

Reflections for 10th January 2021

1st Sunday of Epiphany

Beloved Children

One of the privileges of my work is to stand with families and friends at the font in one of our churches as we gather to celebrate a baptism. Always on those occasions I have a strong sense of the love that people feel for someone they accompany as they come to be baptised, and especially, when we baptise a young child, I sense the love that parents feel for their beloved child.

This week, on the first Sunday of the Epiphany season, we reflect on the truths that are revealed to us in the story of the baptism of Jesus. He went to be baptised to show his support for the ministry of John the Baptist, and for the message of repentance that John was preaching. And the gospel tells us that as Jesus was baptised, he was blessed anew with the presence and power of the Spirit, and he heard these wonderful words of assurance:

You are my son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased

At the beginning of his public work and ministry, before he had begun to speak and teach and heal, Jesus was assured of his Father's love.

Our Bible story this week is the story of Naaman, a man with power and authority who learnt to humble himself, and listen to the advice of others, so that through the outward sign of washing seven times in the river Jordan (the same river in which Jesus was later to be baptised), he found healing and the love of God.

And when we are baptised, at whatever age and in whatever way, we are given the same assurance. The good news is that we are loved, not because of anything we have done, or not done, but simply because we are the children of our loving heavenly Father. As we remember the baptism of Jesus in this Epiphany season, and as we may remember our own baptism, so we may hear anew the Father say to us:

You are my child, whom I love; with you I am well pleased

Revd John Waller

Heavenly Father,
at the Jordan you revealed Jesus as your Son:
may we recognise him as our Lord
and know ourselves to be your beloved children;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Bible readings: Genesis 1. 1-5; Acts 19. 1-7; Mark 1. 4-11

Story: 'The Helpful Servant' (based on 2 Kings chapter 5)