

John 1:29-42 John the Baptist declares who Jesus is. Psalm 40: 1-10 our response to God's care for us.

Sunday 18 January 2026 2nd Sunday after Epiphany.

Did you make any new year's resolutions? How is that going? How many times have you been to the gym? Have you started those German lessons you decided to sign up to? Have you started sorting the boxes in your garage?

When he sees Jesus, John pours out all the wonderful, extraordinary, miraculous qualities of Jesus. The lamb! What do you think of when you hear the word lamb? Cute little creatures gambolling in the springtime? A roast dinner? For anyone standing around when John calls Jesus the lamb, the connotations are far more serious.

Day to day reality: Jewish people saw sheep sacrificed every week in the temple.

The Passover lamb, whose blood protected the Israelites in Egypt, nourished them, and hastened their release from slavery.

The lamb provided at the last moment to Abraham when he was prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac to God.

A lamb, the suffering servant of Isaiah's song, 'as a lamb to the slaughter ... he did not open his mouth', (53:7) Jeremiah's 'gentle lamb' (11:19).

Later we learn of the conquering lamb of Revelation, (5.5) which 'has overcome'.

The lamb, the symbol of strength in frailty, power in weakness, victory in humility, layer upon layer, depth of meaning conveyed in one word to the Israelite who listens, whose education has been to learn the scriptures ... the lamb of God whose sacrifice takes away the sin of the world.

'He who comes after me has surpassed me for he was before me.' John knows that this is the son of God! This is the man that he has witnessed suffused by the Spirit of the Lord, in the shape of a dove, descending from Heaven, alighting on him and saturating him. This is the man he must baptise, with water, despite his protestations. The Messiah.

The next day, he has a couple of his own disciples with him, and Jesus passes by. Already John is at the point of handing over the baton to the Master. Look, he says, the Lamb of God. This is the one who will baptise with the Holy Spirit. The Holy one. Immediately his disciples approach Jesus. What are you seeking? He asks. 'Where are you staying?' It's the afternoon, so maybe they think he's on his way home, or do they just want to be part of his life, to be filled up with whatever mind blowing and inexplicable spirit he exudes? Rabbi, teacher, they call him, longing to learn, to be part of his team. Quite simply, Jesus invites them. 'Come and see.' And they go.

Next, Andrew rushes to his brother, Simon Peter, and eagerly summons him to come and meet the Messiah! Messiah! No doubts there, it's definitely the one! And Jesus greets him as though he's always known him and always will, what joy. Jesus knows us from start to finish. What a blessing.

This is the beginning of a new era. A bit like a new year. Everything is about to start. So back to my questions. Today is the day for some new resolutions. In fact, each day can be a new day, a time to reflect on yesterday, to celebrate and be thankful, and / or to decide to do things differently, perhaps.

We have John, signposting the way, with a hearty warning too. Jesus, the Lamb, the Holy one, the teacher, the one who warmly invites us to 'come and see', the Messiah. We have two disciples, eager to jump onboard, to follow and learn, to be part of the new team and grow it. Is there a character in this little episode that you relate to? Can you identify with anyone? Could you walk in the sandals of any of these individuals, even for just a moment? Do our actions and attitudes point to Jesus? I'm not suggesting that we can measure up to John, but we can do our bit, demonstrating our absolute devotion to God in our everyday life. A simple invitation could be enough: Andrew invites other people too. It's Andrew who brings the boy with the loaves and fishes, and it's Andrew who invites a party of Greeks. (12:20-22)

Perhaps you are a good disciple, a loyal follower? Do you have a particular Christian role model whose opinions and advice you value? Do you read a daily devotional, perhaps, or subscribe to Lectio 365 or Christian Art? Do you have a spiritual director or companion?

Do we keep our eyes peeled? How often has Jesus strolled by and we haven't noticed him? How often have we demurred when Jesus has said, come and see?

Do we look for God's presence in people around us and in the natural world, and meekly, joyfully worship? Do we share God's love at every opportunity? Do we ask Jesus to come more closely into our lives?

Look at the Psalm which we heard earlier and see the rewards: loving Jesus will get us out of the mire; he will give us security, a new song to sing, joy in our hearts, trust, blessings and wonders. Alleluia!

Please join me in the prayer of Richard of Chichester: Thanks be to you, our Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits which you have given us, for all the pains and insults which you have borne for us. most merciful redeemer, friend and brother may we see you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day, Amen.

Fleur Pelly

