

## Quest - 21<sup>st</sup> February 2021

Water! We have seen a lot of it recently, as the River Thames has burst its banks once again this year. Today's readings point to the symbolism of water in the Bible. The reading from 1 Peter shows the link back to Noah's Ark :

God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolises baptism that now saves you also – not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience towards God.

1 Peter 3:20-21



Flooded River Thames near Abingdon

This ties in with today's other reading, the account of Jesus's baptism in Mark's Gospel. Our Sunday magazine that we often use in Quest puts it like this :

It is 'immediately' after Jesus' baptism that he is 'driven' into the wilderness. The baptism shows God's affirmation of Jesus. This is in stark contrast to the tough temptations Jesus then faces in the wilderness. But Mark placing them in this way indicates that Jesus' baptism prepared him not only for his future ministry but also to endure the temptations. (Roots on the Web)

We might feel that we have been 'enduring' a lot recently with the various restrictions brought about by the Coronavirus and this latest lockdown. I have recently been re-reading a childhood favourite of mine 'The Long Winter' by Laura Ingalls Wilder. It is set in the Dakota prairies in the winter of 1880-81, which was an extraordinarily harsh winter. She describes her family's struggle to survive when the people in the emerging town are only newly there and have few resources to draw upon. However, their faith in God and their ingenuity brings them through. I have seen an article in an American Newspaper saying how this book rang bells with them in lockdown too.

As our Bible readings show, God is there for us and will guide us through. We have heard much talk in recent days about a 'road map' to take us out of this latest lockdown. We can remember that as we journey through Lent, the Bible can offer us another sort of road map, one that will help us through all different situations, be that flood, snow or virus lockdowns.