

Swaythling Parish
Sunday 24 January 2021
Third Sunday of Epiphany

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.

*If we can support you in any way at the present time, or you would just like to chat, do please get in touch: peter.dockree@outlook.com
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Introduction from Rev Peter Dockree

Welcome to our service today, however you are joining us. This Sunday is the third Sunday of Epiphany and Bruce will be reflecting later on the Wedding At Cana, and the invitation to all of us to witness God's Glory.

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

God of all mercy,
your Son proclaimed good news to the poor,
release to the captives,
and freedom to the oppressed:
anoint us with your Holy Spirit
and set all your people free
to praise you in Christ our Lord.

Hymn: Give thanks with a grateful heart

Give thanks with a grateful heart
Give thanks to the Holy One
Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ,
His Son

And now let the weak say, "I am strong"
Let the poor say, "I am rich"
Because of what the Lord has done for us"
And now let the weak say, "I am strong"
Let the poor say, "I am rich"
Because of what the Lord has done for us"

Henry Smith © Copyright 1978 Integrity's Hosanna! Music

Readings

Revelation 19: 6-10

A vision of worship in heaven.

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.

John 2: 1-11

The first of the seven signs of Jesus' glory recorded by John.

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.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

A Reflection by Rev Canon Bruce Hartnell

It might be getting old, but I find wedding receptions seem to go on and on these days. Not that I have been to any lately and I’m really looking forward to my grandson, Sam’s (Covid-permitting) in June. I should have found the Jewish custom of celebrating over three days or so rather a trial but sleep will have been allowed along the way, I imagine. Only John’s Gospel tells the story of the festivities at Cana of Galilee and, with John, you can expect any story to have multiple levels of meaning. This one is set before our wondering eyes and excited ears because Epiphany season (usually pantomime season too, very suitably) is about marvellous revelations. Our brothers and sisters in the Orthodox Churches actually call it Theophany – meaning God’s self-disclosure in human form. How does Jesus come to be at this celebration? Probably because his mother is well-known to the family and she is helping with the domestic arrangements (only men were invited to the actual meal). Jesus and his disciples were guests too, we are told. Maybe there is a family connection, or it is out of respect for him as a teacher that Jesus has been asked. Someone who has begun to assemble a regular group of disciples would have been invited to bring them too. They will have gone, not just to receive hospitality, but to help the bridegroom in the formalities and entertainment which are part of the occasion and it will have spanned several days.

On the face of it, Jesus spares his host a serious embarrassment. Possibly, he has himself made matters worse by turning up with a large party and none of the contributions expected of guests like food and wine. This could explain his mother's drawing to Jesus' attention the growing distress in the catering department. He re-acts very discretely, in any case. The other guests are spared the shock of knowing what almost happened and even the master of ceremonies is not in on the secret.

If this incident is not meant to show how Jesus qualified for membership of the Magic Circle, what does it show? There are some clues. When Jesus refers to an hour that has not yet come, perhaps he is thinking of another banquet to be thrown by the Messiah on entering into his kingdom. That's the setting for the visionary piece from Revelation earlier.)

John the Gospel writer says that the miracle reveals Jesus' glory with the result that his disciples put their faith in him. Jesus' glory can't be that he makes a super guest to have at your party; so maybe the provision of an abundant wine supply (more than a hundred gallons on this occasion) is an important clue to his true identity.

Later on, the miraculous feeding on the hillside points to Jesus' role as Messiah as he meets the hunger needs of five thousand people. Over and over in John's Gospel, we hear of people eating and drinking with Jesus. It's as if John is inviting us to enter the story alongside the people in his Gospel, not only to imagine

how they felt but to join in with them and through them.

So, when we share in communion we become another of the guests at the wedding and we too get some inkling of his glory - glory like none other.

A moment to reflect

May God the Son,
who turned the water into wine
at the wedding feast at Cana,
transform our lives
and make glad our hearts.
Amen

From an Epiphany blessing in The Promise of His Glory

Prayers

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

You may wish to light some candles as you pray through the sentences below.

In places of hope and in places of despair, we pray that God's love may be found.

For those who need to see Glory in the midst of their pain. Those who need hope in the midst of despair.

We give thanks for those bringing light where there is darkness and grace where there is brokenness.

We pray for acts that connect us in our

disconnection and unite our societies in our disunity.

We give thanks for those reaching out and stepping out.

We pray for the ability to see the possible in the midst of the seemingly stuck situations.

May God's love, God's hope, and God's peace find us all.

Amen

Hymn: Immortal, Invisible

- 1 Immortal, invisible,
God only wise,
In light inaccessible
hid from our eyes,
Most blessed, most glorious,
the Ancient of Days,
Almighty, victorious,
Thy great name we praise.
- 2 Unresting, unhasting,
and silent as light,
Nor wanting, nor wasting,
Thou rulest in might;
Thy justice like mountains
high soaring above
Thy clouds which are fountains
of goodness and love.

3 To all life Thou givest,
to both great and small;
In all life Thou livest,
the true life of all;
We blossom and flourish
as leaves on the tree,
And wither and perish,
but nought changeth rhee.

4 Great Father of Glory,
pure Father of Light
Thine angels adore rhee,
all veiling their sight;
All laud we would render,
O help us to see:
'Tis only the splendor
of light hideth thee.

W C Smith (1824-1908)

Closing Blessing

Thank you to everyone for worshipping 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)