

The Baptism of Christ

My dear Friends,

At the time of writing we learn that the Welsh Government restrictions are being extended for a further three weeks. Schools will remain closed, university students are not yet to return to live study for a while and most of our normal lives in working, social and family life is prevented from carrying on.

However unlike the first major lockdown in March and the firebreak in November our places of worship may remain open. I am enormously grateful to those who are enabling this to happen in our churches. There is so much that we do not ordinarily do in booking places and arranging seating. Also the sanitising of people and places is being carefully administered. Nevertheless we still can hear holy scripture read and reflected upon, prayers offered and the blessed Sacrament celebrated and shared. In some churches we have been fortunate that small dedicated groups of choristers have enhanced our worship following the strict guidance we have received.

Many of you have I know felt that now is not the time for you to return to church especially because of the virus now circulating which is more contagious. Thank you for the messages and calls telling me of your circumstances and feelings about the situation we are all under. Please continue to pray for each other and all who are helping us through this public health crisis wherever you may be.

Our Gospel this week from St Mark tells us of the crowds who came to St John the Baptist asking for Baptism with water. John told them that one would come after him who would Baptise with the Holy Spirit. He spoke of course of Jesus who was then Baptised by John in the Jordan and then acknowledged by God as his Son. The people had waited a long time for the coming of this Messiah. There was a new beginning for them in their spiritual and religious life in these miraculous events. It did take time however for Christ's message and ministry to spread.

We too need to be patient at this time as we wait for a different kind of new beginning not so much in our spiritual health but in our physical wellbeing. We know that the wonder of science will bring us the vaccine that will make us safe in due course. Let us continue to pray that we will have strength and commitment to continue the work God calls us to do as his Baptised people in the coming months.

Best wishes and prayers

Stewart

The Reverend Canon Stewart Lisk,
Vicar of Roath and Area Dean of Cardiff.