

MONDAY
18 JANUARY
 Hebrews 5:1-10
 Psalm 110:1-4
 Mark 2:18-22

TUESDAY
19 JANUARY
 Hebrews 6:10-end
 Psalm 111
 Mark 2:23-end

WEDNESDAY
20 JANUARY
 Hebrews 7:1-3, 15-17
 Psalm 110:1-4
 Mark 3:1-6

THURSDAY
21 JANUARY
 Hebrews 7:25 – 8:6
 Psalm 40:7-10, 17-end
 Mark 3:7-12

FRIDAY
22 JANUARY
 Hebrews 8:6-end
 Psalm 85:7-end
 Mark 3:13-19

SATURDAY
23 JANUARY
 Hebrews 9:2-3, 11-14
 Psalm 47:1-8
 Mark 3:20-21

REFLECTION

In this week's Gospel readings opposition to Jesus increases and it becomes clear why one religious group, the Pharisees, had issues with him. They were so dedicated to following the Ten Commandments

and the other laws of the first five books of the Bible that they had created hundreds of additional regulations prescribing exactly how they thought this should be done. Unfortunately, many of their extra rules were onerous and misguided. For instance, absentmindedly plucking the ears off grain, as the disciples had done, was believed to break the commandment not to work on the sabbath, as was Jesus' healing in the synagogue.

The Pharisees criticised Jesus for being lax in his law-keeping, but he knew that they had forgotten the heart of the Law, a love for God and neighbour. He was angry that, rather than rejoicing when he healed a man, they objected and complained.

There was a basic incompatibility between Jesus' ways and the Pharisees', and we are given the first ominous hints that such clashes of viewpoint would ultimately lead to his death, as the Pharisees and Herodians join forces "to destroy him"; and we are reminded that among his disciples was Judas, the one "who betrayed him."

PRAYER

Enable us, Lord Jesus, to follow in your example of love, so we are driven by your compassion in all we do. Help us to recognise and deal with any attitudes and ways of thinking that make it difficult for us to show such love to others.



BAPTISM

PART III – BEGINNING A JOURNEY

Baptism is part of each person's story. For infants it coincides with the very beginning of life, but no matter what age the candidate, it represents the beginning of a different story from the one that starts with physical birth. For older baptismal candidates it takes place at a different point, but for everyone it marks a point on a human journey and the beginning of a journey within God's family.

Journey is an important image in scripture, and for many biblical characters a physical journey is preceded by God's call. Moses is called to lead the Hebrews out of Egypt, while Abraham responds to God's call to leave his home. The Church of England Liturgical Commission's (www.churchofengland.org) reflection on baptism points out that Paul is travelling when he meets Christ and that Christ's ministry is played out in the context of constant journeying.

Although baptism can take place at any time, the Liturgical Commission, setting it in the context of the biblical story, suggests particular times. Baptism in the early Church took place on Easter Sunday with all its imagery of rising to new life. Other suggestions are Epiphany/Baptism of Christ and at All Saints' tide.

Physical journeys generally require preparation and the Liturgical Commission sees the Christian journey as no different. To help create a supportive and more rounded preparation, it suggests a set of activities that could take place within services in the run up to and after the baptism itself. These could begin with a formal welcome several months before baptism while, in the weeks immediately preceding, candidates or their parents or sponsors could be given Jesus' Summary of the Law, the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, and the Beatitudes. Thanksgiving and sending out might take place some time after the baptism itself.

These additional steps bring a new emphasis to the importance of baptism, to the welcome into the community of Christ's disciples, and to the beliefs, responsibilities and support that will form part of the journey.

LIVE
 the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU
 THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by
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 and
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Second week of Epiphany

Monday 18 January to
 Saturday 23 January
 2021

WEEK

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