

Our Sunday Service for Mothering Sunday

To be said during the suspension of public worship during
the Covid-19 pandemic

In preparation find a still space at home and if possible light a candle. Take time to allow the words to settle into your heart as you say all the bold text aloud.

As you read the reflection written for the day take time and ask yourself what especially spoke to you today and why. What does this have to say about how you are Christ's disciple, loved, forgiven, redeemed and called to service? What does this have to say about God and in seeing more of God what impact is that for your life and through you the lives of those about you?

Preparation

**All: Be with us, Spirit of God; nothing can separate us from your love.
Breathe on us, breath of God; fill us with your saving power.
Speak in us, wisdom of God; bring strength, healing and peace.**

**This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

**Through the brokenness of Christ, we become one body
as one body we now gather in the name of Christ to offer our praise and thanksgiving, to
receive God's holy word, to pray for the needs of the world,
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins, that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may give ourselves to the service of God.**

Our Confession

*Jesus says, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.'
So let us turn away from our sin and turn to Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.*

**All: Lord God, we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
and restore us to the joy of your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Be still for a moment in confession and in receiving God's Grace in Christ

**All: Blessed is the Lord, for he has heard the voice of our prayer;
therefore, shall our hearts dance for joy and in our song will we praise our God.**

The opening prayer

All: The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept.

All: As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love for you; now and for ever. Amen.

The Word of God

Psalmody *We say the psalm aloud*

Psalm 34.11-20

All: Come, my children, and listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
Who is there who delights in life
and longs for days to enjoy good things?
Keep your tongue from evil
and your lips from lying words.
Turn from evil and do good;
seek peace and pursue it.
The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous
and his ears are open to their cry.
The face of the Lord is against those who do evil,
to root out the remembrance of them from the earth.
The righteous cry and the Lord hears them
and delivers them out of all their troubles.
The Lord is near to the brokenhearted
and will save those who are crushed in spirit.
Many are the troubles of the righteous;
from them all will the Lord deliver them.
He keeps all their bones, so that not one of them is broken.
Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

Scripture Reading

2 Corinthians 1.3-7

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, ⁴ who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. ⁵ For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ. ⁶ If we are being afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation; if we are being consoled, it is for your consolation, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we are also suffering. ⁷ Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our consolation.

At the end of the reading we say:

All: This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' ²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

At the end of the Gospel, we say The Benedictus (The Song of Zechariah)

All: Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, who has come to his people and set them free. He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, born of the house of his servant David.

Through his holy prophets God promised of old to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all that hate us, to show mercy to our ancestors, and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham: to set us free from the hands of our enemies, free to worship him without fear, holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.

And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way, to give his people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of all their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us, To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

A Reflection for the day

I wonder if you have a regular song, poem or passage of scripture that comes to your mind. It might be one of celebration or of consolation. I have often wondered if Paul would join with Edith Piaf in singing 'non, je ne regrette rien'. Reading through his epistles and the Acts of the Apostles we see colourful life in faith as he seeks continually, wherever he finds himself, to know more of God and of what it is to be faithful as a disciple of Christ. Fire, snake bite, prison, vengeance filled mobs, ship wrecks, whatever befalls Paul he would, it seems, be found in praise of God and in prayer.

The psalmists must have been a source of encouragement for Paul and the other disciples who faced uncertain times, anxiousness about the future, for some on a daily basis. Today the psalmist sings to us "*The righteous cry and the Lord hears them, and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to the broken hearted and will save those who are crushed in spirit. Many are the troubles of the righteous; from them all will the Lord deliver them. He keeps all their bones, so that not one of them is broken.*" As much as the psalms would draw us heavenward there is always an earthly honesty and reality within them. The world is messed up, there is evil intent, there are unseen enemies; many are the troubles of the righteous. But, the Lord will deliver them, the Lord hears the cry of the righteous, the Lord is near to the broken hearted.

And how broken hearted must Mary and those with her have been as they stood near to the Lord in his lifting up, in his hour of need, in his anxiety as he faced the unknown of death. Yet in his pain he reaches out to them, he gives his mother to the care of John, and John to the care of his mother. As the sufferings of Christ were abundant, so he ensured an abundance of consolation was possible in the relationship of care he began for John and his mother.

We find ourselves facing anxious and uncertain times, we have, it would seem in the Covid-19 virus, a virulent and unseen enemy that stalks and prowls like a ravenous beast. In such changed times of life, we, like Paul, like the Psalmist also have a hope. For in Christ we are declared righteous before God, God who is with us in Spirit; and more, God who is with us in the care of others.

I wonder if this week we might be able to draw on his presence, if we might find our song in celebration or in consolation. And at a time when an invisible enemy would seek to divide us if we might be open to Jesus' directing us to ringing or e-mailing our neighbours and family; to those he would give to care for and be cared for by.

Our hope is unshaken; for we know that as we share in this time of suffering, so we also share in a consolation far beyond our imagining in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

The Creed

All: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers

We make our intercessions

**Blessed are you Lord our God, for you have created us all.
We are your children, loved by you and ever under your care and protection.
We thank you for our life, your love and all that you give to us.
Blessed are you Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

**We thank you for the church worldwide.
Loving God, bless our local church community, may we show your love to all we encounter and all who cannot gather to worship you this day.
Life giving and loving God
Hear us and help us.**

**We thank you for the world you have given us to care for.
We give thanks for all growing things for food, for the hard work of farmers, processors and shop keepers.
As we give thanks for all we have we remember today the homeless and the hungry, the refugee and the victims of war.
Life giving and loving God
Hear us and help us.**

**We thank you for the love of our homes and for the care we have been shown by parents and carers.
We pray for those at home ill, troubled or anxious, awaiting test results or operations.
And we remember today all who suffer from a lack of love, from domestic abuse, and all who live in homes filled with tension and broken relationships.
Life giving and loving God
Hear us and help us.**

**We give thanks for your eternal love and we pray for all our loved ones departed.
We remember all who have enriched our lives by their goodness.
Life giving and loving God
Hear us and help us.**

Prayer for a Pandemic

**May we who are merely inconvenienced remember those whose lives are at stake.
May we who have no risk factors remember those most vulnerable.
May we who have the luxury of working from home remember those who must choose between
preserving their health or paying their rent.
May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close remember those who
have no options.
May we who have to cancel our trips remember those that have no safe place to go.
May we who settle in for self-isolation at home remember those who have no home.
As fear grips our country, let us choose love!
During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other, let us yet find ways to
be the loving embrace of God to our neighbours. Amen.**

Adapted from 'Prayer for a Pandemic' by Cameron Bellm

The Collect

**God of compassion, whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary,
shared the life of a home in Nazareth, and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself:
strengthen us in our daily living that in joy and in sorrow we may know the power of your presence to
bind together and to heal;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen**

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory
for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Conclusion

**All: Christ, as a light illumine and guide me this day.
Christ, as a shield overshadow me.
Christ under me, Christ over me;
Christ beside me on my left and my right.
This day be within and without me.
Amen.**