

Epiphany Words

An Advent to Candlemas Course from the Diocese of Aberdeen & Orkney



Rite

Friday 24th January



Scripture: Psalm 85.7-13

Show us your steadfast love, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation.

Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.
Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.

Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.
The Lord will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.
Righteousness will go before him,
and will make a path for his steps.

To reflect

The meaning of the word rite is a religious or other solemn ceremony or act of a social custom, practice, or conventional act.

The most important rites in the Christian faith are referred to as sacraments, with Baptism and Eucharist universally agreed across denominations as the most important. These are the sacraments in the scriptures – Jesus’ baptism by water by John the Baptist and Jesus celebrating the last supper with his disciples before his trial, crucifixion, death and resurrection. Other sacraments are Confirmation (affirmation of Baptism), Reconciliation (confession or penance), Ordination, Marriage and Anointing the Sick (unction). Sacraments are an external/outward sign of God’s grace, these can be known as the historic sacraments). Anglican/Episcopalian theology accepts all seven sacraments, with Baptism and Eucharist available to all (partaking in Eucharist reserved for those who have been baptised). Other sacraments may be governed by discernment (affirmation of baptism, ordination, marriage), “All may, none must, some should” (rite of confession) and open to all (anointing of the sick).

What role do the sacramental rites play in your Christian life? What does Eucharist signify to you?

Love’s Choice by Malcolm Guite

This bread is light, dissolving, almost air,
A little visitation on my tongue,
A wafer-thin sensation, hardly there.
This taste of wine is brief in flavour, flung
A moment to the palate’s roof and fled,
Even its aftertaste a memory.
Yet this is how He comes. Through wine and bread
Love chooses to be emptied into me.
He does not come in unimagined light
Too bright to be denied, too absolute
For consciousness, too strong for sight,
Leaving the seer blind, the poet mute;
Chooses instead to seep into each sense,
To dye himself into experience.

To Listen (these and other suggestions can be found on a Spotify playlist at

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0F5bU2sf4OiOtQY3q78Rf2?si=a99cbbf61e7d4587>)

- ‘Sweet Sacrament Divine’ by Francis Stanford, one version is by the Ely Cathedral Choir.
- ‘O Sacrum Convivium’ by Gabriel Jackson, one performance is by The Choir of Royal Holloway, University of London.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.