

Sunday Worship at Home May 16th 2021 Sunday after Ascension

Opening Prayers:

Alleluia. Christ is Risen

He is Risen Indeed Alleluia

Send your Holy Spirit on us.

And clothe us with power from on high. Alleluia

Invitation to confession:

What God has prepared for those who love him, he has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything. Therefore, let us in penitence open our hearts to the Lord, who has prepared good things for those who love him.

For the times we fail to count our blessings.

Lord have mercy.

For the times we envy others.

Christ have mercy.

For the times we fail to give you the time you deserve.

Lord have mercy.

May almighty God who sent his Son into the world to save us, bring us his pardon and peace, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Collect:

Risen, ascended Lord, as we rejoice at your triumph, fill your Church on earth with power and compassion, that all who are estranged by sin may find forgiveness and know your peace, to the glory of God the Father.

A reading from Acts 1: 15-17, 21-end

In those days Peter stood up among the believers* (together the crowd numbered about one hundred and twenty people) and said, '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— for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.' So one of the men who have accompanied us throughout the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning 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.' So, they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. Then they prayed and said, 'Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen to take the place* in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.' And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

Reflection on the reading: Here we are told clearly that the scriptures had to be fulfilled. Jesus had to be betrayed and the one to do that was Judas; nonetheless, his act left a deep wound in the early Christian communities. Forever more, the name Judas would be synonymous with betrayal, not a good legacy to leave behind. All of the four Gospels show us that Judas' act of betrayal goes deep as they all identify Judas as "one of the 12". He was one of the inner sanctum, one of their own and that's what compounds his act.

Trust is a precious commodity, hard to earn but so easy to lose, and when it is gone, whether for an individual or a community, there has to be a point of grieving for what is lost, before any re-building can be done. The disciples knew they needed to replace Judas with someone with impeccable credentials, someone who had travelled the same journey with Jesus as they had. Significantly, before they acted they prayed together as a whole community, prayer has wonderful power, it unites and it heals, and they were also guided by the Holy Spirit into finding the right person, the one named Matthias. The disciple's ministry was not defined by the betrayal of Jesus by Judas, rather that act brought them together to ensure their commitment to building a new church based on love and integrity was stronger than ever. In times of stress, disappointment, or even betrayal in our own lives, we too should harness the power of prayer. Pray to God who knows us better than we know ourselves, to guide us and comfort us in all things, and to keep us on the right path when times are tough. Amen

The Apostles' 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

Be still and pray:

Pray for your family, community and friends, giving thanks for the part they play in your life. For the world with all its problems that they may be overcome by love. For those who are sick or suffering at this time, especially Grace Dooley in Birmingham children's hospital following a riding accident, that she and her family find strength to cope with each new day. For Her Majesty the Queen and her Government and all who make decisions on our behalf. For those who have died recently, that they may rest in peace and rise in glory.

The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, which art in heaven.....

The Blessing

The Spirit of truth lead you into all truth, give you grace to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, and strengthen you to proclaim the word and works of God and the blessing of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with you and all those you love, this day and always.

Amen.