

# Our Sunday Reflection

## Lent 1 February 18<sup>th</sup> 2024



### An Acclamation for the Season

This is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son. He is the sacrifice for our sins, that we might live through him.

### Preparation

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.*

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*

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

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

*Silence is kept.*

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 25.1-9 *We say the psalm aloud*

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame; let not my enemies triumph over me.

Let none who look to you be put to shame, but let the treacherous be shamed and frustrated.

Make me to know your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you have I hoped all the day long.

Remember, Lord, your compassion and love, for they are from everlasting.

Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions, but think on me in your goodness, O Lord, according to your steadfast love.

Gracious and upright is the Lord; therefore shall he teach sinners in the way.

He will guide the humble in doing right and teach his way to the lowly.

All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

## Scripture Reading    1 Peter 3.18 -22

<sup>18</sup>For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, <sup>19</sup>in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, <sup>20</sup>who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight people, were saved through water. <sup>21</sup>And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup>who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

*At the end of the reading we say:*

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

## Gloria

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.

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. <sup>10</sup> And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. <sup>11</sup> And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

<sup>12</sup> And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. <sup>13</sup> He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

<sup>14</sup> Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, <sup>15</sup> and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

*At the end of the reading we say:*

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

## A Reflection for the day

*Revd John Webb writes:*

Because our calendar contains both fixed and moveable dates interesting juxtapositions can occur. I like the thought of preaching when Good Friday or Easter fall on April Fool's Day reflecting on St Paul's comment that 'the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men'. I am writing this on Ash Wednesday which this year happens to coincide with Valentine's Day. At first sight they may seem very different but I wonder if they are really just the different sides of the same coin. That coin being the love of God and our failure to respond. Valentine expresses the self-giving love reflecting the love of God while Ash Wednesday reminds us of the pain caused by our failure to respond to that love.

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent. The word Lent is simply the old English word for spring and marks the transition from the dull winter months to the bright new days ahead. It is the time of coming back to life and new beginnings. I have vivid memories of my mother marking this time of year by performing the dreaded Spring Clean. The whole house was turned upside down – cupboards and draws emptied and cleaned, contents examined repaired or discarded, mattresses turned, carpets taken outside and mercilessly beaten, moths spiders and other unwanted visitors ejected. The darkest corners swept and polished. Then everything would be carefully replaced and sweetness and order restored for another year. It seems that the spring clean became the model for those who took their faith seriously. The excesses of Christmas were replaced by a deep personal examination – a time of reassessment and renewal. A serious time for the examination and renewal of faith. Exposing the dark corners of their lives to the light of the gospel and making a new start.

With so many social and technological changes the dreaded Spring Clean seems to be a thing of the past except in a few stately homes where staff are still employed. And it also seems that the serious observation of Lent has suffered the same fate. It is no longer seen as a time of sorrow and penance for our failures but simply as a time to give up something or collect for some good cause. But I suggest this is very sad and that we all need something more than that - time for a serious look at where we are going – as in to-days Psalm where we read;

Show me your ways, O Lord,  
And teach me your paths.  
Lead me in truth and teach me,  
For you are the God of my salvation;  
In you have I trusted all the day long.

In the Gospel we are reminded of the baptism of Jesus which was clearly a dramatic and affirming experience for him. Part of our Lent observation might be to reflect on our own baptism and how it has affected and directed our lives. This will prepare us for the climax of Lent at Easter when we can celebrate not only the romantic love of Valentine, but also the love of God in the resurrection of Jesus.

# The Creed

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*

O God of peace, who has taught us that in quietness and confidence shall be our strength; help us, as we come into your presence, to be still and know that you are God.

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

As we start this season of Lent let us pray that our faith will grow and develop. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

Strengthen Michael our Bishop and all laity and clergy who seek to serve us in this diocese May they be filled with the Spirit and speak with authority. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We Pray for Our King, Prime Minister, and all World leaders, that they may have the Spirit of wisdom to lead us through this difficult time. We pray for all the experts and scientists who have the difficult task of giving simple advice on complex issues. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for the hungry and starving, that the available food may be used for the benefit of all. *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 our schools, the children, teachers, and support staff as they face further disruption. *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 and risk their lives to care for them. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

Hear us as we remember those who have died..... According to your promises grant them a share in your eternal kingdom. *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.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and for evermore. Amen.

## The Collect

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are, yet without sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit; and, as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save; 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*

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

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

Christ,  
Christ under