

Almighty God in Christ. You make all things new. Transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory.

In the season of Christmas, we're very used to the idea of the heavenly glory. There's a good deal of it about then. There's the glory that the shepherds see, when they realise that above them and around them are the angels proclaiming peace, and the arrival of the Christ: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace", sing the angels, and the shepherds look up and are stunned, and astounded, and they do something, and they go, and they find Jesus, there with his mother in the stable. And then there's the star: more heavenly glory, leading us into this season of Epiphany where we now are, this season of revelation, when we still consider, over these days, the arrival of those wise men from the east seeking, following, the calling of the star, looking for the hope of the nations. A glory that doesn't just shine on a few but on everyone. A glory that reaches into every heart, into the darkest places of our world, the most conflicted, the most dangerous, the most desperate, even into the darkest places of our own hearts.

There is the glory.

And in these readings in this season of Epiphany, Sunday-by-Sunday, we keep finding Jesus right at the beginning of his ministry. Last week you'll remember it was the baptism, this week this extraordinary story of the encounter with Philip, and then with Nathaniel. Right at the very first moments, the opening days, of the account of Jesus's earthly ministry.

But if we take seriously that call, that in the renewal of our lives, God will make known his heavenly glory, what would that look like? How would that be?

Jesus says to Philip: "follow me". It's actually very simple little interaction this, isn't it? It's not a long conversation. It's not a theological dispute. It simply says Jesus *found* Philip and said to him "follow me". And Philip immediately, apparently from the reading, found Nathaniel, and said to him: "Come and see. Come and see."

So here is a moment for us to think: who said to me, "come and see"? Who said those words? Whether actually articulated in a sentence – "come and see": come and hear the truth of the Gospel; come and discover the revelation of the heavenly glory.

Or perhaps those things are articulated in someone's life. Perhaps the 'come and see' that we heard was an act of service, or love, or selfless commitment. Whatever, those words 'come and see' enable us to hear that calling from Jesus. 'Follow me'.

'Come and see'.

And now, in these strange times, we can still say "come and see", even though we worship in churches with just small numbers of those essential to make this happen, yet we are joined together in the communion of saints, worshipping gloriously together, under that heavenly glory, held together by that call to 'follow me'.

So in our lives this week, let's examine every opportunity, to make known the heavenly glory of God, in the renewal of our lives, to make known the heavenly glory of God, in the renewal of our lives, so that, in the poverty, even of our nature, transformed by Christ, who makes

all things new. The riches of God's grace can make abundantly available, to a world even one closed down, locked in, quarantined, that heavenly glory, which transforms everything, and renews everything, and calls us to follow Him. Amen.