

# Second Sunday before Advent

Revd. John Corker

Well – Amblecote parish has been in vacancy for seven months and last Wednesday was the closing date for Priests to apply for the position of Priest in Charge here, with interviews scheduled for the end of this month. Please do HOLD the whole situation and all who are involved in your prayers,

I wonder how each of you feels about it all – the interregnum and how it's going and what the future holds. I imagine a real variety of hopes and fears and all sorts of thoughts and feelings. Perhaps a lot of looking forward and a bit of looking back- linked with trepidation/excitement/concern/hope /nervousness and so on and with what sort of attitude? Negative or Positive??? I must say that I am along with some of you are concerned about the apparent unfairness to Wollaston St James (whatever the history) and their continuing lack of a permanent priestly ministry, also the relationship of the four parishes and that unknown X factor in the advert of taking a lead on a major aspect of ministry across the four parishes. Modern management techniques – keep us all guessing.

I'd like to be encouraging and positive about all this, it sounds like I'm going to say - but I can't! Not so – I can and I'm going to use the post- communion prayer in our service book for this morning to help.

The collect after communion “Father of all we give you thanks and praise that when we were far off you brought us home

It has links and suggestions to the parable of the Prodigal Son – the outgoing love of God meet those who are far away and bringing them home – these words point us to Jesus the Son of God – showing God's love in life and in death, giving us grace i.e. spiritual strength, and opening the gate of glory i.e. offering the resurrection hope of heavenly life. It is this point ( those first five lines) that set the scene of our thanks and praise for God and with it the message of promise and hope.

Next three lines

May we who share your body.....

Refers of course to this service, the bread and wine being the body and blood of our Lord and giving us spiritual sustenance to live the Resurrection life, to share it with others and to be lights in the world. It's our part in the Kingdom of God coming on earth as it already it is in heaven. We pray this in the Lord's Prayer – It's us being given the hands and feet – really the body for Christ on earth today active in his service.

And we conclude in our thanksgiving prayer last 4 lines

We pray that we may be firm in the hope and when you think of Amblecote's situation at this time it means that we should look forward confidently to a new era in our church life – ideally united, working together and supporting one another.

And the reason for bothering about all this is because in the words of this prayer – Dying and living Jesus declared God's love, gave us grace and opened the gate of glory

Love, grace, glory, - do be encouraged, do feel supported; so that we may ensure that the whole earth may live to praise the holy name of God.

Our offertory hymn this morning is Shine Jesus Shine – it's not everyone's favourite – but I like it and would ask you to note how its sentiments echo what I've been trying to say today. It tells of Jesus as the light of the world – it mentions God's awesome presence, His glory and His radiance and the blazing fire of the Spirit.

So do be encouraged, be firm in the Christian hope and so may the power of the Holy Spirit give light to us in Amblecote today and in the days ahead.

Amen