Order of Service

# Trinity 5: July 4th 2021

## Welcome

Hello and welcome. My name’s Nick Bird. I’m the parish priest for the group of parishes just to the east of York, known as the Benefice of Rural East York. I’m not at home at the moment, I’m not recording this in one of our churches, but from Wydale Hall over near Scarborough, the York Diocese’ Retreat and Conference Centre and there is indeed a beautiful view.

I’m sorry you’re not all able to join me here, but we bring you this act of worship that you may worship at home and celebrate the love of God amongst us wherever we are.

As we enter into this time of worship, let us pray.

Blessed are you, Lord our God,

redeemer and king of all.

To you be glory and praise forever.

From the waters of chaos

you drew forth the world and

in your great love fashioned us in your image.

May we, the first fruits of your new creation,

rejoice in this new day you have made.

May Christ, your light, ever dawn in our hearts,

as we offer you our sacrifice of thanks and praise,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Blessed be God forever.

## Gathering

We have waited on your loving-kindness, O God,

in the midst of your temple.

In a few moments of quiet, we bring together our hopes and fears,

all the thoughts tumbling in our minds.

We place them, whatever they are, as they are, before our God.

All is in God’s hands:

our hopes for an end to the pandemic, now easing in this country, but not yet gone,

our fears for a world which is baking and burning and flooding,

our individual joy and sadness, our past and our plans.

All is in God’s hands.

Loving God, you know all, and see all;

you see me and you know me.

Our understanding is clouded, inchoate, incomplete.

Our world is perceived through stories and metaphors:

all we can grasp, at the last,

are things which are nearly true or not quite false.

We are finite and our comprehension is tightly bound.

We reach for things beyond our grasp.

And so we live in a world of clouds,

of tales we tell each other,

of pictures we paint.

Where shall we put our trust?

Where is solid ground?

You, O Lord, the author of all, creator, sustainer,

are the only truth, our firm rock and our foundation.

Guide us, we pray, into all truth

that by faith and by your light,

we may see clearly and surely

this certain knowledge: God is love.

## Hymn

Meekness and majesty, manhood and deity,

in perfect harmony the man who is God.

Lord of eternity dwells in humanity

kneels in humility and washes our feet.

*O what a mystery, meekness and majesty.*

*Bow down and worship for this is your God.*

*This is your God.*

Father's pure radiance, perfect in innocence,

yet learns obedience to death on a cross.

Suffering to give us life, conquering through sacrifice,

and as they crucify prays, “Father forgive.”

Wisdom unsearchable, God the invisible,

love indestructible in frailty appears.

Lord of infinity, stooping so tenderly,

lifts our humanity to the heights of his throne.

## Penitence

Let us pray.

Where we have built ourselves a world of suspicion and offence,

Father, forgive us.

Help us to recreate one of trust and openness.

Where we have seen power in the empty trappings of the strong,

and weakness in the humility of a saint,

Christ, forgive us.

Help us to perceive where true authority lies.

Where we have become trapped by our own illusions,

shackled by what we have convinced ourselves is true,

Father, forgive us.

Give us clarity of mind, freedom of imagination and strength to act.

Loving God, you know us more deeply than we know ourselves.

You see the things we choose to ignore,

and through the excuses we make.

You perceive us perfectly and love us still.

Grant us forgiveness and the peace of the knowledge of your love,

that we may proclaim that your kingdom has come,

and live our lives in the unquenchable power of your Spirit,

joyfully serving others in the name of your Son,

our saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

## Reading

### 2 Corinthians 12.2-10

I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. And I know that such a person—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows— was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat.

On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given to me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated.

Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, but he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.’ So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

## Hymn

The Lord’s my shepherd, I’ll not want;

he makes me lie in pastures green.

He leads me by the still, still waters,

his goodness restores my soul.

*And I will trust in you alone.*

*And I will trust in you alone,*

*for your endless mercy follows me,*

*your goodness will lead me home.*

He guides my ways in righteousness,

and he anoints my head with oil,

and my cup, it overflows with joy,

I feast on his pure delights.

And though I walk the darkest path,

I will not fear the evil one,

for you are with me, and your rod and staff

are the comfort I need to know.

## Reading

### Mark 6.1-13

He left that place and came to his home town, and his disciples followed him. On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, ‘Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?’ And they took offence at him. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Prophets are not without honour, except in their home town, and among their own kin, and in their own house.’ And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he was amazed at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages teaching. He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. He said to them, ‘Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.’ So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

## Homily

I’ve got three friends who recently have had cataracts removed. It’s great to hear them talk about the difference it makes to what they can see.

Well, today we’ve got a contrast between ‘You should have gone to Specsavers’ or ‘Vision Express’. The Gospel reading from Mark has got two distinct sections. The first part describes Jesus’ dismal visit to his home town, Nazareth, which turned out to be quite a failure. Then there’s the more successful story of Jesus scarily sending his disciples out two by two into the countryside of Galilee to spread the good news of the coming of God’s Kingdom.

Now today I want to focus on the first bit, ‘You should have gone to Specsavers’ in the context of knowing that the second bit (Vision Express) is there.

After initial enthusiasm, the people of Jesus’ home town, turned against him because he was one of them. We’re told that Jesus was unable to do any miracles there. In the second part of the reading, the disciples cast out many demons, and they anointed many sick people and healed them.

Visiting his home synagogue must have been quite special for Jesus. It’s certainly been so for me whenever I’ve returned to my home church in downtown Nottingham. Let’s note that this gospel account comes after some dramatic and powerful events. Last Sunday we heard about a woman who was healed simply by touching Jesus’ clothing and the remarkable raising of Jairus’ daughter. But in the mountaintop home town of Nazareth, the only thing that was dramatic was the rejection Jesus experienced through those who knew his family.

So what lessons are here for us? Something for us as individuals and for us as the church.

For us as individuals. We might be tempted to despise those silly Nazarenes who didn’t honour Jesus. But that would be to miss something important, because we too can play that game – we can disbelieve or selectively reject Jesus as well as others. We too can restrict what we think God is capable of in our lives.

In terms of what they didn’t see, this is a ‘You should have gone to Specsavers’ moment. So this story gets us asking how might we be inhibiting God’s working in our lives. What might be blocking God’s will to work through us? I think we’ve always got to ask that.

Are there things in us that might be holding us back or neutralizing Jesus - fears that we have, regrets we can’t seem to get over, grudges we can’t move, or angers or hurts that blind our vision? Jesus said “Prophets are not without honour except in their home town, and among their own kin, and in their own house”. Certainly the hardest places for us to share our faith is often in the familiar places - our homes, our work and leisure places - among those people who know us best.

In this respect, we are the people of Nazareth. We know Jesus. We know the story - we know his mother and his father and his background – he is extremely familiar to us. We’ve got used to the cataracts.

And for us as the church? Who might Jesus be looking out for if he were to pay a visit to York – to our patch, or wherever you are. And do we look with the same view or just see what we want to see. Are we at home with our faith rather than being stretched by it?

I wonder sometimes whether we can block out the more radical or slightly uncomfortable demands of the Gospel – are we ‘blinded by familiarity’. What do you think?

Jesus came proclaiming a Gospel of love and acceptance, to stand in solidarity with the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the foreigner. But sometimes, like others we can become intolerant, judgmental, and even prejudicial and condemning of those in need or those who have fallen short.

Let me tell you about a church in Swansea, that felt called to reimagine the use of its premises – an old gospel hall. They set up Zac’s place – a church for ragamuffins – basically anyone who put themselves in that category. Named after Zacchaeus and aimed at those who were a bit different and especially a place of welcome, described by one person as full of imperfect people, which made it the perfect place for them to come. There was food, clothes and warmth. The only requirement was that each gathering was centred around a good old-fashioned bible study and a good honest discussion.

One night a young girl, a regular to the church came in and disrupted the discussion with shouting and cursing. She was an addict but had had a particularly bad day – someone stole her phone, she had cold water thrown over her and she needed to vent off. One of the group left the room and returned with a bowl of hot water and a towel and offered to bathe her feet. She agreed and instantly her demeanour changed and she sat back and began to sing “Jesus loves me, this I know”. At the end of the meeting, she left the church with two friends and was still singing that chorus, which they later discovered her Dad used to sing to her to get her to sleep. Despite all her trauma and weakness, she had carried those words with her and in that church they were unlocked and she found a tiny bit of hope and refuge where she could express them again.

One of the group said of the bible study “well, we didn’t get very far tonight”, to which another said “Oh I think we did, I think we got a glimpse of heaven, mate!”

See it depends how you see things, doesn’t it?

So what I want to leave you with is let’s be refreshed by the treasure, the wealth of riches that God gives us and pray that God may extend our vision and be open and gracious as his agents out there in the field, whatever and wherever he might be calling us.

It can be ‘You should have gone to Specsavers’ or, as the disciples discovered on their adventure in the second part of the reading, it can be ‘Vision Express’.

## Intercessions

We lift our prayers to you, O Lord, for all people, everywhere: those close to us and those far away.

We pray for those who minister and preach, that they may never find themselves rejected, as our Saviour was in his home town synagogue. We pray for the Church of England, asking for your help to grow in faith: especially today for the church of Papua New Guinea; for Mowbray Deanery and the Area Dean, the Revd Fiona Mayer-Jones.

Guide us in our ministries and bring fulfilment to our own Mark Poole, as he lives each day determined to spread the good news of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Lord, in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

Creator God, look with compassion on the whole human family. Take away arrogance and hatred that infects the hearts of those who pursue violence and terrorism. Break down the walls that separate us. Unite us in bonds of love and peace. We pray today for peacemakers throughout the world, that they may bring hope out of despair, peace out of conflict and prosperity out of poverty.

Lord, in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

Father God, we pray for our families and friends, especially for young people, that they may grow up knowing love and hope, valuing life and respecting others. We pray for those who are about to leave school and move on to the next stage in their lives, and for those for whom what happens next depends on exam or assessment performance.

Lord, in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

Merciful God, we pray for all who suffer in body, mind or spirit and for those who care for them. We pray for the sick, especially for those who, like St Paul, have been given a thorn in the flesh. We pray for any who are in special need of our prayers at this time, especially those known personally to us.

Lord, in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we pray for those whose hearts have been saddened by the death of someone close and dear to them. For members of our families who have died and whose anniversary we recall. Help us to experience the comfort of the Holy Spirit within us, and the fellowship of the church family around us, until we are reunited once more in your heavenly kingdom.

Merciful Father,

accept these prayers

for the sake of you Son,

our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

## Lord’s prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name;
your kingdom come;
your will be done;
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom,
the power and the glory are yours,
now and for ever.
Amen.

## Hymn

Purify my heart, let me be as gold and precious silver.

Purify my heart, let me be as gold, pure gold.

*Refiner's fire, my heart's one desire is to be holy.*

*Set apart for you, Lord.*

*I choose to be holy, set apart for you, my master.*

*Ready to do your will.*

Purify my heart, cleanse me from within and make me holy.

Purify my heart, cleanse me from my sin, deep within.

Purify my heart, let me be as gold and precious silver.

Purify my heart, let me be as gold, pure gold.

## Blessing

Thank you so much for joining us today.

Thank you to all who have contributed to this act of worship and for those who have produced it.

Let us pray.

Lord of all life and power,

who through the mighty resurrection of your son

overcame the old order of sin and death,

to make all things new in him;

grant that we, being dead to sin and alive to you in Jesus Christ,

may reign with him in glory,

to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be praise and honour,

glory and might,

now and in all eternity. Amen.

And may the blessing of God almighty,

the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,

be with you now and always. Amen