

Morning Worship for Fourth Sunday after Trinity

Preparation

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts:
the whole earth is full of his glory.

Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength;
ascribe to the Lord the honour due to his name.

The whole earth is full of his glory.

The Lord shall give strength to his people;

the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace.

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts:

the whole earth is full of his glory.

Opening Prayer

Holy God,

faithful and unchanging:

enlarge our minds with the knowledge of your truth,

and draw us more deeply into the mystery of your love,

that we may truly worship you,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Cast your burden upon the Lord:

And he will sustain you.

Create in us clean hearts O God:

And renew a right spirit within us.

Cast us not away from your presence:

And take not your Holy Spirit from us.

Give us the joy of your saving help:

And sustain us with your life-giving Spirit.

Blessed be the Lord day by day:

The God of our salvation who bears our burdens.

We confess our sins.

God the Father forgives us in Christ

and heals us by the Holy Spirit.

Let us therefore put away all anger and bitterness,

all slander and malice,

and confess our sins to God our redeemer.

(cf Ephesians 4.30,32)

Come, let us return to the Lord and say:

Lord our God,

in our sin we have avoided your call.

Our love for you is like a morning cloud,

like the dew that goes away early.

Have mercy on us;

deliver us from judgement;

bind up our wounds and revive us;

in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

May almighty God,

who sent his Son into the world to save sinners,

bring you his pardon and peace,

now and for ever. **Amen.**

Praise

O Lord, open our lips:

And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Let us worship the Lord:

All praise to his name.

Gloria in Excelsis

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 word of God

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! (Romans 7:15–25a)
This is the word of the Lord; *thanks be to God*

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

At that time Jesus said, ‘To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one another, “We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.” For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, “He has a demon”; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, “Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!” Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds. I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’
(Matthew 11:16–19, 25–30)

This is the Gospel of the Lord; *Praise to you O Christ*

A reflection by Revd Stephen Burge Curate at St Mary’s

We all know what it feels like when life is stressful and hectic, when jobs and things to do seem to flood in one after another, without an end in sight. When life can feel like we’re spinning plates on sticks and we are trying to keep them all going, without letting any fall and

break. All we crave in times like these is a bit of rest and a time to catch up with ourselves and have some space to breathe.

We also all know what it feels like when we are worried about someone close to us or something that we know is going to happen. The worry and the anxiety can be all-consuming, becoming the only thing that we can think about. When we try to rest, we can feel the tension within ourselves, and we can end up feeling exhausted without really doing anything. In times like these what we need most is some peace.

When we are stressed or worried, the thing we need to do most is to listen to Jesus’ comforting words that we heard in our Gospel reading: “Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.” But the nature of being stressed and worried means that we often forget to do so – because they can wrap themselves around us, deafening us to the world and people around us. It is times like these that we find it hard to listen to God and can even forget to listen completely.

Jesus knew that worry, stress and anxiety do not make for a good spiritual life – they distract us from forming a proper and meaningful relationship with God. The words of today’s collect, which we will hear later, put this really rather well, when it prays that as we “pass through things temporal” we may not lose “our hold on things eternal”. Our daily lives, our fears, our worries are all things this life, this temporal earthly, world. God’s love and grace are things of our future eternal life, tastes of which we can enjoy in this life too.

There is, of course, another burden that we can often carry: the burden of sin. When we know that we have done something wrong, when we have fallen short and hurt those around us, that feeling of sadness and shame can be the heaviest burden that we can have to carry. If we try to ignore what we have done wrong, and avoid having to deal with the burden of shame and sin in our spiritual lives, we won’t be able to carry on – it will be too hard to bear. The real paradox is that when we do need God most, when we need forgiveness, we can be too ashamed to seek it. Yet in our Gospel reading, Jesus reminds us that “he is gentle and humble in heart”. God will forgive us and unburden us of our shame and guilt if we ask for God’s forgiveness and his grace.

In his Letter to the Romans, St. Paul describes the struggle of living a life of faith: of wanting to do the right thing, but so often failing to do it. He says: “I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind”. But Paul, also

understood the grace of God; he understood that God would forgive him and take on his burden of sin, for which he thanks God heartily. I know that it is one thing to say that we should simply unburden ourselves to God, to take Jesus at his word and give him our burdens, our stresses, our anxieties and shame. But that can be easier said than done. One thing that I have often found helpful is a version of the Ignatian Examen.

The Examen encourages us to think at the end of the day about those times that we have been nearest to God and those times when we have been farthest from God. It may be a simple thing to do, but it helps to draw us into the love of God, and helps us to unburden our worries, and stresses and our shame. It can help us to take Jesus up on his offer to take on our burden and make our yokes light. More importantly, it can help us to build a closer and intimate relationship with God. It helps us to treasure those moments when we think about and experience the things that are eternal rather than those things that are earthly and temporal. It can help us to give all of our burdens to God and receive a yoke that is light. Amen.

Our faith

Let us declare our faith in God Father, Son and Holy Spirit

**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 of Intercession led by Diane Goodwin

Dear Lord as we come before you this morning we ask that our hearts and minds are stilled as we lift our prayers and petitions to you.

We are often overwhelmed by the needs of the world but you are the God who loves with an everlasting love and you long for us to talk with you. We thank you for all your creation and for your people throughout the world in all their differing cultures and environments. We pray especially for those suffering from poverty, persecution, slavery, oppression and the effects of war. We ask you to give compassion, wisdom and courage to your people throughout the world that they and we may defend those who suffer, and be a voice for those who cannot speak. We thank you for the many Christian charities throughout the world whose mission is to bring relief and offer the glorious hope that Jesus brings.

Lord in your mercy - **Hear our prayer**

We pray for our church. We ask that you bless Joy, Stephen, Gordon and the PCC. Give them the strength and a listening ear to do your will. May your Holy Spirit give them wisdom and discernment to teach us your ways and lead us in the direction we must go as your body here on earth. And may we be obedient to your calling. Fill us with those beautiful gifts of your spirit that will enable us to be your witnesses in a broken and hurting world – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Lord in your mercy - **Hear our prayer**

Thank you for giving us the blessing of family, friends and neighbours. We pray for those who are special to us and we ask that you help us with our relationships. Help us make our good ones stronger, our broken ones healed and our new ones to continue growing. May we be aware of those around us who need a helping hand, some company or a kind word spoken. May we follow your commandment to love our neighbours as ourselves.

Lord in your mercy - **Hear our prayer**

We pray for those who are facing illness and for those who have recently lost loved ones, especially at this current time of crisis. We remember those who have died in faith and we recall those with their years mind at this time.

Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer**

Heavenly father, as David prayed in the Psalms “May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.” Let us lift before God our own thoughts and prayers.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your son,
our saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

A prayer for the coronavirus pandemic

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

*We join together with Christians throughout the world in the prayer
that Jesus 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.**

Conclusion

The Collect for the day

O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy: increase and multiply upon us your mercy; that with you as our ruler and guide we may so pass through things temporal that we lose not our hold on things eternal; grant this, heavenly Father, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honour and power.
For you have created all things,
and by your will they have their being.
You are worthy, O Lamb, for you were slain,
and by your blood you ransomed us for God.
From every tribe and language and nation,
you have made us to be a kingdom and priests

serving our God.

To the One who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
**be blessing and honour and glory and might
for ever and ever. Amen. (Revelation 4.11;5.9b,10,11)**

*We end with the words of the Grace, an ancient Christian prayer of
fellowship, remembering that although we are not together in person,
nothing can separate us from the love of God found in Christ Jesus
our Lord.*

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
and the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all evermore. Amen.**

*Please let us know if you want us to pray for you either individually or
if you would like to be included on the Prayer Chain.
(vicar@stmaryseatonbray.org.uk)*

Reverend Joy Cousans; Reverend Stephen Burge



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