

# Our Service Together

## Next before Lent

### February 11<sup>th</sup> 2024

#### An Acclamation for the Season

All: There is one body and one spirit. There is one hope to which we were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.

#### 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 Psalms Psalm 50.1-6 *We say the psalm aloud*

The Lord, the most mighty God, has spoken and called the world from the rising of the sun to its setting. Out of Zion, perfect in beauty, God shines forth; our God comes and will not keep silence. Consuming fire goes out before him and a mighty tempest stirs about him. He calls the heaven above, and the earth, that he may judge his people: 'Gather to me my faithful, who have sealed my covenant with sacrifice.' Let the heavens declare his righteousness, for God himself is judge. 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 2 Kings 1.1-12

Now when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. <sup>2</sup> Elijah said to Elisha, 'Stay here; for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel.' But Elisha said, 'As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So they went down to Bethel. <sup>3</sup> The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, 'Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?' And he said, 'Yes, I know; keep silent.'

<sup>4</sup> Elijah said to him, 'Elisha, stay here; for the Lord has sent me to Jericho.' But he said, 'As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So they came to Jericho. <sup>5</sup> The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, 'Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?' And he answered, 'Yes, I know; be silent.'

<sup>6</sup> Then Elijah said to him, 'Stay here; for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.' But he said, 'As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So the two of them went on. <sup>7</sup> Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. <sup>8</sup> Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground.

<sup>9</sup> When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, 'Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.' Elisha said, 'Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.' <sup>10</sup> He responded, 'You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not.' <sup>11</sup> As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. <sup>12</sup> Elisha kept watching and crying out, 'Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!' But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

*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      Mark 9.2-9

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, <sup>3</sup> and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. <sup>4</sup> And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' <sup>6</sup> He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. <sup>7</sup> Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!' <sup>8</sup> Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, but only Jesus.

<sup>9</sup> As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

*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      *Trainee Ordinand Farhad Cherhamini*

Our readings this week highlight the themes of presence, revelation, and transition.

In 2 Kings 2, we see Elijah's mantle passed on to Elisha to continue God's work in a world troubled by political and military upheaval. On the one hand, the nation was fractured by civil war. On the other hand, Assyria and Egypt, as superpowers, fought for dominance, causing chaos across the world at the time. But in the midst of the turmoil, God continued to be present by ensuring Elijah's successor. He, therefore, revealed that his purposes endured beyond the lifetimes of his servants at one time and in one particular geographical location.

The passage invites us to reflect on the part we play as those who are called to serve God in our time and our communities: God wants to demonstrate his faithfulness to his world today through us.

Psalms 50 echoes this theme by holding God's sovereignty and righteousness in very high regard. By using images of fire and tempest, the Psalmist reminds his readers of God's holiness and majesty. He also calls his people to gather before the Almighty, just, and loving judge, reminding them of their need for self-examination and living faithfully to God's purposes.

The Transfiguration account in Mark 9 shows a moment in the ministry of Jesus when His identity is revealed in the presence of Moses and Elijah. It announces Jesus as the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets. Here, we can see God continues to be present in the world, this time through the incarnation of Jesus. The voice from the cloud reinforces the authority of Jesus as the beloved Son of God and encourages attentive obedience, from his followers, to God's purposes in the world so God can continue to demonstrate his faithfulness through them.

Today, we too are invited to see ourselves as those through whom God seeks to be present in the world and demonstrate his faithfulness to it through our lives. As heirs of the prophetic tradition and receivers of God's message of redemption, we are called to embody God's love and concern for the world around us.

Interestingly enough, Peter, James, and John witnessed the transfiguration of Jesus right after Peter failed to see God's intention (Mark 8:31-33), and just before the disciples failed to heal a boy (Mark 9:14-18). Perhaps Jesus was trying to lift up their sight and help them see something far greater than outcomes and results. He was trying to help them see the great and awesome privilege of being called to partner with God in their communities. Only a vision like that can ground us beyond failings, disappointments, and even moments of success which tend to topple us down with the false perception that we have arrived.

Questions for reflection:

- How can we shift our perspective to recognise the privilege and responsibility of being called to partner with God in our communities?
- What steps can we take to embody God's love and compassion more effectively in our daily lives?

# 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.

As we prepare to travel through Lent let us pray for the coming of the Kingdom of God in our troubled world.  
*Lord in your mercy hear our prayer*

Strengthen Bishop Michael and those who seek to serve you in this diocese. May they be filled with the Spirit and serve you as the first disciples. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for our King, the Prime Minister, Members of Parliament and all World leaders, that they may always seek to serve the best interests of those they represent.  
*Lord in your mercy hear our prayer*

As we hear of the frightening events through the world we pray for all world leaders that they may have the courage and goodwill to work together to establish peace between nations. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for the homeless, hungry and starving in this country and abroad.  
*Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for our families, friends, and neighbours that we may bring light and hope in the darkest places.  
*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 joy 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. Amen.

## The Collect

All: Almighty God, whose Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death on the cross: give us grace to perceive his glory, that we may be strengthened to suffer with him, and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. **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.