

Discipleship

The theme of the Gospel for Epiphany 2 is discipleship - and presents an account of Jesus inviting 'the initial twelve' to simply follow Him. Whilst we're told how Jesus went about it, little is said about what their roles would ultimately require.

However, later in His ministry, Jesus does mention this, albeit in pretty broad terms: ***“Go rather to the lost sheep... As you go, proclaim this message - the Kingdom of Heaven has come near... Freely you have received; freely give”***.

Eugene Peterson (1932 - 2018, an American Presbyterian minister, theologian, author, and poet) had this to say: ***“Christian discipleship is a decision to walk in His ways, steadily and firmly, and then finding that the way integrates all our interests, passions, and gifts, our human needs and eternal aspirations. It is the way of life we were created for”***.

As are we... And, as Christians, we are called to be disciples, too. And in a Parish Mission Statement that was drafted just before the Covid epidemic, we were one the verge of adopting this as a working hypothesis: *“To live and explore the Mystery of God”, and “To invite others to live and explore it with us”*.

The important question that needs to be considered is **“how?”**. There is, of course, no single 'answer', as discipleship is a personal commitment and vocation that's unique to each of us.

Thought for the week: Whilst preparing the Home Worship Resources for next week, I came across the following poem - which I invite you to consider as a starting point for further personal reflection. This has been freely adapted from the Costa Blanca Chaplaincy website...

The feast of Epiphany brings the Christmas season to an end. As we now move on into the Church's year, I thought that this poem "Now the Work of Christmas Begins" composed by Howard Thurman, an African-American theologian, educator, and civil rights leader would make an excellent framework for this week's intercessions. (The relevant prayers can be found in the Home Worship Resources)

The Work of Christmas Begins

**“When the song of the angels is stilled,
when the star in the sky is gone,
when the kings and princes are home,
when the shepherds are back with the flocks,
then the work of Christmas begins:
- to find the lost,
- to heal those broken in spirit,
- to feed the hungry,
- to release the oppressed,
- to rebuild the nations,
- to bring peace among all peoples,
- to make a little music with the heart...
- And to radiate the Light of Christ,
every day, in every way, in all that we do and in all that we say.
.....Then the work of Christmas begins.”**

Howard Thurman

A final prayer:

***“Jesus, you said we cannot truly call you Lord unless we do the things you said we should do. With all of my heart, I want to be authentic when I call you Lord. Help me to give you my full devotion and complete obedience. Make me a true disciple.
Amen”***