

Our Sunday Service Together

Sunday August 16th 2020



Almighty and eternal God, revealed for all time and to all the world as one God, yet three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, living in the unity of love. We now join the Saints of the ages, together yet apart and 'make a Spiritual Communion, rejoicing in the grace of God come to us in fullness through Christ our Lord and Saviour, by the will of the Father and through the presence of The Spirit with us, now and for ever.

An Acclamation for the Season

All: Alleluia, alleluia! It is our duty and our joy, always and everywhere to give you thanks, holy Father, almighty and eternal God. For you have revealed the glory of your eternal fellowship of love with your Son and with the Holy Spirit, three persons equal in majesty, undivided in splendour, yet one God, ever to be worshipped and adored. Alleluia!

Hymn Be Thou my Guardian and my Guide

Preparation

All: 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

God the Father forgives us in Christ and heals us by the Holy Spirit. Let us therefore put away all anger and bitterness, all slander and malice, and confess our sins to God our redeemer.

All: Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord, we come to you in sorrow for our sins, and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.

We have lived by our own strength, and not by the power of your resurrection.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived by the light of our own eyes, as faithless and not believing.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived for this world alone, and doubted our home in heaven.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

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

All: May Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom that cannot be destroyed, forgive us our sins, open our eyes to God's truth, strengthen us to do God's will and give us the joy of his kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Risen Lord.

Amen.

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 Psalmody Psalm 67 *We say the psalm aloud*

God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us,
That your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations.
Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.
O let the nations rejoice and be glad, for you will judge the peoples righteously
and govern the nations upon earth.
Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.
Then shall the earth bring forth her increase, and God, our own God, will bless us.
God will bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen

Scripture Reading Romans 11.1-2a and 29-32

I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. ² God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. ²⁹ for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. ³⁰ Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, ³¹ so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. ³² For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

At the end of the reading we say:

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

Gloria

All: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Gospel Matthew 15.21-28

Alleluia, alleluia. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, one God, who was, and who is, and who is to come, the Almighty.

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²² Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, 'Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.' ²³ But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, 'Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.' ²⁴ He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' ²⁵ But she came and knelt before him, saying, 'Lord, help me.' ²⁶ He answered, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' ²⁷ She said, 'Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.' ²⁸ Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.' And her daughter was healed instantly.

Alleluia, alleluia. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, one God, who was, and who is, and who is to come, the Almighty.

A Reflection for the day Philippa bellows (trainee Priest) writes;

In times of continued uncertainty, we may find change difficult and seek reassurance. As Christians we can be sure that God is unchanging but we may find it more challenging to realise that the way we understand God necessarily changes as we enter more deeply into relationship with him. Today's readings reassure us of the

certainty of God's blessing from the earliest times. Psalm 67 praises God's 'saving power' and restorative blessing poured out on 'all the peoples' wherever, or whoever, they may be. St Paul draws on his own Jewish background to reassure the Romans that God will never go back on his gifts and his promise of mercy.

Today's gospel takes us right into the crisis of a mother's despair. Imagine her anguish at her daughter's suffering; imagine the humiliation and rejection she risks by crying out to Jesus. He doesn't seem to hear her at first, perhaps she feels ignored? The disciples resent her and want Jesus to send her away. First century Galilee is a man's world, and the woman is a Canaanite amongst Galileans; her plight for her daughter is a cry from the margins of society. Despite facing humiliation and apparently unheard, the woman persists. She kneels down in front of Jesus and pleads 'Lord help me'.

Even in today's society we can see that this woman is remarkable. Perhaps we are struck by the courage of her conviction in the face of illness, uncertainty and rejection. Jesus's hesitation and questioning may have tested her further, but she stands her ground. The woman's response that 'even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table' is a powerful demonstration of her faith. She knows and testifies that Jesus came to save all people regardless of nationality, status or gender. Imagine her joy when she is accepted and her daughter is healed.

This miracle reminds us that God's healing love poured out through Jesus knows no limits. The woman was in despair, an outsider and oppressed, yet her persistence was affirmed. The way we understand God changes as we grow to know him better through Jesus. The Canaanite woman's plea from the edge of society offers us hope in times of change and uncertainty. She had to persist to claim her portion of the children's bread; her reward was everything she could have imagined and more. Perhaps we can take some real hope from her experience. There will probably be further times of uncertainty ahead, we may have worries which torment us too. We will probably experience some times of desolation when Jesus seems not to be listening or when we feel as if we calling from the margins. But the awesome and reassuring flip side of that is the gift of consolation when we feel Jesus's presence amongst us.

I wonder whether the way we understand God is changing as we experience worship differently, as we adapt to different ways of being Christian outside church and in our everyday lives? We may notice Jesus's presence in prayer, in music, in nature, in one another and in all sorts of unexpected ways. God's gifts and promise of mercy know no limits. May we be given the grace to persist in prayer and trust in God's everlasting blessing and healing love.

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

*Pray to the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication.
To that end keep alert and always persist in supplication.
(Eph. 6:18)*

Gracious God, we pray for your church throughout the world, that your way may be known upon earth, and your saving power among all nations. We pray for all church leaders and all those who are seeking new ways to live and tell the story of Jesus in changing times.

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his name.

God of compassion, the Canaanite woman's persistence led to Jesus's blessing. Challenge the boundaries we set to our charity and concern. Grant that we may all rejoice in your love and share it.

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his name.

God of hospitality, you set a place for everyone at your table. Open our hearts to embrace those who are easily excluded and despised. We pray for peace and unity among all people and across nations.

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his name.

God of healing, at your word, the girl was released from her distress. Grant your healing love to all who are weighed down with sickness or anxiety. We pray especially for

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his name.

God of hope, you bring life to all who call upon your name. Draw into your family all who have died and be with those who are bereaved....

Give thanks to the Lord and call upon his name.

A Prayer during the Covid-19 Pandemic

All: Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy
 in this time of uncertainty and distress.
 Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
 and lift up all who are brought low;
 that we may rejoice in your comfort
 knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
 in Christ Jesus our Lord.
 Amen.

The Collect

All: Lord of heaven and earth, as Jesus taught his disciples to be persistent in prayer, give us patience and courage never to lose hope, but always bring our prayers before you through Jesus Christ our Lord.
 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.