



## Sunday 11th July 2021

## Sixth Sunday after Trinity

### Today's Sunday Services

9.30 am	Holy Communion	- St Mary the Virgin, Denbury
11.00 am	Holy Communion	- Ss Peter and Paul, Broadhempston
11.00 am	Celtic Morning Prayer	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen
5.00 pm	Wedding Rehearsal	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen

**Telephone support/chat following the church services:** Sheila Sheldon is available to speak to following our church services. Sheila's phone number is (01803) 814227.

### Morning Prayer

Tuesday	9.15 am	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen
Wednesday	9.00 am	- For the Zoom password, email: <a href="mailto:rachelbelringer@gmail.com">rachelbelringer@gmail.com</a>
Thursday	9.15 am	- St Mary the Virgin, Denbury
Friday	9.15 am	- Ss Peter and Paul, Broadhempston (A time of silent prayer and meditation at Broadhempston)

### Reflection

Our churches are open for private prayer and reflection throughout the week at the following times:

St Peter & St Paul's, Broadhempston	9am to 5pm	Sundays and Wednesdays
St Andrew's, Ipplepen	9am to 5pm	Daily
St Mary the Virgin, Denbury	10am to 5pm	Daily

Please note, St John the Baptist, Woodland is currently closed for private prayer and reflection.

### Mid-Week

Monday	Rev'd Andrew Down's Day Off	
Tuesday	10.15 am	Holy Communion - St Andrew's, Ipplepen
Wednesday	7.30 pm	Bellringing Practice - St Andrew's, Ipplepen
Thursday	10.15 am	Holy Communion - St Mary the Virgin, Denbury
Friday	1.00 pm	Steering Group - St Andrew's, Ipplepen
Saturday	11.30 am	Wedding of Arun Kingwell & Courtney Tout - St Andrew's, Ipplepen

Andrew at Cell Group on Tuesday and Wednesday

### Next Sunday – Seventh Sunday after Trinity

9.30 am	Holy Communion	- St John the Baptist, Woodland
11.00 am	Holy Communion	- St Andrew's, Ipplepen
6.00 pm	Evening Prayer	- Online via Zoom

For the Zoom password, email: [rev.andrewdown@gmail.com](mailto:rev.andrewdown@gmail.com)

**Online Sermon this Sunday:** The Rev'd Hannah Mears, Diocese Vocations Advisor, is doing our weekly video sermon. The theme is personal holiness and what it really means. It will be based on the Gospel reading from Mark. <https://vimeo.com/cofedevon>

**June and July Edition of the Beacon** is now available for you to collect from our churches. We are always looking for new contributors. If you have an idea or article do contact the editor.

**Points for Prayer.** We pray for the Steering Committee and PCCs as they review the last year and begin to plan the direction of the Mission Community and individual parishes.

**In Memory.** Betty Elders, Valerie Dakin, Sheila Stacey and Andy Vickerstaff.

**Look out for the wonderful cards on sale to raise funds for our churches.** Thank you to Robin and Pam Thomas for organising this. Fantastic picture Robin!

**Round Two of the National Community Lottery Connections Fund is now open!** Grants of between £300 and £2,500 are available to small charities, faith groups and community groups with an income of less than £50,000 who are working to reduce loneliness by helping people feel more connected with their communities. Grants could be used to cover the costs of technology and equipment that will help make people feel more connected with their communities or help strengthen services through training and development. People understand what is needed in their community and what will make a difference. To check out whether you are eligible, how to apply and the closing date visit the website. [www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk](http://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk)

**Mothers' Union Job Vacancy** The Mothers' Union in the Diocese of Exeter is looking for a kind person who would be prepared to act as Examiner for its annual accounts. Watch the video to find out about the Mothers' Union and how they support families. If interested, please contact the MU Administrator Julie Hingston. [office@mu-exeter.co.uk](mailto:office@mu-exeter.co.uk)

**Called to "love our neighbour with sensitivity"** The Government announcement about stage 4 of its roadmap out of lockdown includes no limits on numbers at weddings and funerals and no restrictions on communal worship and singing. It will confirm on 12 July if restrictions will end on 19 July. The Rt Rev'd Dame Sarah Mullally, who chairs the Church of England's Recovery Taskforce, said "We all must exercise personal responsibility and carefully manage the risks from Covid-19. As Christians, called to love our neighbour as ourselves, we must also exercise collective responsibility and continue to take appropriate precautions to protect others."

**Job Opportunity: Social Justice and Creation Care Officer** Diocese of Exeter Mission and Ministry Team. Closing date 23 July We are looking for someone passionate about social and environmental issues with the ability to build relationships, support and manage volunteers, work with vulnerable people and inspire sustainable activities around land use, food, energy, finance, travel, procurement and lifestyle as part of our Christian Mission. Is this you or someone you know? If yes, we would love you to apply!

<https://exeter.anglican.org/vacancies/mission-and-ministry-social-justice-and-creation-care>

### Readings

	This week	Next week
<b>Readings for this Sunday:</b>		
1st Reading	Amos 7:7-15	Jeremiah 23:1-6
Psalm	85:8-End	23
2nd Reading	Ephesians 1:3-14	Ephesians 2:11-End
Gospel	Mark 6:14-29	Mark 6:30-34, 53-End

Readings for the week ahead:	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
	12 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>	14 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>
	Matt 10.34-11.1	Matt 11.20-24	Matt 11.25-27	Matt 11.28-End	Matt 12:1-8	John 12:14-21

They can also be viewed/downloaded from <https://bible.oremus.org/>

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Facebook pages: [www.facebook.com/StAndrewsIpplepen/](http://www.facebook.com/StAndrewsIpplepen/)

[www.facebook.com/denburyworship](http://www.facebook.com/denburyworship) [www.facebook.com/Broad20/](http://www.facebook.com/Broad20/)



## Reflection by Steven Sheldon

Sixth Sunday after Trinity

Mark 6:14-29

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2021

This story about the death of John the Baptist is well known through all those lurid Biblical epics with scenes of drunken orgies and sensuous lap dancing, none of which are actually in the Bible but we which have been shown over the years, based on nothing more than human imagination and our love of titillating bad behaviour on the part of the ruling classes. And along the way, some very important points are diminished.

Early in his public ministry, Jesus was out and about in Galilee, healing and preaching the good news of the Kingdom of God. As part of their training the disciples are sent out to do likewise, with great success which gets all the local tongues wagging, asking the same question, Who is this Jesus? Public opinion was divided among ideas like he's either Elijah or John the Baptist reincarnated, or perhaps he's a new prophet like the ones from ancient history who boldly spoke the word of God.

Herod Antipas was the ruler in Galilee at the time, and he knew in his heart which of these ideas was true: Jesus was John the Baptist raised from the dead. It was like Macbeth seeing the ghost of Banquo. We need to forget any movie epics we may have seen and look at the actual words in the story: *John had been telling Herod, 'It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife'*. It doesn't make good cinema, but I'm rather taken by this idea of John telling Herod something. How did this come about? It implies more than Herod just picking up on some rumours and hearsay, more than John wildly shouting as Herod passes in his livery.

Later in the story it says, *When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him*. He was perplexed, not angry, and he liked to listen to him. What an image. What an odd couple, sitting having a conversation in private. Jewels and silks alongside tattered animal skins. Herod didn't go out into the wilderness to hear John rant and rave about repentance, he summoned him to the palace for a private audience, some spiritual direction, summoned him because he was seeking something, summoned him because Herod, like every other human being, had buried within him a need to seek out that something beyond himself, something beyond what his wealth and power and privilege could provide.

Herod, like the kings of old, could have had a retinue of hired prophets who would say whatever they thought was wanted. But Herod had a moral vision that he struggled with in his position of power and authority. Talking to John eased his conscience for a while. In Luke's gospel when Jesus is sent to Herod for judgement we read, *Herod was very pleased when he saw Jesus, because he had heard about him and had been wanting to see him for a long time*. Herod was pleased to see Jesus, he longed to hear something, see something that would show him the way, that could lift this burden of guilt, to excuse his failure to live up to the dictates of his own conscience. From both John and Jesus Herod wanted some simple miraculous proof about the way forward; he wanted it easy and handed to him on a platter. As we know the only thing Herod got on a platter was John's head

The Kingdom of God is there to disturb the comfortable, and Herod was surely disturbed, but not enough. He caved in to the temptation to go along with what others thought was best, what others might think of him. That's what this story is about. At his birthday party with all his friends gathered round, his step-daughter entertained the crowd. As his friends enjoy the dancing, he can't resist showing off the greatness of his position of wealth and authority, and foolishly vows to reward her by giving her anything she wants. Politics kicks in, and Herod is caught between that proverbial rock and a hard spot. He's snookered. Oh heck, what will my friends think of me if I go back on my vow to give the girl anything she asks for? They'll start to think the word of Herod cannot be trusted. And yet, John is my friend who I have been keeping safe from my wife's bad intentions. Although he was *deeply grieved*, in the end he throws his beliefs aside to live up to the expectations of others, to follow the crowd, to maintain his status in the gang.

Jesus trained his followers to think for themselves. He asks them, Who do YOU say I am? It's not enough to act in a certain way simply because the law, custom, tradition, public opinion demands it. As Christians we are not guided by the spirit of the age, but by the Holy Spirit. We can't just be 'sad' like Herod and then continue to act in ways contrary to God's commandments of love. We must brave the opinions of others and try to embody the compassion of Christ.

The Bible teaches us that the life of a prophet doesn't have much of a retirement plan. The prophets of old did not have an easy ride. Being a prophet then and in our time is not a calling we all share, but is one of those gifts of the Spirit which some are given and fewer embrace. We know them when we hear them, these modern day heroes who speak out inconvenient truths in the face of opposition. We have all heard various voices in our lifetime while we stand mute, silently watching and listening as they dare to speak to the powerful on behalf of the powerless. Often it's only in hindsight that we can recognise them as prophets by the fruits that their words and actions generate.

Six years ago Barak Obama gave one of his finest speeches, of which the media coverage was universal silence. Barry talked about things that everyone had been much too silent about for much too long. He concluded that we cannot once again, once the cameras go away, slip into a comfortable silence and do nothing, that comfortable purposeful silence of shame and fear shared by both the institutions of Church and State, who have not lived up to their own standards of truth and compassion. Throughout the world today we are reminded of the evil that can be unleashed by political silence.

Herod, in full party mode, in a moment of bright and breezy companionability, made an oath he shouldn't have, and it cost him dearly, because he was faced with a moral dilemma. Do I stand by my oath, even though I know it is wrong? We all do this. We do what is wrong in order to save face, to stay in with the in crowd, to maintain that bright and breezy companionability. We collude with hatred, and bigotry, with misogyny, with racism, with homophobia, with exploitation, even with blasphemy just for an easy life. We stay silent out of embarrassment, out of fear of ostracism. We undermine ourselves and our own standards by our silence. Silence has a place in our worship, but can be an obstacle in living a fully Christian life.

When we fail to speak against unloving words and opinions and actions, we weaken ourselves. We may not all be full blown prophets, but we all need to witness against hate and prejudice in favour of love, acceptance, dignity and respect.

One of the mysteries of God's Grace is that while those in power may seek to silence Truth, to extinguish the Light, the Light of Jesus will always continue to shine.