



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

Sunday 12th January 2020

Epiphany 1 – Baptism of Christ

Altar Colour -_White

Readings: *Isa 42:1-9, Psalm 29, Acts 10: 34-43, Matt. 3: 13-end*

Collect: Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit: grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit, that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children; 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.

Isaiah 42:1-9 (ESV) - The LORD's Chosen Servant

Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law. Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it: "I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols. Behold, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth I tell you of them."

COMMENT: This is one of four poetic passages in the Book of Isaiah referred to as "The Servant Songs." They describe Israel's mission as God's servant people to bring "light to the nations." Though composed by an unknown prophet during

Israel's exile in Babylon (586-539 BC) who has been named by scholars as Deutero-Isaiah (or Second Isaiah), the apostolic church appears to have regarded these poems as prophecies of Jesus, the Messiah/Christ. Arguments have persisted as to who the servant actually was – an individual or the nation of Israel as a whole. It would seem that while verse 1-4 appear to identify an individual, verse 5-9 seem to refer to the nation as God's representative. Generally speaking, the nation has been incorporated in an individual in the same way that a monarch incorporates a people – e.g. in the law courts using English Common Law, "the Queen vs. Smith and Company." Some biblical scholars have suggested that Jesus himself adopted these songs as the model for his ministry which began with his baptism by John. The authors of the four Gospels nowhere cite Jesus himself quoting from these songs. There is little doubt, however, that they had these passages in mind as they told the story of his ministry and passion. (Matthew 26:24, 54, 56; Mark 9:12; Luke 18:31, 24:25-27, 46) He alone fulfilled all the qualities ascribed to the Servant. His character completely exemplified the gentleness, righteousness and justice described in this passage, moral qualities which to this poet/prophet come directly from Yahweh. The role of the Servant is clearly defined as creating a new covenant that will bring this knowledge of Israel's moral monotheism to other nations. At the beginning of the Christian era, some Jews thought of the Servant as the Israel's Messiah, but surprisingly Christian interpreters dissented from this view until the end of the 18th Century.

Matthew 3:13-17 (ESV) - The Baptism of Jesus

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness." Then he consented. And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased."

COMMENT: This simple story of Jesus' baptism reveals the humility of Jesus. He identified with sinners. In Matthew's version of the baptism, only Jesus saw the Spirit descend as a dove and heard God's voice. This follows Mark's narrative, but both Luke and John give a different view of the experience. Luke told of it as an impartial observer of the incident would do, probably because the matter did not seem important to him or he had no independent tradition on which to base this detail. (Luke 3:21-23). John, however, stated specifically that it was John the Baptist who saw "the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove" and for him this

was the sign that Jesus was the Son of God to whom he was to bear witness (John 1:32-34). Of course, such a distinct presentation of the same incident served the specific purposes of the different authors. While Matthew did not refer to the Old Testament passages, the concept contained in the words, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased," are undoubtedly a combination of phrases from Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1. Matthew intended them to be interpreted as confirmation of Jesus' messianic role. In this passage the baptism by John was the point in his life when Jesus recognized his true vocation.

Benefice Prayer Requests:

Please pray for the sick, those in hospital, and those recovering from illness or surgery including: Pat Kenwick, June Kellaway, Ann Lambert, Fay Lord, Reg Hanbury, Geoff Harris, Ruth Tutt, Roger Gray, Bernard, Martin DeWavrin, Marion Traynor...

Please pray for those who are grieving, particularly Lewis and Hector; the staff pupils and parents at Piddle Valley School.



Requiescat in pace



Amy Quin, Piddletrenthide. Funeral 31st January 3pm at Poole Crematorium

Dates for your Diary

Stepping Stones Tuesday 21st January

Tiddlers at Piddle Valley School 4th February

Messy Church at Piddletrenthide Saturday 8th February 3-5pm

Benefice service at Milton Abbey Sunday 29th March 10.30am

Benefice Meeting at Piddle Valley School Wednesday 20th May 6.30pm

What's going on around the Benefice!



Food Bank: Thank you for your generosity over the last few months, we shall continue to collect and tin/packet a week for the Dorchester Foodbank.

15th January Wednesday: 10am Dorchester Police Station Chaplaincy Visit

16th January Thursday: 9.00am Morning Prayer, Coffee and a chat at Cheselbourne with the Rector.

16th January Thursday, 9.30am Morning Prayer with Alan Neades at Piddlehinton

Next Sunday 19th January 2020

Epiphany 2

Readings - Isa 49: 1-7, Psalm 40: 1-12, 1 Cor. 1: 1-9, John 1: 29-42

8.30am Holy Communion at Piddletrenthide

9.30am Family Eucharist at Cheselbourne

11.00am Parish Communion at Piddlehinton

11.00am Sung Morning Prayer at Hilton

11.00am Horsey Half Hour at Melcombe Horsey

Confirmation: There has been some interest expressed regarding confirmation. Fr. Roger will be contacting Bishop Nicholas of Salisbury to arrange this to take place within the Benefice. Please email the Rector if you would be interested in becoming a confirmation candidate.