closing Blessing

Thank you to everyone for worshiping with us today.

May God give us light to guide us,  
Courage to support us,  
And love to unite us,  
Now and evermore  
and may the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit  
be among you and remain with you always.

**Amen**

*(B.O'Malley)*

*If we can support you in any way at the present time, or you would just like to chat, do please get in touch:*

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