

Our Service Together

Lent 2 February 25th 2023



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 22.23-31

We say the psalm aloud

Praise the Lord, you that fear him; O seed of Jacob, glorify him; stand in awe of him, O seed of Israel.

For he has not despised nor abhorred the suffering of the poor;

neither has he hidden his face from them; but when they cried to him he heard them.

From you comes my praise in the great congregation;

I will perform my vows in the presence of those that fear you.

The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek the Lord shall praise him; their hearts shall live for ever.

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord,

and all the families of the nations shall bow before him.

For the kingdom is the Lord's and he rules over the nations.

How can those who sleep in the earth bow down in worship,

or those who go down to the dust kneel before him?

He has saved my life for himself; my descendants shall serve him;

this shall be told of the Lord for generations to come.

They shall come and make known his salvation, to a people yet unborn,

declaring that he, the Lord, has done it.

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 Romans 4.1-5 and 13-17

¹³For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ¹⁴If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

¹⁶For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, ¹⁷as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations')—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

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.

The Gospel Mark 8.31-38

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days' rise again. ³² He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

³⁴ He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶ For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷ Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸ Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

At the end of the reading we say:

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

A Reflection for the day

Along with Judaism and Islam, Christianity traces its relationship with God back to one man, Abraham. Though in the world's eyes the talk of a man, aged as he was, of becoming 'a father to many nations' was completely ludicrous, Abraham's faith in God's faithfulness brought forth life. Abraham is held as the father of faith in the One God. His living by faith is the example to all, for the law and religious adherence can only result in failure and judgement; it is through faith alone that grace is mediated and redemption realised!

If Abraham is the exemplar, the father of faith in God, then how are we to react to Peter's outburst in Mark's gospel? In the verses prior to today's offering Peter has just realised that Jesus is the Messiah, but then he takes Jesus to one side and begins to tell him he has his methodology for saving Israel all wrong. Commentators have said he reacted from an instant sense of loss and grief, but Jesus simply rebukes the words and actions of Peter.

This is not the only time we see Peter miss what is before him, letting Jesus and his calling as Messiah down; we can already hear the faintest sound of the cockerel crowing from the dark hours of a Good Friday morning. But, we have to love Peter, he keeps engaging with Jesus and trying to fathom what it is that is unfolding before his eyes. The hopes he had in the man seem to be unravelling in the one instant yet at the same time binding together in an unbreakable golden thread. How often is it that the hopes we have in Jesus, whilst secure and real need to be comprehended with different eyes, with divine intent and timing, with the eyes of Abrahamic faith, rather than a worldly viewpoint?

From a worldly viewpoint Peter should never be the rock on which Jesus would build His church. He should never be the one given the keys, looked to as the lead Apostle, because Peter again and again misses the complete picture. Time and again he sees something in Jesus but misses the full reality of who he is. How much is that still the situation today? How often do we hear folks say Jesus was a good man, I can accept his philosophy of love for the world, he definitely was a prophet, a teacher, a healer, but God's chosen Messiah? If we are honest, how often is it that we too miss the full picture of who Jesus the Christ, the Messiah really is?

Peter gives to us a gift here, the gift that discipleship is not grounded on how much theology we understand, or any recognised leadership position in the church, but on being prepared to keep seeking to understand. And more, that discipleship has built into it doubt, stumbling, and a constant seeking to look and see and know more as we are known fully.

Interestingly, Mark's Gospel is accepted to be largely written from Peter's own recollections of his time with Jesus, and he recounts for us both the high points and those that any self-respecting leader would never tell. So Peter tells us Jesus called his actions like those of Satan, the who opposes God's redemption of humanity. That must have hurt, and having the world know does nothing for any leader's reputation.

But this is part of the gift Peter gives to us, for none of his recollections are actually about him, but about the one he came to know in fullness through the trips and stumbles and his focus sharpened to see the living breathing, walking and talking image of the grace of God before him; the grace of God who restored Peter time and again!

In reality we should never look to Abraham or Peter as our icons of faith, but look through them and see the fullness of who they put their faith in – the One God!

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*

As we journey through Lent may we grow in faith, understanding and service.
Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

Strengthen Michael our Bishop 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 the witness of the church to God's faithfulness, the redemption of Christ, and to the grace which welcomes all, again and again.
Lord in your mercy hear our prayer

Let us pray for priests, preachers and theologians as they struggle to interpret the mystery of God to be relevant for each generation. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We Pray for the King, Prime Minister, and all World leaders, that they may have the Spirit of wisdom to lead us through difficult times. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

On the second anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the continued fighting in Gaza, and the rumours of war about the world we pray with deep lament for those killed, injured, displaced and all who make profits from war. May the reign of the Prince of Peace come to this broken world.
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 those approaching death. We give thanks for those who use their skills 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. The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us now and always. Amen

The Collect

Almighty God, you show to those who are in error the light of your truth, that they may return to the way of righteousness:
grant to all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may reject those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same;
through our Lord Jesus Christ, 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