

**ALL SAINTS CHURCH BOYNE HILL
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Dear Parishioners and Friends of All Saints, Boyne Hill,

The beginning of my sermon to celebrate the Epiphany was, I am ashamed to say, more about me than the text. The Epiphany is about the gifts the wise men brought to Jesus. This, I felt, gave me the opportunity to speak about three books that I had the joy to receive at Christmas. Good gifts are from people who have taken the time to think about the recipient and what their interests are. I received David Attenborough's 'Adventures of a Young Naturalist', 'Why we Kneel How We Rise' by Michael Holding and for a birthday present I received 'BBC Sports Report' by Pat Murphy.

People know that through watching Attenborough's programmes over many years and our recent efforts to become an Eco Church I am interested and concerned about sustainability issues. Michael Holding was part of the incredible West Indian cricket team of the 1970's and 80's with a bowling attack that must have terrified the opposition batsmen. Holding was perhaps the most fearsome of all quick bowlers and has gone on to become a brilliant commentator of the game. His book is 'a powerful, poignant and personal exploration of racism.'

Having said there is no link I can at least say that Epiphany has at its heart gifts. Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh. The gifts give clues as to where the wise men came from. East from the Holy Land could be the Jordanian deserts of Arabia. Rich people could have accessed gold, and frankincense and myrrh are harvested from trees in Southern Arabia. These gifts had meaning for the recipient too.

Gold fit for a king. Of course, Jesus would be a very different kind of king. A servant King.

Frankincense is a special kind of fragrance used by a priest. In church we cense the altar, the book of the gospels, the Eucharistic gifts and the cross as a sign of God's presence. The altar and the gifts are signs that Jesus offered us transformed life through his body and blood, The cross is where the act of God's love took place and the book of the gospels where the word comes alive by the way we live sacramentally. At Epiphany this gift points towards Jesus bringing Heaven to earth. The divine entering humanity.

Myrrh is a sweet smelling liquid that was rubbed into the skin of someone who had died. Jesus' suffering and death would be important.

The earlier visitors to our Lord were the Shepherds and it's worth noticing the differences with the Magi. Shepherds were poor, came from a field close by and were probably Jewish. The Magi were rich, travelled from afar and were Gentiles. From this we gather that Jew and Gentile were brought together at the

Nativity. One of the things Epiphany reveals is that God doesn't have favourites but welcomes people from any background and any nationality.

I have just written an article for the Maidenhead Advertiser. The theme looked at the response of people in Maidenhead to the need to support refugees and asylum seekers. I have recalled how we first met the Iranian community at Easter when we had people present at church from all around the world. The language that has become a joy to us is that of Farsi spoken by the people of Iran.

I made the point that we have been able to offer hospitality, English classes, learning about the Christian faith and through Care4Calais find educational opportunities for the young. However, if we are honest many of us will say that the Iranian people through their vitality, their hard work, their intelligence and friendship have given more to our community than we have given them. These highly intelligent people with varying gifts to offer, look with hope that they may share their God-given gifts in this country.

Epiphany reveals God has no favourites but welcomes people from any background and any nationality. I believe that we are all the richer for this.

RESOURCES FOR THE WEEK

Thursday 12 January	<i>3.00pm Open the Book at All Saints School</i> <i>7.00pm Class in the Birinus Room for those seeking Baptism and Confirmation</i> <i>8.00pm Choir Practice</i>
Friday 13	10.00am Tiny Saints Toddler Group in the Parish Centre
Sunday 15	10.00am Parish Eucharist for the Second Sunday of Epiphany Celebrant: Fr Jeremy Preacher: Fr John <i>6.00pm Sundays@Six</i> <i>Night Prayer with reflection, on zoom led by the Church of the Good Shepherd, Cox Green</i>
Monday 16	9.30am Morning Prayer in Church
Tuesday 17	9.30am Morning Prayer in Church <i>1.30pm Christian Union at Altwood School</i>
Wednesday 18	10.00am Eucharist Celebrant: Fr John <i>9.00am Hatha Yoga in the Parish Centre (New class. see flyer)</i> <i>11.00am Tai Chi in the Parish Centre</i> <i>3.00pm Open the Book at Larchfield School</i> <i>7.30pm PCC Standing Committee in the Birinus Room</i>

PRAYER INTENTIONS

Lord, The Diocese of Oxford are once again encouraging us to 'Come and See' this Lent and to contemplate the beatitudes. Lord, you invited us to come and see and you opened our eyes to your wonders. In word and sacrament, we are transformed by the encounter with you. Now give us the courage to share the story of who you are with others we meet, so they too may be transformed.

We pray for our schools and the opportunity to share the good news of Jesus through our Open the Book Teams and through assemblies. We pray too for the start of our Young Saints mornings and Sundays@4 as we return this month.

We pray for our Thursday evening class enabling people to hear the story of the Christian faith. We give thanks that three people are sharing in this course as they hear the call of Jesus to 'Come and see.' We continue to pray this Epiphany tide for the message of God that he has no favourites and welcomes people from all backgrounds and from any nationality. We give thanks for the town of Maidenhead as it welcomes Asylum Seekers and Refugees and we give thanks for the Iranian community that have shared so much with us.

We pray for our health and social care services working under extreme pressure and for all workers in the health care sector. We pray for those people in this country who are dependent on the NHS and social care. We pray for our local hospital of St Mark's, our doctors' surgeries and our care homes of Larchfield, Normanhurst and Clara Court. We pray for our Government that it may find solutions to the crisis within the health care sector.

We continue to pray for the people of Ukraine and for all parts of the world where there is warfare and violence. We pray for peace and reconciliation in all the troubled parts of the world.

Please pray for Esme Lennox on the anniversary of her Baptism.

We pray for those of our congregation and parish in any kind of need. We pray by name for Michael, Kirsten and Maddy; for Suzette, Danielle, Paul Latham, Jenny Chua, Doris Winn, Birmta Zadinane, Kirsty Banner, Harrison Hawkes, Heidi Webb, Florence Harrison, Tadeusz, Teresa, Leigh Hutchison-May, Soheila, Silvia Denison, Cheryl Brookes, Marnos, Gordon Kerrison, Lorraine Ansell, Emilia Clark and Ruby Doughty. May they know God's healing presence.

We pray for the recently departed: Dorothy Chalk, Larisa Stephenson, Ramon Lobb, Gail Brown and Gerald Newth. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

Please keep within your prayers Pat Newth and her family as they mourn the loss of Gerald. Pat and Gerald joined us to worship around Easter and have quickly become part of the community. Gerald had offered his significant gifts with finance to support our book-keeping role. He was a maths teacher for many years at Rugby School and with Pat has experienced working and living in a number of countries.

May we all be blessed by God's love this week.

Fr Jeremy

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 15 JANUARY THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY

COLLECT

Almighty God, 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

O T READING *Isaiah 49: 1 - 7*

Listen to me, O coastlands, pay attention, you peoples from far away! The LORD called me before I was born, while I was in my mother's womb he named me. He made my mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of his hand he hid me; he made me a polished arrow, in his quiver he hid me away. And he said to me, 'You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.' But I said, 'I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity; yet surely my cause is with the LORD, and my reward with my God.' And now the LORD says, who formed me in the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, and that Israel might be gathered to him, for I am honoured in the sight of the LORD, and my God has become my strength. The LORD says, 'It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.' Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One, to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations, the slave of rulers, 'Kings shall see and stand up, princes, and they shall prostrate themselves, because of the LORD, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.'

GOSPEL *John 1: 29 - 42*

John the Baptist saw Jesus coming towards him and declared, 'Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, "After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me." I myself did not know him; but I came baptizing with water for this reason, that he might be revealed to Israel.' And John testified, 'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God.' The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he exclaimed, 'Look, here is the Lamb of God!' The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, 'What are you looking for?' They said to him, 'Rabbi' (which translated means Teacher), 'where are you staying?' He said to them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated Anointed). He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas' (which is translated Peter).

MUSIC

Prelude: O Lamm Gottes unschuldig BWV 618 *J S Bach*

Opening Hymn: AM 223 All hail the power of Jesu's name

Gradual: AM 448 I come with joy

Offertory: AM 678 In Christ alone my hope is found

Communion: AM 747 O God, you search me and know me

Closing Hymn: AM 422 Alleluia sing to Jesus

Postlude: War March of the Priests *F W Mendelssohn*

FLOWERS FOR 2023

There are still a few weeks available on the Flower Sponsors' Board for 2023 on the table at the back of the Church. We would be pleased if you would like to add your name against a week you would like to sponsor. This is a very appropriate way to remember loved ones we no longer see or to celebrate anniversaries, that special birthday or occasion. Sponsoring a week ensures that we can have flowers in the church on that Sunday and relieves the PCC funds of any cost whatsoever. We are sure you are aware of the pleasure the flowers give to everyone and would like to thank you in anticipation for your continued support. Would you please give your Sponsor donation, prior to your chosen week, to Stella Harding and inform her of any colour or flower preference you might have, and we will do our best to accommodate. If Stella is not available, please feel free to use one of the envelopes with the board and hand it into the Church Office.

The Flower Team

A NOTE FOR YOUR DIARY – WALSINGHAM

We have booked the following dates at Walsingham for our 2023 pilgrimage: Monday 25th- Friday 29th September (4 nights). If you might be interested in joining us do put these dates into your brand new 2023 diary. I will be looking for names and deposits around Eastertime so you have a little time to think before you need to put your name down.

Fr John

FOODSHARE

In these hard times Foodshare are more in need of our help than ever. Each week in the Maidenhead Advertiser there is a list of items most wanted.

breathe, stretch, tone, relax!

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