

15 January 2006

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

The Epiphany themes start to unfold in the January readings in church. Today there is 'the manifestation of Christ' to Nathanael in the *Common Worship* scheme of readings. (At 1100 it is the manifestation of Christ at the wedding at Cana.) Whatever is behind the mysterious incident referred to in the enigmatic reference to Nathanael 'under the fig tree', the fact remains that it was sufficient to bring about a total 'disclosure situation' as far as Nathanael was concerned. He needed no more assurance, he had found the Christ. For most of us the path to faith is not that simple, but, as Blaise Pascal was to discover, the one who truly searches for God has in fact already found him. In some of our darker moments it is worth remembering that 'The depth of our discovery may at times seem to be quite shallow, but we have a lifetime to search more deeply, and also to be found by the One who, in any case, is searching us out as well.'

Our prayers today. We pray for our own church and parish, and in the wider Church we pray in the Anglican Communion for the Church in Kenya. In our diocesan prayer we are praying with the other parishes for the work of the Missions to Seafarers. In the parish we pray for the work of the External Affairs Committee, and in our systematic prayer for the people living in the parish we pray for those living in Beech Walk.

SUNDAY SERVICES

0800 HOLY COMMUNION *Common Worship rite*
Order 1: page 167 Collect of the Day: page 384
Eucharistic Prayer E: page 196.

0930 SUNG EUCHARIST *Common Worship rite*

Wayfarers, Children's Hour and Crèche.
Order 1: page 167. Collect of the Day: page 384
Eucharistic Prayer A: page 184
Setting of the Eucharist: *Darke* in F
The hymns are either on the Readings paper or else in
More Hymns for Today.

Introit Canticle: A Song of the New Jerusalem. (*Last item on readings paper*)
[Tune: NEH 10111]
Introduction, Prayers of Penitence, *Kyrie eleison*
Collect of the Day: page 384
Readings on green paper

Both last week and this week there have not been many 'notices' as such on the Weekly Notes, nor lengthy words of anthems and that sort of thing. This has given the opportunity for some additional items of a more general sort. Last week there was a section about the complications of the *Common Worship* calendar; this week some remarks are prompted by one of the hymns at the 0930 service.

'MHT 129' and other things. We do not often use *More Hymns for Today*, which is one of the five hymn-books in regular use here (six, if you count *A Hundred Canticles for Ewell*), but it does contain some good stuff. I try as far as possible only to have one hymn-book per service, and in fact it works out that at the earlier Sung Eucharist today two of the three hymns from MHT are actually in our green hymn-books. But No. 129 is not, and it is a good one, so we are having it today. The tune is *not* familiar, but it is particularly fine, and worth knowing.

It is a useful example of not being tied too closely to the seasons in our choice of hymns. I remember a crotchety old lady at Guildford Cathedral, when I was Precentor there, who was very cross because we had 'Ride on, ride on in majesty' as the Gradual hymn on Advent Sunday. I explained to her that since the next item on the programme was the Gospel reading, which in those days of the *Book of Common Prayer* readings was the account of Our Lord's entry into Jerusalem, the hymn was just right at that point. 'What's that got to do with it?' she said: 'you are only supposed to sing it on Palm Sunday!' (I fear that there can be a meaningless dogmatism and conservatism even about hymnody.) 'Abide with me' is a straightforward evening hymn, but seldom sung at Evensong these days, but is a firm favourite at funerals, particularly 'non-Church' ones - though possibly for more than one reason. Easter hymns are appropriate on almost any Sunday, for what should be obvious reasons; so, for that matter, are hymns like 'When I survey the wondrous cross.' They are *particularly* appropriate on certain seasons, but their message is not meant to be restricted by the calendar. Some are obviously inappropriate on certain days; one would not sing 'O come, all ye faithful' on Good Friday, an illustration I had to use some years ago to a bride who wanted 'There is a green hill' at her wedding. But as a general point the doctrines of the incarnation and redemption, as well as the life of faith, prayer and sacrament are worth singing about at any time.

'MHT 129' is a good example of this. It is clearly about Christmas, and Christmas is in recent memory, irrespective of which Church Calendar and Lectionary we actually follow. In its first three verses the hymn reminds us of both the Nativity and the Epiphany. Then it makes its point powerfully in the last verse, in words rather like the more familiar ones of Sir John Betjeman, rooting the reality of the incarnation in the sacramental reality of the Holy Eucharist in which we are, at that time, participants. A good hymn; we have not sung it here before. 'O come, let us enjoy it.' **W.R.H.**

Next Sunday. A reasonably normal Sunday, once again, though we shall be welcoming visitors for Holy Baptism at Mattins. Last week's sermon at the Sung Eucharist made a plug for our being 'The Church Welcoming' at Holy Baptism, and perhaps this advance notice may persuade some people to exercise that important role next week.

Sharing the love of Christ, the Light of the world, with the people of Ewell.

New Testament Reading from the Revelation to St John.
 Gradual Cantic: A Song of Praise. (*On readings paper*) [Tune: NEH 47]
 The Holy Gospel reading from St John.
 Sermon by *the Vicar*
 Nicene Creed: page 173
 Intercession; then all stand for the Greeting of Peace
 Offertory Hymn: MHT 129* Collection.
 [* There is a note about this hymn on the back page of the Notes.]
 Eucharistic Prayer A: page 184
 Turn back to page 178 for the Lord's Prayer, etc.
 Hymn at the Invitation: MHT 128 (*Different tune*) [Tune: C for C 2: 4]
 Anthem: 'The Call' (from *Five Mystical Songs*) *R Vaughan Williams*

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life: Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength:
 Such a Way as gives us breath: Such a Light, as shows a feast:
 Such a Truth, as ends all strife: Such a Feast, as mends in length:
 Such a Life, as killeth death. Such a Strength, as makes his guest.

Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart:
 Such a Joy, as none can move:
 Such a Love, as none can part:
 Such a Heart, as joys in love. *George Herbert* (16th cent.)

All stand after the anthem for the Post-Communion prayer: page 384
 All stand for The Blessing and Dismissal.
 Hymn: MHT 125

Welcome to any visitors or newcomers to St Mary's today. Please make yourselves known, and join us for coffee in the Church Hall across the road between the 0930 and 1100 services.

SUNG EUCHARIST *Book of Common Prayer rite*
 Setting of the Eucharist: *Mathias* in C
 (Creed and Gloria: *Merbecke*)
 The hymns are from the old red hymn-books at this service today.

Sermon by *the Vicar*
 Introit hymn: 77. Then green Prayer Book: page 31
 Kyrie eleison (Lord, have mercy): page 33
 Greeting and the Collect of the Day
 (*There is a separate leaflet for the Collect and Readings*)
 The Epistle: Romans 12: 6-16
 At the end of a letter containing much weighty theology, St Paul turns to thoughts about practical Christianity.
 Gradual hymn: 74
 This translation of an ancient hymn from the fifth century recounts the various Epiphany themes in the New Testament, anticipating in verse 4 the gospel reading for today.
 The Holy Gospel: St John 2: 1-11
 The first 'sign' of Jesus at the wedding at Cana in Galilee.
 Nicene Creed: page 34.

Offertory Hymn: 387 Collection
 After the hymn, all kneel for the Prayer for the Church (page 36), the Prayers of Penitence, etc., and for the Prayer of Consecration
 Hymn at the Consecration: 416 [Choir use OFH 335 & Amen]
 During the Communion: O Lamb of God (page 44)
 Anthem: The Call (from *Five Mystical Songs*.) *Vaughan Williams*
 [Words printed above at the 0930 service.]
 After Communion:
 The Lord's Prayer and the Prayer of Thanksgiving: page 44
 All stand for Gloria in excelsis
 The Blessing
 Hymn 267 The Epiphany theme of the world-wide Gospel of Christ.

1800 Evening Prayer, said in the Parish Room.
In church this week
 Tuesday 1000 Holy Communion
Other events and notices.
 Monday 2000 Meeting of Vicar, Churchwardens and the Administrator
 Saturday Vicar at the Surrey Annual Conference of the Royal British Legion at Hindhead.

Tickets will be available in church next Sunday for a Shrove Tuesday party on 28 February at 1830 in the Church Hall entitled 'HALL TOGETHER.' The clever title (*not* thought up by the Vicar this time) reflects the fact that a tremendous amount has been done in the hall during the past year, and it is a time to celebrate this, and indeed to thank those who have done so much to bring this about. There will be food – probably with an Italian flavour – and some form of cabaret. A vegetarian option will be available. This is just a preliminary notice today, but book the evening now, because we expect quite a demand for tickets.

A few non-members of the Standing Committee turned up for the meeting last Monday in connexion with the Parish Share meeting. I am grateful to those who came and took part. Our response has now been sent off to Diocesan House.
 Copies of the important Report of the Parish Finance Review Group are available for the general congregation, and there are twenty-five or so left out of the forty copies placed in the Welcome Area. A clearly-presented Statement of our financial position is also in the Welcome Area, on the blue notice-board. The Report is made in the light of the facts disclosed on the displayed Statement.

The Sacristy Rota should be ready today. If not, those on for 5 February will be separately notified. The rota is not complete, because of some gaps, which, as yet, it has not proved possible to fill. However, as a working document it obviously has to appear now, since the old rota is almost at its end, and I am grateful to those who have agreed to be included on it for the first time W.R.H.