

Our Service Together

January 1st 2023



An Acclamation for the Season

All: Alleluia, alleluia. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. For to us a child is born to us a Son is given. His name will be called Wonderful counsellor, mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth. Alleluia, 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

The sun of righteousness has dawned with healing in his wings. 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 Psalm 148 *We say the psalm aloud*

Alleluia. Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights.

Praise him, all you his angels; praise him, all his host.

Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you stars of light.

Praise him, heaven of heavens, and you waters above the heavens.

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created.

He made them fast for ever and ever; he gave them a law which shall not pass away.

Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps;

Fire and hail, snow and mist, tempestuous wind, fulfilling his word;

Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars;

Wild beasts and all cattle, creeping things and birds on the wing;

Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the world;

Young men and women, old and young together; let them praise the name of the Lord.

For his name only is exalted, his splendour above earth and heaven.

He has raised up the horn of his people and praise for all his faithful servants,

the children of Israel, a people who are near him. Alleluia.

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 Hebrews 2.10-18

It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹ For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason, Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹² saying, 'I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.'

¹³ And again, 'I will put my trust in him.' And again, 'Here am I and the children whom God has given me.'

¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters^[1] in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

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 2.13-23

Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' ¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I have called my son.'

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸ 'A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.'

¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead.' ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, 'He will be called a Nazorean.'

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

In May we will witness the coronation of a King, Charles III. Many wonder what 'sort' of a king Charles will be. Will he take after his mother in service of all, or will he take after previous king Charles 1st or 2nd (disastrous, both of them)?

In our readings we are presented today with two possible ways of being a king. The first comes to us in the person of Herod. Power, paranoia, and persecution seem to be the heart of this king; even the historian Josephus confirms that Herod did all he could to retain and exercise power. The edict to go and kill all the boys under the age of 2 in Bethlehem would have been of no surprise to folks. He even had his own 2 sons killed when they seemed to threaten his rule.

The second way of being king comes to us, well literally 'to us', in Jesus Christ. It should always be an amazing thing to us that the God who exercised the power of creation, who holds life and death in His command, whom the Old Testament reveals is almighty before all the other so called gods and idols, chooses a path of complete vulnerability to bring in His kingdom and rule.

In looking to Matthew's gospel we see this radical vulnerability as the whole mission to redeem the world is put at risk – what if Joseph would not listen this time! Jesus is put at the mercy of human beings; as if being born

into humanity was not vulnerability enough for the God of all creation, now that newly born child is placed into the hands of fallible humanity to bring about His aims!

God knows how much humanity can mess things up and yet he trusts humanity again and again it seems! But this is God's way in Christ, to put complete trust in humanity to be able to redeem that same humanity. *'Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death.'*

Ok we say, it is one thing maybe to think God did this in Jesus Christ, after all he is God incarnate. It makes sense that God the Father trusted God the Son to fulfil the purposes of God; but what if Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane had decided it was too much to drink the cup before him? Praise God he did not!

But it can get really scary to think God places His trust in humanity to bring about his Kingdom aims today; that God trusts each of us to bring to reality the presence of the Kingdom we pray for each day.

We should have confidence, however, because God is with us in Jesus, completely with us in every way - the Son became *'like his brothers and sisters in every respect'*. And more, because *'he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested'*. In simple terms Jesus is the 'pioneer' of our faith, he shares our humanity completely, he leads the way that we too can follow.

As we step into a new year we can do so with confidence and with hope! Confidence that we have a God who fully shares in and understands our 'human condition' and will only ask of us what he knows we can achieve in the power of His Spirit with us. Hope, that the Kingdom we pray for will come on earth as in heaven as we allow the love of God to be 'made flesh' in our lives.

Happy New Year!

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*

Let us pray to our incarnate Lord, who has brought us out of darkness and into his own marvellous light.

Christ born for us, Son of God given for us:
help us to know you, to worship and to serve you ...
Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

Wonderful counsellor, you order all things with your wisdom:
help the Church to reveal the mystery of your love
and fill her with the Spirit of truth ...
Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

Mighty God, the government is on your shoulders:
guide the leaders of the nations and bring in your kingdom of justice and righteousness ...
Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

Everlasting father, you call us to live together in unity:
protect by your mercy all your children, bless our families and renew our communities ...
Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

Prince of peace, you bring reconciliation through the cross:
by your healing power give to all who suffer your gift of wholeness and peace.
Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Father, full of the Spirit, hear our prayer, receive our praises, fill our lives. Amen.

The Collect

All: Almighty God, who wonderfully created us in your own image and yet more wonderfully restored us through your Son Jesus Christ: grant that, as he came to share in our humanity, so we may share the life of his divinity; 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.