

## **Epiphany2, 14<sup>th</sup> January 2018**

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### **St Stephen's**

Today's collect includes these words: transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory. We are meant to show the glory of God to others. Epiphany is about the revelation of the glory of God in Jesus. In our Gospel Nathaniel uses messianic titles for Jesus because Jesus had seen him under the fig tree and knew what Nathaniel's character was like. Jesus reinforces the revelation of his glory by telling Nathaniel that he would see greater things, and that The Son of Man was the link between Heaven and Earth. Philip and Nathaniel became disciples of Jesus. Their lives were transformed by his grace just as ours should be. They later became apostles sent out by Jesus to make him known to others. That is the pattern which we should be following. As disciples we get to know the Lord as well as we can. Then he sends us to tell others about him.

How do you feel when you leave church? Are you encouraged and built up in your faith? Do you feel closer to God? Do you want people you care about to know God? In Holy Communion we meet with our Lord Jesus. That should transform our lives. How must Philip have felt after meeting Jesus? Philip knew Jesus was the one Moses and the Prophets had written about. Philip wanted his friend Nathaniel to know Jesus too. How about you? Do you want others to come and meet with Jesus Christ?

You may want that, but lack the confidence to share your faith. There are courses which can help us share our faith, but I think there is a better way. If you meet someone who really impresses you, you want to know them more. Nobody is more impressive than Jesus. So, get to know him more. The more you know him and love him the more you will want others to know Jesus. The best way of sharing your faith with people you care about is to talk naturally about the Lord you love. It's like talking to someone about your family. So let's look at our gospel reading with that in mind.

Philip found his friend Nathaniel and told him about Jesus. When Philip mentioned Nazareth, Nathaniel said, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip was not put off. He simply said, 'Come and see.' Sometimes the church has a poor reputation which puts people off the church. But, you can encourage them to ignore what others say and make up their own mind. Invite them to come with you to a church

meeting. You could invite them to a Christingle or something else which is not just for regular churchgoers. Perhaps you could go along with them to an Alpha course later this year. Any bad reputation can be overcome by the reality which they find in church. When they do see the reality of the church, they should find a group of people who know the Lord, love the Lord and obey the Lord.

In our reading from Revelation it says in verse five, "by your blood you ransom for God saints from every tribe and language and people and nation." Do we behave like saints? Saints are the holy people of God. Sadly, some church members behave like people of this world rather than people of the Kingdom. In the New Testament epistles, the behaviour of church members is challenged and corrected. We can learn from them and seek to correct our own behaviour. In this church do we always speak the truth in love or is the way that we talk no different from the way people of this world speak? Do we gossip when we shouldn't? Do we make sure that something is not only true but helpful before we share it? Do we grumble and complain rather than always encourage one another? Let us make sure that our conversations including on e-mail or Facebook are always loving and uplifting.

Patrick wants this year to be one in which we grow as disciples. Through Word and Sacraments let us get to know the Lord better. Let us make our church one worth coming to, a church where the love of God is shown and where people can grow in faith and the knowledge of God. Amen.