

## The Second Sunday of Epiphany

My dear Friends,

I wonder what brought you first to Church? Statistics tell us that most people come as children with their families. Others however may have been brought by friends in later life. I remember after having worshipped at Llandaff Cathedral throughout my childhood and youth going to university and having a variety of experiences in church life. My college was one with Christians from all different denominations and backgrounds. Of course I also met people of other Faiths and none.

When Sunday came I found myself going to different Anglican Churches, College Chapels and the Cathedral of Christ Church. There were a wide range of traditions from free evangelical worship services, through broad, middle of the road matins to Anglo Catholic masses. Also I went with friends to Baptist, Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches. All had something special to offer and made their appeal and claim on those who regularly and devoutly attended.

Eventually I settled in a church which helped nurture my faith and spiritual development throughout those early years. It was not so much the style of worship which held me but my fellow Parishioners and clergy. I remember more recently a very wise and telling comment from a worshipper at one of our churches, "The music brought me here but the people made me stay".

In our Gospel reading this week from St John Ch. 1, we hear the story of Nathanael. He is initially sceptical about coming to see Jesus when encouraged to do so by Philip. "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" he asks. "Come and see" Philip responds. When Jesus sees Nathanael he recognises him as an honest and upright young man who might be outspoken in his views but without malice, one who could be a loyal and faithful supporter. For his part Nathanael immediately believed and trusted in Jesus for he knew him through and through. Nathanael is not mentioned in the other Gospels, however we think he is there called Bartholomew. He went on to become a missionary sharing the good news of Jesus to Syria and Asia Minor.

This Sunday marks the beginning of the week of prayer for Christian Unity when we can celebrate and value what our friends in other denominations have as well as sharing our own strengths. It is also perhaps a time to remember that we can learn from other Anglican parishes and communities as we seek to follow our Lord through these demanding days. In the years to come we are called to widen our vision and enhance what we seek to offer not of ourselves but in the name of Jesus. We pray that more may come to know him, let us say to our friends as Philip did, "Come and See".

Best wishes and prayers

Stewart

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Vicar of Roath and Area Dean of Cardiff.