

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

14th February 2021 – Sunday before lent
(Altar Colour Green)



Readings: 2 Kings 2:1-12, Psalm 50: 1-6, 2 Cor 4: 3-6, Mark 9: 2-9

Collect: Almighty Father, whose Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death upon the cross: give us grace to perceive his glory, that we may be strengthened to suffer with him and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

2 Kings 2:1-12 (ESV) - Elijah Taken to Heaven

Now when the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. And Elijah said to Elisha, "Please stay here, for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. And the sons of the prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take away your master from over you?" And he said, "Yes, I know it; keep quiet." Elijah said to him, "Elisha, please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that today the LORD will take away your master from over you?" And he answered, "Yes, I know it; keep quiet." Then Elijah said to him, "Please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So the two of them went on. Fifty men of the sons of the prophets also went and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. Then Elijah took his cloak and rolled it up and struck the water, and the water was parted to the one side and to the other, till the two of them could go over on dry ground. When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you." And Elisha said, "Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me." And he said, "You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it shall be so for you, but if you do not see me, it shall not be so." And as they still went on and talked, behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it and he cried, "My father, my father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" And he saw him no more. Then he took hold of his own clothes and tore them in two pieces. And he took up the cloak of Elijah that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan.

COMMENT: This story of Elijah's passing his role as the leading prophet of Israel his time to his disciple, Elisha, has the markings of a heroic folktale preserved as oral history. It even has an element of a ballad about it. The story tells of the journey for Gilgal to Bethel and on to Jericho where the two prophets

miraculously crossed the Jordan and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind. Elisha's refusal to stay at either Gilgal or Bethel ultimately gained its reward as he finally witnessed Elijah's ascension. Elijah's repeated rejection of Elisha's instructions sounds very much like the refrain of a minstrel's song. So do Elisha's instructions to the company of prophets the two meet at each holy site. The most likely location is about seven miles north of Bethel, a shrine in the central mountains north of Jerusalem. Bethel, of course, was famous in Israelite religious history as the place where centuries earlier the patriarch Jacob had his dream and received a renewal of the divine covenant made with his father Isaac and Grandfather Abraham (Genesis 28). By the time of Elijah and Elisha in the 9th Century BC, both Gilgal and Bethel had become the location of prophetic guilds associated with these spiritual leaders of Israel's God in their struggle against the syncretist tendencies of monarchs such as Ahab and Jezebel. It was members of these guilds who followed Elijah and Elisha on their journey. The miraculous crossing of the Jordan River (v8) also recalls the story of Moses leading the Israelites across the Red Sea. At first, Elijah divided the waters so that he and Elisha could cross over on dry ground, but eastward bound. In v14, having seen Elijah ascend in a chariot of fire, Elisha repeated the same miracle crossing, returning to the west side of the river bearing Elijah's mantle. As it stands now, the whole story shows that the spiritual gifts Elisha inherited were the same as those of his predecessor and in the same prophetic and covenantal tradition as Moses and the patriarchs.

Mark 9:2-9 (ESV) - The Transfiguration

And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah." For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified. And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him." And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only. And as they were coming down the mountain, he charged them to tell no one what they had seen, until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

COMMENT: Immediately after Peter's confession that Jesus is the Messiah/Christ, Mark tells of Jesus' transfiguration to show that Jesus stands in the historic prophetic tradition of Moses and Elijah. This continuity of ancient Israel's faith and the church in Rome for which Mark was writing said to both Jew and Gentile Christians that they belong to the same faith tradition. The same God who had covenanted with Israel and inspired the prophets had now fully realised through Jesus Christ God's magnificent purpose of salvation designed before the creation of the universe. About AD140, Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, reported that Mark had committed to writing what he remembered of Peter's recollections of Jesus. This pericope (Scripture selection) could well have been one of those recollections. While it does have the sense of immediacy found in an eyewitness account, it also has literary qualities in that it fulfils the intent of Mark's gospel of identifying exactly who Jesus is. There is, however, an unmistakable difference from Peter's confession. The voice from the cloud not only confirmed Peter's confession but recalled the voice of God speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai in (Exodus 19:7-25). Mark undoubtedly wanted his audience to make that connection. Jesus being transfigured and having his clothes become dazzling white also made another significant connection with the Jewish tradition. The shekinah of the LORD, a word used in rabbinic writings but not in the Old Testament, expressed divine imminence or universal presence. The word literally meant "that which dwells" and clearly designated the LORD's dwelling on earth as in heaven. This spiritual manifestation of the divine presence had a close association with the OT term "the glory of the Lord" represented by dazzling light. Accordingly, the temple in Jerusalem had been built facing eastward so that the brilliance of the rising sun would fill the holy precincts at the hour of the morning sacrifice. In the

Corinthians reference above, Paul also saw “a light from heaven, brighter than the sun” (Acts 26:12-18; cf. 9:3-9; 22:6-11). So also did the shepherds in Luke 2:9. Wherever it appeared in the apostolic record, this phenomenon reiterated both divine presence and the element of continuity between the Old and New Testaments.

Post Communion: Holy God, we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ: may we who are partakers at his table reflect his life in word and deed, that all the world may know his power to change and save. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Blessing: Christ the Son of God, born of Mary, fill you with his grace to trust his promises and obey his will; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen**

Benefice Prayer list.

Please pray for those who are suffering, from illness, recovering from surgery or hospital treatment, all affected of Coronavirus including, poor health & long Covid, financial pressures, employment uncertainties, loneliness and family difficulties, anxiety and depression, and a longing for some form of normality.

Please pray for those who have asked our prayer including: Richard Mitchell, Bin Roy, Frances Mallett, Ann Lambert, Gill Howell, Geoff Harris, Reg Hanbury, Hannah Parsons, June Kellaway, Robin Saunders, Anna Thomas, Cyril Atkinson, Joe Patterson, William, Bernard & David.

For all those in care homes, and the staff, including: Roger Gray (Dorchester) and June Smith (Warminster).



Requiescat in pace

Hamish Carron Brown (Haslemere)
Andrew Steven (Ireland)
Pat Hansford (formerly Piddlehinton)
Irene Butcher (Reading).

This Week's Assembly presentation is on 'Thinking and Imagining' – copy the link to view

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AygOTkSR7g&t=1s>



Live Streaming

The daily offices will continue to be streamed daily via Facebook

Monday @ 8am Morning Prayer

Tuesday @ 8am Morning Prayer & 8pm Compline

Wednesday @ 8am Morning Prayer & 6pm Evening Prayer

Thursday @ 9am Communion & 8pm Compline

Friday @ 6.00pm Compline - Saturday @ 6.00pm Devotions / Evening Prayer



Benefice Notices

Biosecurity of our church is of upmost importance: A reminder of our arrangements.

THE
WEEK
AHEAD

- The altar and chancel area which should only be accessed by officiants, especially Hilton and Piddletrenthide where regular live streaming takes place.
- Sign in and sanitise your hands each time you enter a church
- Where possible; flowers and cleaning should be carried out when the church is open for private prayer.
- Hymn books and Orders of service can be retained by a regular user for personal use, otherwise they are stored for 72hrs before they are used again.
- All churches are closed on both Friday and Saturday before a Sunday Service is to take place.

When attending a service please arrive in good time to ensure you can follow the Covid safety protocols set out in church.

- *Wear a face-covering*
- *Sanitise Hands*
- *Sign in*
- *Find a seat allowing for 2m personal distancing from other households.*
- *Avoid mingling*



**Fr Roger will be taking some time off 16th to 19th February 2021.
Only urgent calls and emails will be responded to.**

Wednesday 17th February 2021 – Ash Wednesday (Altar Colour – purple)

8.00am Morning Prayer – online only
6.00pm Imposition of Ashes – online only

Sunday 21st February 2021 - Lent 1 (Altar Colour – purple)

Readings: Gen. 9: 8-17, Psalm 25: 1-9, 1 Peter 3: 18-end, Mark 1: 9-15

9.30am Communion Service at Hilton
11.00am Communion Service at Piddlehinton
11.00am Horsey Half Hour Service at Melcombe Horsey
6.00pm Evening Prayer at Piddletrenthide

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