

## ***Morning Worship for Second 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.*

Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Romans 6:1b–11)

This is the word of the Lord; *thanks be to God*

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

Jesus summoned the twelve and sent them out with the following instruction: 'A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household! So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows. (Matthew 10:24–31)

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

*A reflection by Gordon Gray Reader at St Mary's*

When we explore Gospel passages we need to bear in mind that the writers had two intentions in mind. The first was to tell stories about Jesus, what he did, what people thought about him especially his relationship with God.

The second objective was to interpret Jesus' story to the people to whom they were writing – basically first and early second century Jews and Gentiles. I doubt whether any of the New Testament writers expected their readers to include people like you and me, 2,000 years and 2,000 miles later, with different languages and cultures. So it really is astonishing just how often the gospel story for the day is directly relevant to today's needs.

When I prepare to a sermon I tend to have 3 questions in mind: What did Jesus say or do?; what did it mean to those who first read or heard the story? and what might it mean to us today?

Three months ago we were instructed to stay at home and in that time Christine and I like most of you have hardly gone out – just a weekly shop plus the occasional walk. A strong factor in the population obediently staying at home has surely been fear. With this pandemic many people have become fearful of their own mortality, and the reminder that we aren't even close to being invincible. Fear makes people behave differently. I've seen a couple of examples during lockdown, each involving a relatively elderly lady in each case shouting at anyone who came close to her and berating them.

At first sight today's Gospel story is about fear and it's worth noting that the commandment that is most frequently cited in the Bible is stated four times today – Don't be afraid, fear not. So my first observation today is that Jesus frequently tells his disciples not to be afraid.

Now being human we tend to think of the command to 'Fear not' is associated with human disasters such as famine, war, the rise of an evil leader, things that go bump in the night. And Jesus is quite clear – there is no need to be afraid of these sorts of things; you are dearly loved by God and whatever might happen nothing will separate you from God's love.

It seems certain given the number of times the command is repeated that Jesus did indeed tell his disciples not to be afraid and, coming as it does immediately after Jesus commissioning his disciples to go out and proclaim the good news, no doubt this would not only have been a help to them; but also to those to whom the Gospels were written, at a time when the recipients may have been facing persecution and threat of death. It's a message that's relevant to today's readers who are also sent out to share the good news. Don't be afraid, because God knows exactly what you are like. He has counted your every hair, your every wrinkle, your every cell. And you are loved - so have faith, and do not be afraid.

Yet Jesus goes on to say you should “fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell”. Was this coded language to the disciples or to first century readers of someone or something so terrifying? I must be honest and say ‘I don’t know’ but I do know of examples in modern society that can destroy both soul and body in hell; for example, the sin of greed. It was certainly an issue for 2nd century Christians where in the letter to Timothy we read “the love of money is the root of all evil.” In today’s world it seems you’ve got to have money even though the thirst for money by corporations and individuals is destroying our planet.

We exploit the world’s resources and in the process wipe out the countless species of wildlife whilst polluting the land and the oceans. Big businesses encourage addiction to energy, drugs, tobacco and alcohol to grow profits. They tear down the rain-forests and are surprised we have global warming. Decisions are made by governments that put economics above the health and safety and needs of people.

We are so wasteful buying things we don't need with money we don't have to impress people we don't like, while, as I write, 45% of school children are being denied food vouchers that would save them from going hungry through the holidays. Sometimes the struggle to feed a family keeps parents worrying all day and up all night and society’s prescription is to encourage them to take drugs. Yes, our culture, offers a really fearful prospect, in which people are eaten away from the core of their being. As Jesus says – fear those things that can destroy both soul and body in hell. As we come out of pandemic there will be a brief opportunity for a change in our culture. It’s my hope that the love of money has less influence on governments and commerce. 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 Chris Banks*

Lord we know that you hear us when we pray in faith, when we place our trust in you. Hear us now as we pray for Joy, for Stephen, for Gordon and for the family of St Mary’s who today are your church for the people of these villages, at this difficult and unprecedented time Strengthen your church in the service of Christ, praying this morning for our Bishops, Alan, Richard, and Michael and for our spiritual leaders as they lead us through these dark moments when hope is sometimes lost and our hope turns more than ever to you, Lord, for comfort. Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer**

Lord, we give grateful thanks for the dedication of our health professionals and for all who expose themselves to risk in caring for others as well as for the many other people in key and other roles who work tirelessly in the background. Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit – thinking especially of all those affected in any way by the Covid-19 virus – whether infected themselves or worried about loved ones who may be at risk. We pray that their trust in you will be rewarded and that all will be delivered safely back to loved ones.

Lord God, whose son, Jesus Christ, understood people’s fear and pain before they spoke of them, we pray for those in hospital; surround the frightened with your tenderness; give strength to those in pain; hold the weak in your arms of love, and give hope and patience to those who are recovering. Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer**

At a time when violence and civil unrest have become commonplace on streets across the world, we ask that by your hand a spirit of reconciliation might prevail and a new spirit of universal equality become the norm.

Lord God, show us where there is loneliness,  
that we may take friendship.  
Show us where individuals are not seen as persons,

that we may acknowledge their identity.  
Show us where there is alienation,  
that we may take reconciliation.  
Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer**

Lord, we pray too today for all those living in Edlesborough; in Cow Lane, Wren Walk and Cook's Meadow as well as for church finance and for Christian Stewardship.

Lord, hear us too as we remember those who have recently died in the faith of Christ, those whose years mind falls at this time, families who cannot properly mark the loss of their loved ones, bring your comfort and peace to all who mourn.  
Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer**

Lord, you lead us in ways we do not know, through joy and sorrow, through victory and defeat, beyond our understanding.  
Give us faith to see your guiding hand in all things; that being neither lifted up by seeming success, nor cast down by seeming failure, we may press forward wherever you may lead us.  
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*

Lord, you have taught us that all our doings without love are nothing worth: send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love, the true bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whoever lives is counted dead before you. Grant this for your only Son 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.*

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Reverend Joy Cousans; Reverend Stephen Burge

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