

# BENEFACT BULLETIN

Church News for

Bedale, Burrill, Leeming and Thornton Watlass

29th January 2023

## The Fourth Sunday of Epiphany

### OUR PRAYERS ARE ASKED FOR

Ross, Gaynor, Toni, Bel Newman, Lesley Hall, Delma Bode, John Hall, Barbara Pike, Chris, Lynne Riddlestone, Olive Robinson, Harry Scorer, David Disney, Kath Finkill, Harry Lillystone, Enid Farrow and Pauline.

### RIP

Georgina Rudd, Mary Dennis, Pamela Exelby and Gloria Kirk

*May they rest in peace and rise in glory*

### *Praying for Edwin in Bolivia*

Please pray for Edwin, his parents and his 3 siblings this week.

### COLLECT AND READINGS

#### Collect

**God our creator, who in the beginning commanded the light to shine out of darkness: we pray that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ may dispel the darkness of ignorance and unbelief, shine into the hearts of all your people, and reveal the knowledge of your glory in the face of 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.**

#### First Reading - 1 Kings 17.8–16

Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 'Go now to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and live there; for I have commanded a widow there to feed you.' So he set out and went to Zarephath. When he came to the gate of the town, a widow was there gathering sticks; he called to her and said, 'Bring me a little water in a vessel, so that I may drink.' As she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, 'Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.' But she said, 'As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar, and a little oil in a jug; I am now gathering a couple of sticks, so that I may go home and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.' Elijah said to her, 'Do not be afraid; go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterwards make something for yourself and your son. For thus says the Lord the God of Israel: The jar of meal will not be emptied and the jug of oil will not fail until the day that the Lord sends rain on the earth.' She went

and did as Elijah said, so that she as well as he and her household ate for many days. The jar of meal was not emptied, neither did the jug of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah.

### **Second Reading - 1 Corinthians 1. 18–31**

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.' Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength. Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.'

### **Gospel Reading - John 2.1–11**

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.' Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

### **Post Communion Prayer**

**Generous Lord, in word and eucharist we have proclaimed the mystery of your love: help us so to live out our days that we may be signs of your wonders in the world; through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.**

## COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL

Contemplate Mary's words. She has no idea what Jesus is going to do, but she knows it will be all right. And this is not some great, earth-shatteringly important world event. It's a friend's wedding, and the caterers have messed up. This is ordinary, real life. And God is right there, being involved. This is prayer about real things.

Sometimes it is easy to feel a fraud when you pray. A friend is ill. Do you pray for miraculous healing, or for a favourable outcome to his latest blood test, or for fortitude to cope with the symptoms? Exams time. Do you pray for straight As, or for good questions, or for a positive attitude for whatever results I get? You don't want to second guess God, or tell him what you think he should do, but you may feel like a fraud for praying 'do whatever you think best, God.' Isn't that a bit of an opt out? For it's an easy prayer and you can look back and say 'Yep, my prayer was answered', no matter what the outcome. It feels a bit underwhelmed. There is none of the assurance that comes with praying for a specific outcome and then seeing it.

So which should you do? Should you use your limited wisdom and imperfect grasp on the whole situation to pray that a friend will pass their driving test, or bring it before God and leave the rest up to him? What if God wants her to fail? Should you be bold and specific in prayer, or is it that telling the Almighty what to do, thinking you know better than him? Should you then be more general, humble in the face of God's wisdom, or is that being feeble and faithless?

Perhaps both, for daring prayer is good. But we do not have to plan God's solutions for him. We can trust that our Lord knows what he's doing better than we do. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa 55:9) However, we also need to make sure we are not just evading specifics with a limp-wristed, wet-lettuce Christianity that can never see answered prayer because it is so vague that anything is an answer and not.

God loves to hear us pray and wants us to bring our requests to him, however small. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." (Phil 4:6) We also need to bring the big issues before him, not because he does not know, but because in doing that we can join our hearts and minds with his. Praying is much more about changing us than changing things.

Take this quote from Archbishop Justin Welby, "Praying is simply sitting before God and allowing him, through Jesus, to shape who we are." Or this, from Michael Ramsey, who said that prayer is "coming to God with the people on your heart and coming to the people with God on your heart." Prayer does not have to use words. So sometime you will pray for a specific outcome. But if it does not happen, that does not mean that God is not listening, or does not care, or that prayer does not 'work'. God is not a slot-machine. Sometimes you will pray in different style, bringing the matter to God's desk, and leaving it in his in-tray. And leaving it is important. We are told to be persistent in prayer, but that does not mean we are to worry and fret. Of course we are still concerned, especially when it is a situation close to home, such as the welfare of a loved one, but there is a difference between trusting concern and faithless fear.

Mary brought to Jesus a small problem, and look how he provided far more than required. This is our lavish, loving Lord. Mary could have asked for a specific result – that the guests would leave early, that a fresh supply of wine would be discovered behind some cloaks, that

everyone would suddenly become teetotal. Instead she left the choice of solution with Jesus, safe in the knowledge that he would sort it.

So we don't need to beat ourselves up if we cannot in full faith pray for a miraculous healing. If God has put that on your heart then go for it, and know that our mighty Lord is more than able. But if God has not put that on your heart, then do not feel that you are a disappointing failure for praying differently. Maybe that is not what God wants you to be asking. We cannot pretend before God. He would far rather have honest mustard-seed faith than cardboard cut-out mountain faith.

It is good to pray with sure faith. It is also good to pray in the darkness, when we do not know how to pray, when we can see no possible way through, we just know that through has to be got. In these times, we can pray with David, "In you, Lord my God, I put my trust ... Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long." (Ps 25:1,4-5)

## **Service Times and Venues**

### **Thursdays 10:30am BCP communion at St Gregory's**

	<i>Morning Services - St Gregory's, Bedale</i>	<i>Morning Services - St Mary's, St John's and Burrill</i>	<i>16.30—Evensong conference call</i>
29th Jan	10:30 Benefice Service at St Gregory's, Bedale#*F		None
5th Feb	8am St Gregory's #	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #*	St Gregory's, Bedale *
	9.15am St Gregory's #*F	11am St John's, Leeming #*	
12th Feb	9:15am St Gregory's #*F	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #*	Burrill Church *
19th Feb	9:15am St Gregory's #*F	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #*	St Mary's Thornton Watlass *
		11am St John's, Leeming	

# Communion \* conference call F Facebook

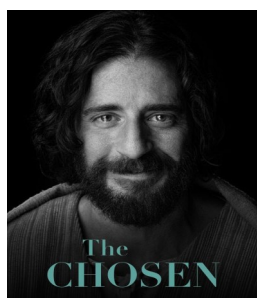
## **St. Mary's Church, Thornton Watlass - 100 CLUB**

The time has come to either renew your membership or join for the first time. £12 for the year with two prizes each month, £20 and £10. If you are interested in joining then please get in touch with Chris Carruthers, [cjcskiwatlass@aol.com](mailto:cjcskiwatlass@aol.com) or 01677423519.

**The first draw will be in February when both January and February prizes will be drawn. Good luck.**

## **The Chosen**

**Come and watch the first-ever multi-season series about  
the life of Christ.**



The Chosen is an historical drama of the life of Jesus, which offers us the opportunity to see his life and the Bible in a new way.

We'll be meeting each Thursday afternoon at 1.30pm in the Chantry Hall.

We'll watch an episode and then spend a little time talking together about what we've seen.

**Come and join us THIS Thursday!**