

St Martin of Tours Chelsfield

*St Martin's worships and serves a loving God,
reaching out to the community in the name of Jesus Christ.*

Sunday 24 January 2021

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EPIPHANY

When I watch or read the news in the current Covid pandemic crisis it seems to me that more emphasis is given to negative rather than positive events, and we are quicker to criticise than to congratulate those in authority. Why does the media concentrate on the bad things in life, rather than the good? And what might this depressing slant say about us, the audience?

It isn't that these are the only things that happen. Perhaps journalists are drawn to reporting bad news because sudden disaster is more compelling than slow improvements. Or it could be that news gatherers believe that cynical reports of corrupt politicians or unfortunate events make for simpler stories. But another strong possibility is that we, the readers or viewers, have trained journalists to focus on these things. Many people often say that they would prefer good news: but is that actually true? An experiment in one newspaper some years ago to provide an issue that included only good news stories lost almost two thirds of its sales on that day!

But too much bad news is surely not good for us – as the increasingly frequent reports about our declining mental and spiritual wellbeing seem to indicate.

The book of Psalms is an emotional roller coaster of human response to events. As in our news bulletins, darkness, despair, doubt and dread feature strongly. But there is a good sprinkling of praise, faith, hope and blessing too which offers a balance of good news.

Today's Psalm reminds us that the faithful will receive God's blessing. This does not guarantee us immunity from the troubles of the world; but it gives us the strength to endure them, the hope to look beyond them and the peace to overcome them. In a time of crisis, God's grace and blessing are good news indeed – we need to share more of them!

Revd John

*You are invited to spend a quiet time with these prayers,
readings and reflection.*

Prayers for the week

Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles the wonder of your saving presence: renew your people with your heavenly grace, and in all our weakness sustain us by your mighty power; 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.

[Collect for the Third Sunday of Epiphany]

Almighty Father, whose Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world: may your people, illumined by your word and sacraments, shine with the radiance of his glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth; for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. Amen.

[Post Communion for the Third Sunday of Epiphany]

Today's psalm and readings

Psalm 128

The Happy Home of the Faithful

Happy is everyone who fears the Lord,
who walks in his ways.

You shall eat the fruit of the labour of your hands;
you shall be happy, and it shall go well with you.

Your wife will be like a fruitful vine
within your house;
your children will be like olive shoots
around your table.

Thus shall the man be blessed
who fears the Lord.

The Lord bless you from Zion.

May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem
all the days of your life.

May you see your children's children.

Peace be upon Israel!

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning, is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

Genesis 14:17-20

Abram Blessed by Melchizedek

¹⁷ After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). ¹⁸ And King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High. ¹⁹ He blessed him and said, 'Blessed be Abram by God Most High, maker of heaven and earth; ²⁰ and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!' And Abram gave him one-tenth of everything.

The Revelation of John the Divine 19:6-10

The Rejoicing in Heaven

⁶ Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunder-peals, crying out,

'Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God
the Almighty reigns.

⁷ Let us rejoice and exult
and give him the glory,

for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and his bride has made herself ready;

⁸ to her it has been granted to be clothed
with fine linen, bright and pure'—

for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

⁹ And the angel said to me, 'Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And he said to me, 'These are true words of God.' ¹⁰ Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, 'You must not do that! I am a fellow-servant with you and your comrades who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'

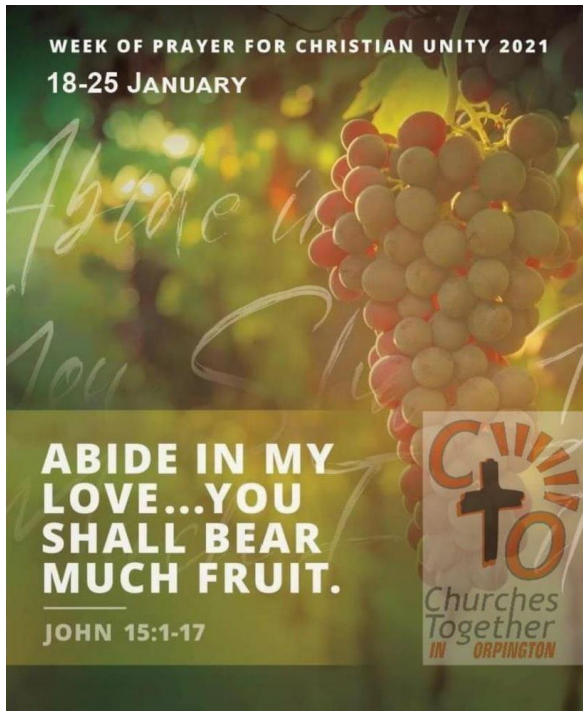


The Gospel according to John 2:1-11

The Wedding at Cana

¹ On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ² Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' ⁴ And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' ⁵ His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'

⁶ Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷ Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸ He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. ⁹ When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom ¹⁰ and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' ¹¹ Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.



THE CONVERSION OF PAUL

25 January

Almighty God, who caused the light of the gospel to shine throughout the world through the preaching of your servant Saint Paul: grant that we who celebrate his wonderful conversion may follow him in bearing witness to your truth; 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.

The Acts of the Apostles 9:1-22

The Conversion of Saul

¹ Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

³ Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' ⁵ He asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The reply came, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶ But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.' ⁷ The men who were travelling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. ⁸ Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹ For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

¹⁰ Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, 'Ananias.' He answered, 'Here I am, Lord.'

¹¹ The Lord said to him, 'Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, ¹² and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.' ¹³ But Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; ¹⁴ and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.' ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; ¹⁶ I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.'

¹⁷ So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' ¹⁸ And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, ¹⁹ and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, ²⁰ and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, 'He is the Son of God.' ²¹ All who heard him were amazed and said, 'Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem among those who invoked this name? And has he not come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?' ²² Saul became increasingly more powerful and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Messiah.

Prayers for all those affected by coronavirus

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

A family prayer

Loving God, you know us and all that we are facing.
We thank you that we can come to you as we are – with
all our fears and concerns, our difficulties and challenges.
Please draw close to each of us and those we remember
before you now.
Bring to us your peace and comfort.
And fill us with your Spirit that we may be bearers of your
grace and hope to others.
As a country protect us, encourage us and keep us. In
the name of your Son Jesus, we pray.
Amen.

Scriptural Comfort

'Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand'

(Isaiah 41:10)

'Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'

(Philippians 4:6,7)

'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.'

(John 3:16)

As we do not know how long this situation will last it is important that we look out for one another.

Please let Revd John know of anyone who is ill or in distress.

***Or if you need prayer or spiritual support,
or are lonely and just need a short chat please phone***

PLEASE NOTE
ST MARTINS IS CURRENTLY CLOSED
FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP

**There will still be a midweek service
on Wednesdays at 9.30am
Holy Communion (BCP)**

- Please follow the signed instructions on notices.
- Stewards will be there to offer direction.
- There will be a one-way entry and exit system.
- You will need to register your attendance and provide contact details for tracking when you arrive — please bring your own pen to sign in with.
- Please use the hand sanitizer provided.
- Please wear a face covering if you are able.
- If you cannot wear a face covering or have another vulnerability please let a sidesman know, so that you can be directed to a more spacious area
- Please take all your belongings home with you.

Worship from St Martin's continues to be available online:

- A Sunday service on the web site —see panel below
- Daily prayer on Facebook at 8.15am on Tuesdays and Thursdays

Please let Revd John know of any urgent prayer requests or of people in particular need.

Services on Sunday 24 January and Sunday 31 January

There will be a Family Communion service at 10.00am on Zoom a recording of which will be available subsequently on Youtube.

If you wish to join the Zoom service please call 07826 516481 and ask for a link or email mediapr@stmartinchelsfield.org.uk

You can join by telephone if you don't have internet access.

The service sheet and hymns are on the web site.

Please note that to accommodate pastoral offices or with any changes to Diocesan or Government guidelines these arrangements are subject to change at any time.

For more information on St Martin's please visit our web site and Facebook page:

www.stmartinchelsfield.org.uk

www.facebook.com/ChelsfieldStMartins

Other links and resources

Daily HOPE is a national, free phoneline from the Church of England on **0800 804 8044**.

The line is available 24 hours a day and offers music, prayers and reflections, as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone.

For today's online Sunday service from the Church of England visit:

www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online

Prayer for the nation:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/call-prayer-nation>

For other Church of England resources please visit:

www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-liturg-and-prayer-resources

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