

**The Dunster Benefice**  
Carhampton, Dunster, Timberscombe,  
Withycombe with Rodhuish, Wootton Courtenay  
Newsletter 19th February 2021



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**Video Reflection  
from the Archdeacon  
of Taunton.**

Archdeacon Simon Hill reflects on this week's reading from Mark.

Click [here](#) to view on YouTube.

**From the Cathedrals**

**Portsmouth Cathedral** - Livestream, 5.30pm, Saturday 20th February. David Price plays Alan Ridout's *Stations of the Cross* with a reflection for each movement by Canon Angela Tilby. For more details on the Cathedral's website and the link to their livestream page click [here](#).

**St Paul's Cathedral** - *Rooted in Love* Watch Sarah Mullally (Bishop of London) and Paula Gooder (Chancellor of St Paul's) in conversation online about how we can draw closer to Christ this Lent. For more details and to watch on the Cathedral's website click [here](#).

**Sunday 21st February (First of Lent)**

**Readings & Collect**

Heavenly Father, your Son battled with the powers of darkness, and grew closer to you in the desert: help us to use these days to grow in wisdom and prayer that we may witness to your saving love in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Common Worship Collect taken from Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England © The Archbishops' Council 2000

**Genesis 9.8-17**

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 'As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.' God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.' God said to Noah, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.'

**Mark 1.9-15**

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

**Most churches will be open for private prayer on a Sunday or some other day of the week, please keep an eye on the notice boards.**

**Rector's Note**

We all like to be comfortable in our clothes. The medieval practice of wearing a hairshirt has pretty much died out. Thomas More, Lord Chancellor, executed in the time of Henry VIII, wore a hair shirt for most of his life. There was something of the aspiring monk about him, although he was married twice and had children. He spent a lot of time in the Charterhouse in London, later suppressed and most of the brothers hanged for not supporting the king. I cannot think of much that would be more intolerable than being perpetually itching and sore, by wearing an undershirt made of goat hair. That of course, is rather the point. Needless to say, should you wish to (please don't!) you can buy a hair shirt on the internet.

In the story of Jonah, the whole of the city of Nineveh wore sackcloth and ashes when he told them that God would destroy them for their behaviour. This included all the animals, surely a comic touch by the author of the story – Jonah is a sort of tragi-comic tale. Poor things, wound up in sackcloth and covered in ash, but we are now in the season of Lent, when traditionally we call to mind our wrongdoing and repent. Jonah himself was given plenty of opportunity to do this, trapped in the belly of the whale, surely an apposite image for misery.

The point about repentance is not atoning – Jesus already did that for us – but about turning round - *conversos*, the real meaning of conversion. Facing the world anew, a fresh start, everything before us again.

*Caroline*

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