

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE, RASTRICK WELCOME TO

Morning Praise

Sunday 17th May 2020

*Click on the underlined links to take you to safe content on the internet.
If you are able light a candle as you start the service and if others are in the house
encourage them to reading some of the service with you.*

Introduction

This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

We have come together in the name of Christ
to offer our praise and thanksgiving,
to hear and receive God's holy word,
to pray for the needs of the world,
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins,
that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may give ourselves to the service of God.



Prayer of Penitence

Jesus says, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' So, let us turn
away from our sin and turn to Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

Together we pray:

**Lord God, we have sinned against you.
we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
and restore to us the joy of your salvation,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Hymn: [O thou who camest from above](#)

The Word of God

Today, historically, was ROGATION Sunday when Christians walked their parish boundaries to ask God to bless the crops and pray that growth would not be disturbed by freak weather.

There was the hope for God's protection and guidance.

Our two readings reflect the current life conditions, due to covid-19 – a need to speak for God, as Paul did in Athens and to bring supporting love into the world, as Jesus requested of His disciples in the Upper Room in the Gospel Reading.

Reading: [Acts 17: 22-31 read by Roger Ellis](#)

Gospel Reading: [John 14:15-31 Video Reading](#)

Reflection Canon Michael Storey

“There is a tide in the affairs of men” is part of speech in one of Shakespeare’s plays. No doubt after this service someone will tell me from which play!!

“Tide” is a word used in the Christian Calendar – so we have Christmastide, Eastertide, Rogationtide, Ascensiontide and Whitsuntide. The one least remembered is Rogationtide, which starts today and lasts the four days before Ascensiontide starts on Thursday – Ascension Day.



The last of my diaries which names today as Rogation Sunday is the one for 1989 and so the only Rogation Days now in diaries from 1990 are Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. This is an ancient season, dating back to pagan days when people asked for their gods’ blessing on the crops, as crops began to grow in an obvious way. Rogationtide was made Christian by Archbishop Mamertus of Vienne, France, in 470AD, following a volcanic eruption in that part of France. So began processions at Rogationtide for a blessing on the crops and against “volcanic eruptions”. These were suppressed in England during the Reformation but bought back in the 1662 Prayer Book, STILL the official Prayer Book for the Church of England.

In my days as vicar of Crosland Moor, we had a Rogation Sunday procession round the parish boundary so that all church members knew the extent of the area in which they had to spread the faith. The “fun bit” was bouncing the youngest person on a boundary stone, the most obvious one being the boundary stone marking the Linthwaite/Crosland Moor boundary. The procession was led by a crucifer with a cross and prayers said at various places. We aren’t going to walk round our boundary today - covid-19 won’t allow us! But we can compare our times with those in Vienne in 470AD. Our “volcanic eruption” has been, from what I know of French history in 470AD, a much more sad and serious “eruption”.

As Christians we are called to respond as best, we can. Let us see if the readings have something to help us. The first one took us to a meeting of the city council (Arepagus) in Athens. Paul was on his second missionary journey and had come to a place, a city, the population of which liked to consider Religion. Athens abounded in statues and altars to various gods. Paul had spotted one “TO AN UNKNOWN GOD”, as if Athenians were still looking for a god other their own. So, Paul, with his usual enthusiasm, gave them a simple lesson. His God (our God) is the source of all life and he came up with one of his best known statements –“God made man that he might seek Him” Paul then went on to inform his hearers that his God offered eternal life! Had the reading continued we would have heard that his hearers sneered!

Our Gospel reading took us to The Last Supper, Jesus was speaking to the eleven loyal disciples, asking them to obey his command to love one another with the promise of a Counsellor to help them in their lives ahead, when He would be gone and returned to The Father. Happily, as we know from the first reading, Paul was given that help, enabling him to be brave and face those doubting Athenians.

Our current world is a bit of a mix of 470AD “volcanic eruption (Covid-19) and a doubting world which tends to have, in a way, as many gods as the Athenians had. Our call is the same as that faced by Archbishop Mamertus, the eleven disciples in the Upper Rome and Paul facing the Athenian doubters – it is to present our Faith as something which is important, can help to combat opposition and give a meaning of Hope to the world around us.

We have this to do within our parish, and to ANYONE who doubts and “sneers”. The message is still as given by Jesus – LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU.

Two simple ways of Loving:

1. In conversation of any sort, especially when being told of a problem, listen, and listen again before offering any advice.
2. Words of friendly evangelism: Nobody cares what you know, until they know you care.

Amen

Hymn: [A New Commandment](#)

The 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.

Prayers of intercession – [Prepared by John Hearson](#)

A Prayer for Church Growth

God of Mission

**Who along brings growth to your church,
Send your Holy Spirit to give
Vision to our planning
Wisdom to our actions
And power to our witness.
Help our church to grow in numbers,
In spiritual commitment to you,
And in service to our local community,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray
**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.**

The Collect for today

God our redeemer,
you have delivered us from the power of darkness
and brought us into the kingdom of your Son:
grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life,
so by his continual presence in us he may raise us to eternal joy;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen

Hymn: [Though I feel afraid](#)

Final Prayer

Eternal God,
whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life:
grant us to walk in his way,
to rejoice in his truth,
and to share his risen life.
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. Amen

Blessing

May the peace of God, which passes all
understanding, keep our hearts and minds in the
knowledge and love of God and his son Jesus Christ
our Lord. Amen

Our service ends with the Grace,
**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.**

*And the peace of God,
which surpasses all understanding,
will guard your hearts
and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Philippians 4:7

THE ARCHBISHOP
OF CANTERBURY

And something a bit special to celebrate today's theme of Loving on another