

Epiphany Words

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



Free

Thursday 30th January



Genevieve of Brabant Baptising her Son in Prison (1824) by Jean-Baptiste Mallet (1759-1835) (oil on canvas, Musee d'Art Thomas Henry, Cherbourg, France) via WikiMedia

Scripture: Mark 4.21-25

Jesus said to them, 'Is a lamp brought in to be put under the bushel basket, or under the bed, and not on the lampstand? For there is nothing hidden, except to be disclosed; nor is anything secret, except to come to light. Let anyone with ears to hear listen!' And he said to them, 'Pay attention to what you hear; the measure you give will be the measure you get, and still more will be given you. For to those who have, more will be given; and from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away.'

To reflect

At the beginning of the reading from St Paul's letter to the church at Corinth that we heard on the third Sunday of Epiphany 1 Corinthians 12.12 states 'Just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--Jews or Greeks, slaves or free--and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.'

Jesus in the prophecy from Isaiah in the Gospel of Luke speaks of being sent to proclaim release to the captives and let the oppressed go free. Many of the artworks suggested for this week, reflecting Sunday's Gospel readings, are of prisoners, of released slaves and people freed in some way – reflecting 1 Corinthians inclusivity and Jesus' proclamation.

In the Scottish Episcopal Church's Baptism rite, freedom is mentioned in the blessing of the water – invoking the Israelites passing through the Jordan to freedom in the Promised Land from slavery in Egypt. The prayer after the newly baptised is anointed with oil is: *May the Spirit of God be in you, wisdom and understanding keep you, the power of God encircle you, and God's truth lead you into freedom.* This reflects the freedom we have – to respond to God's love, to follow Christ and the freedom that lies in following Christ. So today's image is a woman baptising her child in prison – captive and freedom in one image.

My God! I Know, I Feel Thee Mine by Charles Wesley

1

My God! I know, I feel thee mine,
And will not quit my claim
Till all I have is lost in thine,
And all renewed I am.

2

I hold thee with a trembling hand,
But will not let thee go
Till steadfastly by faith I stand,
And all thy goodness know.

3

When shall I see the welcome hour
That plants my God in me!
Spirit of health, and life, and power,
And perfect liberty!

4

Jesu, thine all-victorious love
Shed in my heart abroad!
Then shall my feet no longer rove,
Rooted and fixed in God.

5

Love only can the conquest win,
The strength of sin subdue
(Mine own unconquerable sin),
And form my soul anew.

6

Love can bow down the stubborn neck,
The stone to flesh convert;
Softens, and melts, and pierces, and breaks
An adamant heart.

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

7

Oh, that in me the sacred fire
Might now begin to glow,
Burn up the dross of base desire,
And make the mountains flow!

8

Oh, that it now from heaven might fall,
And all my sins consume!
Come, Holy Ghost, for thee I call,
Spirit of burning, come!

9

Refining fire, go through my heart,
Illuminate my soul;
Scatter thy life through every part,
And sanctify the whole.

10

Sorrow and sin shall then expire,
While, entered into rest,
I only live my God t'admire—
My God forever blest.

11

No longer then my heart shall mourn,
While purified by grace
I only for his glory burn,
And always see his face.

12

My steadfast soul, from falling free,
Shall then no longer move;
But Christ be all the world to me,
And all my heart be love.

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