

Our Sunday Reflections

May 12th 2024

Easter 7

An Easter Acclamation

Praise be to God in the highest. It is our duty and our joy, always and everywhere to give you thanks, almighty and eternal Father, and especially in these days of Easter to celebrate with joyful hearts the memory of your wonderful works.

For by the mystery of his passion Jesus Christ, your risen Son, has conquered the powers of death and hell and restored in men and women the image of your glory. He has placed them once more in paradise and opened to them the gate of life eternal.

And so earth and heaven resound with gladness, while angels and archangels and the powers of all creation sing for ever the hymn of your glory.

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 Psalm 1 *We say the psalm aloud*

Blessed are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked,
nor lingered in the way of sinners, nor sat in the assembly of the scornful.

Their delight is in the law of the Lord and they meditate on his law day and night.

Like a tree planted by streams of water bearing fruit in due season,
with leaves that do not wither, whatever they do, it shall prosper.

As for the wicked, it is not so with them;
they are like chaff which the wind blows away.

Therefore, the wicked shall not be able to stand in the judgement,
nor the sinner in the congregation of the righteous.

For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked shall perish.

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 Acts 1.15-17 and 21 to end

¹⁵In those days Peter stood up among the believers (together the crowd numbered about one hundred and twenty people) and said, ¹⁶'Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus— ¹⁷for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.'

²¹So one of the men who have accompanied us throughout the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²²beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection.' ²³So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴Then they prayed and said, 'Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.' ²⁶And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

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 John 17.6-19

'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; ⁸ for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹ I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰ All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹ And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. ¹² While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³ But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. ¹⁴ I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁵ I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

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

Revd John Webb writes

'Oh dear, we seemed to have lost contact, we will try to re-connect'. I am surprised how often we hear this on the BBC news – a correspondent in some far-off place losing the connection so that we find that they have been talking into space without any response. I think to many of us that is how prayer feels, we are pouring our hearts out to God and all we get in response is silence. So it is interesting that in our Gospel reading for to-day St John records Jesus praying. Jesus starts his prayer by saying what he has been doing – he has made God's name known to the disciples. This may sound odd to us because we often regard a name as little more than a label, but to Jesus, and his contemporaries, familiar with the Old Testament it meant much more than that – the name meant the whole character and nature of a person and what they were really like.

This had a particular relevance when the Jews spoke about God's name because it was held to be so sacred that it was never even pronounced except by the High Priest when he went into the Holy of Holies in the Temple on the Day of Atonement. The name of God was so sacred that men were not even supposed to know it let alone speak it. So Jesus is claiming that he has shown to his disciples the true nature and character of God so that even the humblest of us can 'name him' and come close to him like a child coming to a parent in absolute trust that they will be loved.

Jesus then goes on to look forward to the time when he is no longer with the disciples and he passes the responsibility of the spreading of the good news to them. It is clear that he knows that will not be easy, but he never doubts that it will work. In saying this Jesus expresses two great convictions – belief in God, and belief in men. It is amazing he that put his trust in ordinary people like us.

It is important to note that Jesus doesn't expect a reply from God. There is no attempt at re-connection. There is no booming voice in response. It seems that Jesus is so confident in his father's love that he can simply make his prayer knowing that God will hear and respond. He has an unshakable faith in God's love

and goodwill towards us and he invites us to do the same.

There is no doubt that the church is in a great crisis at present and many of us fear for its future. This prayer of Jesus was said at an even greater time of crisis when he was about to pass the responsibility of spreading the Gospel to the first disciples. Let us pray with the same confidence for the church as we go forward into the unknown future. It is safe in the hands of God.

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*

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.

Let us pray for the church throughout the world that it may repent past failures and be faithful in showing the love of God to all the world. *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 peace and the end of death and destruction in Ukraine and Gaza. *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. We pray for all those responsible for religious education that they may inspire those they teach. *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

O God the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:

we beseech you, leave us not comfortless, but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before, 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