

Order of Service – Sunday 23rd August 2020

Welcome

(sung)

*We adore you, most holy Lord Jesus Christ,
here and in all your churches throughout all the world,
and we bless you, because by your holy cross
you have redeemed the world.*

Good morning and a very warm welcome to our act of worship for Sunday 23rd August. Wherever you are joining us from you are more than welcome. I'm recording this today from Holy Trinity Church Stockton on the Forest, empty but for myself. It's good to start with a song, and that which I sang is the prayer of St Francis of Assisi on entering a church. Often, when I walk into a church, usually by myself, I will sing this. It's good to remind ourselves that God is present and by his cross he redeems the world. So welcome to our act of worship this morning as we pray and sing and reflect together. May the Lord be with you.

Gathering Prayers and Confession

We come in worship to God, in our need, and bringing with us the needs of the world.
We come to God, who comes to us in Jesus, and who knows by experience what human life is like.

We come with our faith and with our doubts, with our hopes and with our fears.
We come as we are, because it is you Lord, who invites us to come, just as we are, because you have promised never to turn us away.

We are here O God,
We have felt your touch in the sunlight,
Seen your power in the salt waves.
We have wondered at your mystery in the stars and we marvel that you, the maker of the universe knows us by name.
We are here, God. We are here to praise and worship you.

We are here, Jesus,
We know that you came to find us.
We have listened to your words, we have felt the warmth of your love, and we thank you that you call us your friends.
We are here, Jesus. We are here to praise and worship you.

We are here Holy Spirit,
We are grateful for your presence.
Grateful for the way you bring us close, for the way you both comfort us, and challenge us.
We are here, Holy Spirit. We are here to praise and worship you.

In the silence of your love, we bring to you all the things that trouble us, that harm us, that make us feel ashamed or afraid.
We confess our sins Lord.....the things we shouldn't have thought, said or done and the things we should have said and done but didn't.
God, have mercy on us.....Christ have mercy on us.

Taizé chant (repeated)

In the Lord I'll be ever thankful,
In the Lord I'll rejoice.
Look to God, do not be afraid,
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near;
Lift up your voices, the Lord is near.

Matthew 16.13-20

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.' Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Song (*sung by John and Rhona Hall*)

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.

Refrain

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.

Homily

When I do selection interviews on Bishop's advisory panels for want to be vicars, one question I always ask is this: Who is Jesus Christ to you?

And in a sense there are a million different answers for a million different people, but it pins

it down. This is what Jesus is doing with his disciples. He's getting them to nail their colours to the mast. "Who do people say that I am? And Who do you say that I am?"

When I'm interviewing people there are a whole variety of answers. The ones that trouble me, though, especially from those who are exploring ordained ministry, in answer to the question "Who is Jesus Christ to you?", they um and ah a bit and say, 'He's my best friend, the one that walks with me'. Yes, OK, I think. "He's a great influence on my life." "He's a moral standard to live by". Alright, I get that. Or they offer a whole plethora of these vague answers, of Jesus the nice guy, who lives alongside me, who guides me in some sort of a way. Well, I can hold to that, but we need to dig a bit deeper.

"Who do people say that I am?" Well, people have all sorts of answers like that. He's the one who changes history. He's the one who challenges the powers. "But for you, for you", says Jesus, "who do you say that I am?". And this is Simon Peter's shining moment, but don't worry because next week he falls down again when Jesus is talking about his suffering and his death, and Peter says that this can't happen, and Jesus replies "get behind me Satan". But for now, Peter gets it so right.

But for now Peter answers, "You are the Messiah, the son of the living God", he says. And I wonder whether it is only at this moment, when he is asked to nail his colours to the mast, that it profoundly dawns on Peter who Jesus of Nazareth is. Not just this rabbi from this backwater, not just this traveller and healer and preacher or teacher. "You are the Messiah. Oh my God, you *are* the Messiah. Oh my God, *you are God!* You are the messiah, the son of the living God" .

Perhaps it is only in those moments when we are asked to nail our colours to the mast that it dawns on us, and we publicly and profoundly own that truth. "You are the Messiah, you're the Christ, you are *my* messiah, *my* Christ. You are the one who calls me home, the one who redeems me, the one who will suffer and died, but rose again. You are that to me"

Who is Jesus Christ to you? The son of the living God.

I pray that when you are confronted by the Living God, that when you have that moment of decision, when you have those profound experiences of the call of God on your life, that it is also a deep recognition of who you are, of who calls you, and to whom you belong. To the Messiah, the son of the Living God, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayers of intercessions

Let us pray:

'Who do people say the Son of Man is?'

I say the name, Jesus Christ, and I see the eyes of unlimited compassion, I see the hands that heal, I hear the voice of forgiveness and truth, I feel the love that conquers pain, I see, hear and feel, the presence of God.

Come, let us pray to the Son of Man, for all those who are in need this day.

Christ the Peacemaker, be present in all places of violence and conflict.

Bring peace and justice and hope among and between all nations, even in the darkest of places.

Christ the Feeder, where people hunger, in or out of the camera, direct not just the pity of our eyes, but the generosity of our hearts, so that the hungry are fed, the poor are clothed and the homeless feel warmth, have shelter and know they are welcome.

Christ the Sustainer of our minds and souls, for all who are feeling lonely, isolated and anxious....for all who are struggling to live in the shadow of the pandemic, who have lost their confidence and are feeling hopeless and fearful, enfold them in your love and tenderness and bring strength, hope, and light.

Christ the Lord of all lives, for children and their families, especially in this season of extended time at home and all the pressures and difficulties this brings, may there be life-giving times of joy and refreshment..... for young people who have received exam results this last week and the week before and who face decisions about their future, make clear for them the path ahead. Protect and bless them.

Christ the Healer, stretch out your hand to bring comfort, healing and wholeness to all who are sick and suffering.....and for those who are recovering and gaining in strength.

Christ the Conqueror of death, be alongside those approaching the end of their life, reassure them of your presence and comfort those who watch over them. For those who have died and those who are weighed down with grief and sorrow, embrace them in your love.

Christ who calls us to follow, bless all that we are, receive all that we have, and by your grace, unite us as one body to serve generously, to love passionately and to proclaim faithfully the gospel of your Kingdom, to the glory of your name.

We ask all these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen

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.

Blessing

May Christ the good shepherd,
who laid down his life for the sheep,
draw you and all who hear his voice
to be one people within one fold.

And may the blessing of God almighty,
Father, Son and Holy spirit
be with you and those whom you love and pray for,
today and always.
Amen.

We go in to the world
to walk in God's light,
to rejoice in God's love,
and to reflect God's Glory.
Amen. Thanks be to God.

Hymn

1 Alleluia, sing to Jesus!
his the sceptre, his the throne:
Alleluia! his the triumph,
his the victory alone.
Hear the songs of holy Zion
thunder like a mighty flood:
'Jesus out of every nation
has redeemed us by his blood!'

2 Alleluia! not as orphans
are we left in sorrow now:
Alleluia! he is near us;
faith believes, but knows not how.
Though the cloud from sight received him
whom the angels now adore,
shall our hearts forget his promise,
'I am with you evermore'?

3 Alleluia! bread of heaven,
here on earth our food, our stay:
Alleluia! here the sinful
come to you from day to day.
Intercessor, friend of sinners,
earth's redeemer, plead for me,
where the songs of all the sinless
sweep across the crystal sea.

4 Alleluia! King eternal,
you, the Lord of lords we own;
Alleluia! born of Mary,
earth your footstool, heaven your throne:
you, within the veil have entered,
robed in flesh, our great high priest;
yours the blood and yours the body,
in our eucharistic feast.