

Revd Michael Burns
Christ Church West Wimbledon
Sermon : January 27th 2020
“Third Sunday after Epiphany”

SERMON 26 JANUARY 2020 – EPIPHANY 3

Over these past 3 weeks we have been continuing to celebrate the Epiphany. The word means ‘showing, revealing’ – God being revealed to the world through Jesus. So it is that our nativity tableau is still in place with the wise men, the kings presenting their gifts. The Epiphany is about Jesus Christ being revealed to the whole world and it is a feast when God says that this Jesus is for everyone, for the whole world without exception. In these past weeks we have been thinking about how important it is that all are made to feel at home when they come to worship, particularly the visitor, the stranger. We cherish the long-standing tradition of the guest being given the place of honour. Last week our local Methodist minister helped us to think about the invitation of Jesus to two strangers who were following him: ‘Come and see’ – we use that phrase so often when we eagerly want someone else to see what we have seen, to share what we have discovered. We don’t want to keep such things to ourselves.

We also have reflected upon the baptism of Jesus by John at the start of his ministry – and so have been thinking about our own baptism, whenever it was. Many of us were brought to baptism by our parents who said ‘thank you to God’ for our birth and offered us to his care in faith and trust. It was wonderful last Sunday that I was able to baptise Mila, who is here today with her parents to be welcomed by the whole church family – and it is also another great privilege that we are here this morning, still in the season of Epiphany – of God revealing, showing Jesus to the whole world – to celebrate the baptism of Rose. Her parents have recently moved to a new home and so they have found their way to Christ Church where I think they have felt a warm welcome.

Moving house is a stressful time – and Rose was born in October while all the upheaval was going on. But everyone has survived and it is good for them to feel settled in a new home and a new church. So welcome.

In my humble opinion the bringing up of children has to be the toughest job in the world and every bit of help is needed. So, it is good when the central place of the Christian faith is still seen, 21 centuries later, as of fundamental importance for many families. Following Jesus of Nazareth continues to be the ultimate goal for many and the one strand which keeps life together as we all want God to bless and protect us and those for whom we love and care.

This morning you all have your part to play in the celebration for Rose. Family and friends have a special role and responsibility to support and pray for Doug and Kate as they bring up Rose, together with Grace and Eryn, in the best way that they are able. And of course, Rose – as well as Mila – is also being welcomed into the family of the Church as they both begin their journey today as the newest Christians. And that is what all of us are doing this morning – praying for and supporting the family of Mila and Rose, whether you know them or not, because we are all bound together by the invisible thread that links us into one, the link of love which comes from God and leads back to God through Jesus who wants us above all to be one united and loving family following Jesus Christ – something which began hundreds of years ago with the calling of those first disciples of Jesus as they fished in the Sea of Galilee and then answered that call. And for that – thanks be to God.