

Reflection Epiphany Sunday 2024

Christ in the Rubble

I am grateful to Eliza (Revd Dr Eliza Getman) for this extract from a longer and powerful sermon from Rev Dr Munther Isaac, of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bethlehem, preached on 23/12/23.

"To our friends who are here with us: You have left your families and churches to be with us. You embody the term accompaniment – a costly solidarity. "We were in prison and you visited us." What a stark difference from the silence and complicity of others. Your presence here is the meaning of solidarity. Your visit has already left an impression that will never be taken from us. Through you, God has spoken to us that "we are not forsaken." As Father Rami of the Catholic Church said this morning, you have come to Bethlehem, and like the Magi, you brought gifts with, but gifts that are more precious than gold, frankincense, and myrrh. You brought the gift of love and solidarity. We needed this. For this season, maybe more than anything, we were troubled by the silence of God. In these last two months, the Psalms of lament have become a precious companion. We cried out: My God, My God, we have you forsaken Gaza? Why do you hide your face from Gaza? In our pain, anguish, and lament, we have searched for God, and found him under the rubble in Gaza. Jesus became the victim of the very same violence of the Empire. He was tortured. Crucified. He bled out as others watched. He was killed and cried out in pain – My God, where are you? In Gaza today, God is under the rubble. And in this Christmas season, as we search for Jesus, he is to be found not on the side of Rome, but our side of the wall. In a cave, with a simple family. Vulnerable. Barely, and miraculously surviving a massacre. Among a refugee family. This is where Jesus is found. If Jesus were to be born today, he would be born under the rubble in Gaza. When we glorify pride and richness, Jesus is under the rubble..."

https://www.redletterchristians.org/christ-in-the-rubble-a-liturgy-of-lament/?fbclid=IwAR1fS65ty895u11m0VeGQfnlmoQ9JuXzQQfCkVYJzLh8jxog9FrjmHhmlc_aem_Aea1ryQ95nlV64vwb7viOW-4xrc06-Bb_lgBuOz7UvMUYNLIS9n_1uETIJ-UNGTbq_8

Fr David

Happy
New Year

NEXT SUNDAY 14 01.2024 2nd Sunday of Epiphany
10.30am in the Hall

READINGS: OT 1 Samuel 3: 1-10 (11-20)
NT Revelation 5: 1-10
GOSPEL John 1: 43-end



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St Thomas, Exeter

7th January 2024

Epiphany

10.30am in Hall

Today

10.30am in the Hall

Hymn Numbers

394 O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness

537 We three kings of Orient are

41 As with gladness men of old

Tuesday 9th January

7.30pm House Group meet at 6 Painter's Ct

Wednesday 10th January

10am Holy Communion (BCP)

Thursday 11th January

9.30—11am St Thomas Tots

10.30-12.30pm Knit & Natter, 9 Maple Rd.

Details from Jenny 01392 498725

3-5pm Warm Space in the Hall

Friday 12th January

9.30am Morning Prayer

10am Staff Meeting

Saturday 13th January

9am Men's Breakfast in the Sawyers

Collect

O God, who by the leading of a star manifested your only Son to the peoples of the earth: mercifully grant that we, who know you now by faith, may at last behold your glory face to face; 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**

Isaiah 60: 1-6

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms. Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.

Ephesians 3: 1-12

This is the reason that I Paul am a prisoner for Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles— for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given to me for you, and how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I wrote above in a few words, a reading of which will enable you to perceive my understanding of the mystery of Christ. In former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind, as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that is, the Gentiles have become fellow-heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I have become a servant

according to the gift of God's grace that was given to me by the working of his power. Although I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given to me to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ, and to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; so that through the church the wisdom of God in its rich variety might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose that he has carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have access to God in boldness and confidence through faith in him.

Matthew 2: 1-12

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet: "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel." ' Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests,

they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Post Communion

Lord God, the bright splendour whom the nations seek: may we who with the wise men have been drawn by your light discern the glory of your presence in your Son, the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

NOTICES

Community Larder There will be a collection box in the hall on Sundays for food donations. The need remains great so please be mindful of our wider community.

Pioneering Parishes:

What: A series of four fortnightly webinars to help parishes start to move their energy outwards and become more pioneering.

When: Tuesday 9th January, Tuesday 23rd January, Tuesday 6 & Tuesday 20th February.

Time: 14.00-15.30.

Please refer to weekly email and/or speak to Fr David or Revd Sarah.

House Group will meet fortnightly from 9th January until 13th February in either Helen or John's house. Throughout Epiphany they will study the Book of Proverbs. Details from Mic, John or Ian.

