

Sunday Worship at Home 28th February 2021 2nd. Sunday of Lent

Opening Prayers:

O Lord, open our lips

And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Reveal among us the light of your presence

that we may behold your power and glory.

Let us call to mind our sins:

For our failure to value the love of others and our failure to love as Christ loves us.

Lord God, your love gives us life, but we fail to live as your children:

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy

Lord Jesus, you call us to do good, but we seek our own good:

Christ have mercy

Christ have mercy.

You hear us when we cry for help, but we ignore the cries of others:

Lord have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins,

and restore us in his image to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Collect (Special Prayer for the day)

Almighty God,

by the prayer and discipline of Lent may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings, and by following

his Way come to share in the glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Gospel Reading: Mark 8 31-end

Then Jesus 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. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 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." 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. 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. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? 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."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you O Christ.

Reflection on the Gospel.

We've all heard the expression "a cross we have to bear", used when someone is going through a difficult time, or may be as a throw-away comment for something frivolous. The truth is that during our lives we all pass through difficult times, and we do so with prayer and trust in God that in the end all will be well.

It is almost a year since the nation entered the first period of lockdown and who would have imagined that as we enter another Spring, we would still be living with disruption and restriction to our way of life. Who would have thought so many people would lose their lives, or suffer permanent health problems? Who would have seen the loss of education and jobs, the closure of places of worship, lack of family contact and so much more? We may not be living with the innate fear we had at the beginning of the pandemic, but the heavy cross of Covid 19 has not gone away. It is only by the sacrifice of most people, and the ingenuity and hard work of the scientists, and those that make our rules, that we are able to see the light at the end of a very long tunnel. Many countries are far behind us, the world will take a long time to recover.

So what does the cross we have borne collectively this year have to do with the cross of Jesus?

The answer for some people unfortunately is very little, however most of us **have** denied ourselves and borne the isolation and disruption caused by Covid, because we **have had to** in following government guidelines to deal with a global pandemic.

To bear the cross of Christ is different.

It is different because in doing so, we **willingly** deny ourselves to live with true love and compassion for those in need, not just those we know. Every time we open our hearts to the suffering stranger, the lost and the desolate people in the world, every time we look beyond our own desires to the greater needs of the world, we come closer to Jesus and the understanding of what he meant about taking up our cross to follow him. In the long run, anything we need to deny ourselves to follow Christ, will be nothing compared to what he did for us. If we continually put our trust in Him to fulfil the promises he makes, as Abraham did in our first reading (Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16), the gift we receive will be the joy of being with him forever in heaven. Amen

The Creed

We believe in God the Father,

from whom every family in heaven and earth is named.

We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.

We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Be still in the presence of God to pray and listen: For forty days and forty nights Jesus was wandering in the desert. As we travel through Lent may our focus be to align ourselves with Jesus. May our Lenten wanderings bring us closer to a relationship with him and may we arrive at Easter with a renewed longing to walk close to God. Pray for the souls of those who have died, especially Vincent Grove, whose funeral will take place this week, and pray for strength for Pam, Jonathan and Christopher and all the family at this time.

The Lord's Prayer:

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 deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and forever. Amen.

The Blessing:

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness, to deny yourselves, take up your cross and follow Him, and the blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, be with you and all those you love, this day and always. **Amen**

Reverend Irene