

Our Sunday Service Together

September 10th 2023

14th Sunday after Trinity



An Acclamation

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.

Alleluia

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

Let us come to the light of Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

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 119.33-40

Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes and I shall keep it to the end.
Give me understanding and I shall keep your law; I shall keep it with my whole heart.
Lead me in the path of your commandments, for therein is my delight.
Incline my heart to your testimonies and not to unjust gain.
Turn away my eyes lest they gaze on vanities; O give me life in your ways.
Confirm to your servant your promise, which stands for all who fear you.
Turn away the reproach which I dread, because your judgements are good.
Behold, I long for your commandments; in your righteousness give me life.
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 13.8-14

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet'; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' ¹⁰Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

¹¹Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹²the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; ¹³let us live honourably as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. ¹⁴Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

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 18.15-20

¹⁵If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. ¹⁶But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If the

member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax-collector. ¹⁸ Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.'

at the end of the reading we say:

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

A Reflection for the day

Have you ever wondered why we see St Peter recoil when Jesus seeks to minister to him in moments like his washing of feet? Jesus famously says 'if you do not let me minister to you like this you can have no part of me'.

Jesus comes to serve, rather than be served. Jesus is the living, breathing, walking, talking embodiment of how God would love creation and restore it to himself. We may not wish it so, we may wish to recoil with Peter, but we have to let God embrace us, love us, serve us in Jesus Christ. But this seems back to front, we are to bow before God in reverent praise and worship not the Son of God stoop and serve us.

If we are honest, whether it is God or friend and neighbour, we find it difficult to be served, to receive the gift of someone else's help and assistance – we are happy to give, but to receive?! Ann's recent bone crushing accident (she is on the mend, slowly!) and the out pouring of offers of assistance, from meals, car driving to hair plating, reminded me – a professional service giver, that it is really important to let people give and minister to me. Paul, as he continues to give practical direction to the readers of Romans about what it means to live as Christian disciples (followers of the way of Jesus the Christ) underscores this – 'Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.'

If you look to statistics, we are a nation living on debt. The national debt in 2022 was equal to our national domestic output; in other words, we owe as much as we make as a nation! The average unsecured (not including mortgages and the like) personal debt in 2022 was £3,700 and the interest on that debt equals £123 million a day. We are a nation of folks indebted, bonded we used to call it, to a system designed to see us 'live to work'; just like the Israelites did in Egypt all those years ago. Unlike Israel, we seem happy and content with being in such servitude to 'mammon'.

But, says St Paul, the way of Jesus is to be people with little or no debt to anyone – except to love one another. He calls us to have little or no financial debt so we are not bonded to anyone, to any system that will, in the end, bleed us dry. Instead we are called to be people who welcome the love of God in the service of others to us. And more, to be people seeking to serve others each day - in the earlier verses of Romans 12 Paul says 'love one another with mutual affection; *outdo one another* in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord.' We are called to be folks looking for ways to serve and love one another.

Jesus came as the servant of God's love for the world and calls his followers to, well, follow him and live the same way. As he walked and talked the love of God, so too his followers. 'You have to see it to 'be' it' is the phrase of the age today, well Jesus lived it so God's love could be seen and others look to 'be just like him, be his disciples, be Christian.

To be in debt to anyone in anything other than the ways of God's love for the world is not the way of the Kingdom of God and we should be worried at how we seem content as a nation with our debts. May the church show the way of Jesus, may we follow him and outdo each other in offering, and receiving, the gift of servant 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*

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ let us pray to the Father.

We pray for Michael our bishop and all the clergy in this diocese. May they be filled with the Spirit and serve you as the first disciples. We give thanks for all those who have spread the good news throughout the ages. *Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.*

We Pray for our King and government, that they may have the wisdom and courage necessary to guide our nation. *Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.*

We pray for the victims of war, injustice, prejudice and abuse that they may find peace and reconciliation. May we never forget that all people are loved and valued by God regardless of differences. *Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.*

We pray for our use of the gifts of God entrusted to us, that we may use them responsibly for the good of all. Especially we pray for those returning to school, college or university. *Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.*

We pray for our families, friends and neighbours that we may serve Christ in one another and seek the common good. *Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.*

We pray for the sick, suffering and dying and we give thanks and pray for those who use their skill to care for them. *Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer*

Rejoicing in the fellowship of all your saints, we commend ourselves and the whole creation to your unfailing love.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

The Collect

All: Almighty God, whose only Son has opened for us a new and living way into your presence: give us pure hearts and steadfast wills to worship you in spirit and in truth; 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

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