

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE, RASTRICK WELCOME TO

# Morning Praise

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Easter 7 - Sunday after Ascension Day

*Click on the underlined links to take you to safe content on the internet.*

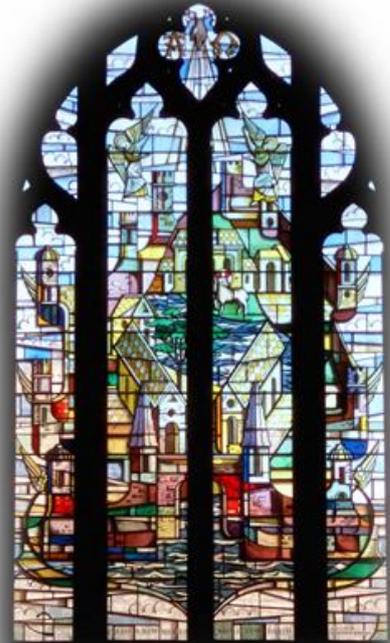
*If you are able light a candle as you start the service and if others are in the house encourage them to reading some of the service with you.*

## *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: [Lord, I lift your name on high](#)

## The Word of God

*Reading:* [Acts 1: 6-14 read by Ann Johnson](#)

Video : [The Ascension of Jesus](#)

*Reading:* 1 Peter 4:12-14; and 5:6-11. - Suffering for Being a Christian

Peter writes to the churches in Asia minor:

Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in as much as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

*Reflection* Rev Jill Swallow

Is it already two weeks ago since we celebrated VE day? Around that time, I decided to re-read my 'Make Do And Mend' book. This is a compilation of all the government leaflets distributed during the Second World War. Chapters include 'Saving fuel in the home' and 'How to reinforce clothing for extra wear', when we are told never to put a new patch of material on an old garment. Didn't Jesus say much the same about old wine skins? Perhaps he had some input in compiling this chapter. As I read my book, I couldn't help thinking that lots of these wartime instructions and restrictions were alive and well and appearing in many a home for decades after the war, and probably still are in some. Do these ring any bells with you?

‘Only so much bath water’. ‘Never waste heat in the oven’. ‘No food to be left on the plate after a meal’. ‘Never throw anything away’. .....Thought so.

These wartime qualities of being resourceful and resilient, plus that wonderful ability to spot the potential of making something different out of something no longer needed.....these are truly great qualities. Indeed, today we would say that they are adaptable and transferable skills. Just the job for difficult times. And in true wartime spirit we mustn't waste these skills, so I thought I might try and weave them into what St Peter is saying to us this morning. He is talking about something that none of us wants or needs. Something that lots of us can't find a use for, and don't know what to do with.

St Peter is talking about suffering. He tells us not to be surprised that we suffer, and not to be ashamed when we suffer. But then he goes one step further still when he tells us to ‘rejoice in our suffering’. What is he talking about? Well, there's an element of triumph in that word rejoice, and we must look for our own mini triumphs when times are hard. As one of the hymn writers says, we must ‘Triumph through our sorrows’.

I well remember years ago trying to feed five of us on very meagre resources in what were for us as a family very lean and uncertain times. I would often scour the nearly empty cupboard and fridge thinking ‘What have I got left?’ and ‘What on earth can I make out of that?’ It's amazing what you can make out of not very much. One thing that suffering always manages to do is this. It disturbs. Suffering of any kind disturbs all that is familiar and routine in our lives. But think on, because that disturbance itself can be very rich soil. Disturbance can break open rich seams of possibilities you never thought possible. Suffering can offer you perspective and insight, and a good peppering of wisdom to go with it. These are treasures well worth having.

I have three tips for the week:

1. Try to see your suffering as a diversion instead of a road block. Remember that diversions can take us to strange places and take a lot longer, but they are usually far more interesting.
2. In true wartime spirit do not waste your suffering. Mine it. Mine it for its riches, and in true St Peter spirit, be determined day by day to find those mini triumphs within it.

3. Much as I used to do with my empty kitchen cupboards, look your problems and hardships firmly in the face and ask yourself 'What have I got?' and 'What on earth am I going to make out of it all?'

And there will be something. There always is. And with St Peter behind you egging you on, God knows it will be good. Amen

Hymn: [Do not be afraid](#)

### *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 David Marshall](#)

### *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*

O God the King of glory,  
you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ  
with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:  
we beseech you, leave us not comfortless,  
but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us  
and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen

**Hymn:** [Guide me, O thou great Redeemer](#)

*Final Prayer*

Eternal God, giver of love and power,  
your Son Jesus Christ has sent us into all the world  
to preach the gospel of his kingdom:  
confirm us in this mission,  
and help us to live the good news we proclaim;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen

*The Blessing - [A Blessing for our nation – click here](#)*

The Lord bless you  
And keep you  
Make His face shine upon you  
And be gracious to you  
The Lord turn His  
Face toward you  
And give you peace

May His favour be upon you  
And a thousand generations  
And your family and your children  
And their children, and their children

May His presence go before you  
And behind you, and beside you  
All around you, and within you  
He is with you, He is with you

In the morning, in the evening  
In your coming, and your going  
In your weeping, and rejoicing  
He is for you, He is for you

Amen, amen, 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.**