



**The Benefice of the Piddle Valley,  
Hilton and Ansty, Cheselbourne and Melcombe Horsey**

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent**

*Altar Colour – Purple*

Please take this pew sheet home.

Isaiah 55: 1-9

Psalm 63: 1-9

**Collect:** Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; 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**

**1 Corinthians 10:1-13 (ESV) - *Warning Against Idolatry***

For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things took place as examples for us, that we might not desire evil as they did. Do not be idolaters as some of them were; as it is written, “The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.” We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents, nor grumble, as some of them did and were destroyed by the Destroyer. Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

**COMMENT:** Paul was a much younger the Corinthians to live differently than their morally and spiritually corrupt society. But Paul was both honouring and condemning his ancestral traditions as he wrote to what may have been a predominantly Gentile Christian audience. He also likened the events of the Exodus led by Moses to the Christians’ experience of

baptism and the Eucharist. In verses 3-4 he even identified the manna and the rock which Moses struck to obtain water with the spiritual food and drink of the sacraments. Paul was saying to his Corinthian friends, that receiving the Christian sacraments will not save them as the Exodus and the wilderness experience in themselves did not save the Israelites? The words “as some of them did” sound like a drumbeat through this passage. Because of the Israelites’ idolatry, he claimed, most of those who fled Egypt died in the wilderness long before the remnant straggled into the Promised Land. Their wandering away from the way mandated by the LORD, so they met their doom. Noteworthy, is that Adherence to ritual is no guarantee of being in right relationship with God. ‘Living must correlate with liturgy’. Paul was also confronting some other issues, such as sexual immorality and idolatry and points to the brutal treatment of those who married Moabites and adopted the fertility god Baal of Peor described in (Numbers 25:1-9), where twenty-four thousand, died by plague (Paul’s twenty-three thousand is an inaccurate recall – yet the force of the example is not diminished). Paul sternly warned the Corinthians that their sexual behaviour could well have the same result, if for no other reason than that it is a common human failing (v7-8, 11-12). The seaport city of Corinth was notorious for sexual promiscuity and licentious living. The Corinthians had something to learn from the experience of the Israelites. At the same time, Paul did not leave them without a word of encouragement. The great benefit of the Christian life, he stated in v 13, is not that they will be tested by their circumstances, but that God will not let them be tested beyond their strength to endure. Here, as always in Paul’s declaration of the Christian way, that the grace of God provided the strength, not simply human moral effort.

### **Luke 13:1-9 (ESV) - Repent or Perish**

There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And he answered them, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

### ***The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree***

And he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. And he said to the vinedresser, ‘Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?’ And he answered him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’”

COMMENT: Luke gives us a glimpse of the violent and hostile world in which Jesus lived. Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor who later condemned Jesus to death, had murdered a group of worshipers as they offered their sacrifices for the temple. Strangely, there is no

other ancient record of this atrocity. Another group had been killed by a falling tower, part of Jerusalem's fortifications near the important water source, the pool of Siloam and its reservoir. Such tragedies would naturally produce great fear among common people. In the simplistic conventions of the times, these incidents would have been used by religious leaders to warn the general populace that such events resulted from sin on the part of the victims. Jesus explicitly refuted this simplistic traditional belief. Calamity can happen to anyone, sinner and righteous alike. As Messiah, Jesus used these incidents to call his fellow Jews to repent and believe in him. He foresaw disaster ahead for his people. Their only hope was to accept him for who he was and fulfil their historic mission of making God known to the world. In saying this, he clearly challenged the traditional view that the Jews held of their election as God's covenant people. All Jews regarded this divine favour with great pride. They looked for a Messiah who would rout their oppressors and establish Israel's worldly dominance. As the true Messiah came from God, Jesus had a quite different mission. The parable of the fig tree confronted them with a last chance to recognize him and to respond to God's mercy, or find that there is a limit to God's forbearance. The historian Professor Herbert Butterfield of Cambridge University, made a case for his conviction that God allows humanity the freedom to commit enormous sins such as the two world wars and holocausts of the early 20th Century. Yet there is a sense, he claimed, that these great atrocities are also the very acts by means of which Providence resets the course of history. One can certainly read the OT stories of the Exodus and the Exile in Babylon in this light. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus can also be accounted for in this manner.

**Short Preface:** And now we give you thanks because you give us the spirit of discipline that we may triumph over evil and grow in grace, as we prepare to celebrate the paschal mystery with mind and heart renewed.

**Post Communion:** Merciful Lord, grant your people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil, and with pure hearts and minds to follow you, the only God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

**Blessing:** Christ give you grace to grow in holiness, to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**

**Next Sunday's Services**

<p><b><u>31<sup>st</sup> March 2019</u></b>  <i>Altar Colour – Purple</i>          1 Sam 1:20-end          Col 3:12-17          Luke 2: 33-35</p>	<p><b><u>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent - Mothering Sunday</u></b> </p> <p>10.00am Benefice Eucharist Service at Milton Abbey          5.00pm Mothering Sunday Eucharist at Piddlehinton</p>
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### **Benefice Prayer Requests:**

- Please continue pray for those who are sick, recovering from surgery, illness or receiving hospital treatment, it is of great comfort to them. Including: Colin Webb, Anna Webb, June Kellaway, Ann Lambert, Betty – Hillary and Jane, For Fay Lord and Terry Jeanes, Ted and his daughter Sue, Michelle Simpson.
- Please pray for those who grieve,
- Please pray for Vicky and Connor, Gill and Andrew, Quenton and Alice, Tim and Clare, who are preparing for Holy Matrimony
- Please pray for the many carers in our community who provide care for their loved ones.



### ***Requiescant in pace***

Rita Burdit of Piddletrenthide -Funeral arrangements to follow.

### **What's going on around the Benefice!**



**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March: Morning Prayer** 9.30am  
St Mary's Piddlehinton, this is a weekly service.

**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March: Piddle Valley Preschool: Easter Morning**  
10am to 12 noon, Piddletrenthide Village Hall. Come and get

involved in helping with some Easter art, story reading and singing.

### **Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March: Lent Evening Prayer / Compline**

5pm Piddletrenthide, Piddlehinton & Hilton

**Stepping Stones Home Group:** Next meeting 26<sup>th</sup> March 2019. Meets twice a month on a Tuesday evening at 7.30pm, at Orchard Cottage, Melcombe Bingham. (Richard and Julie Saunders on 01258 880585.) ***All Welcome.***

**Food bank:** Please remember your food bank donations over lent. I have delivered donations from Alton Pancras and Melcombe Horsey this week – thank you.

### **Lent Lunches:**

3<sup>rd</sup> April, Holcombe Dairy House 12noon - Alton Pancras

5<sup>th</sup> April, Bridge House, 12.30 – Piddlehinton



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