

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE, RASTRICK

Welcome to Morning Worship

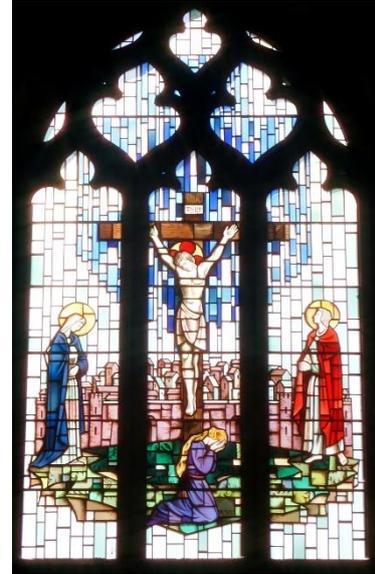
30th August 2020

*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: [Take my life](#)

The Word of God

We are in the season of Trinity, hence the green frontal and vestments. Green for growth! The Christian calendar starts off with Jesus from Advent to Ascension Day, then 10 days without Him until Whitsunday, when the scared disciples received strength from the Holy Spirit. The Sundays of Trinity set out the teachings of Jesus

in this first year of the three year cycle, Year A, we follow Jesus' teachings from Matthew's Gospel. Some weeks the lesson is not too hard to consider. Today it's a tough one – can we cope with challenge and suffering?

The challenge to Jeremiah, in about 600BC gives us a foretaste. He warns the Jews of his day of divine judgement and unpopularity and complains to God about his own situation. God promises to save and strengthen him. In the Gospel reading, which follows last Sunday's, in which Peter confessed his belief that Jesus was the Messiah, Jesus points out how He Himself will suffer and warns that Peter and the others will have to suffer as a result of their faith.

OT Reading: Jeremiah 15: 15-21 read by Julia Tum

Gospel: Matthew 16: 21-end read by Shirley Stow

[For the readings click here](#)

Reflection prepared by Cannon Michael Storey

If you go to Rome, one place on the tour is to go to the Mamertine Prison, which it is claimed is where Peter was imprisoned before he was executed. There is no door – prisoners were lowered in through a hole in the floor above. From here, he was taken and executed upside down – he didn't think it was right for him to be crucified in the same way as Jesus had been.

One of my favourite memories of my only trip to Rome was to go on a road out of Rome and see the place where it is said that Peter, running away, was stopped in his tracks by a Voice – in Latin “Quo Vadis?” Where are you going? He went back and so, as we know, he gave his life for Jesus.

This huge faith of Peter, I think, is given to us this morning, as one of the lessons from the teachings of Jesus – following Him brings challenge BUT God gives strength to those who do follow His teachings.

Let's look at Jeremiah's problems.

600 BC was a tough time if you were a Jew. The neighbouring country was Babylon – Iraq in modern language. We don't have to spend much time in looking at Middle Eastern history before we know it has always been an area of squabbles, disputes over bits of land, trying to be top dog and, often, open war. Jeremiah's time was, if you like, similar to today.

Among his problems, one was that that he had been warning the Jews to live out their faith, so that God would be on their side if Babylon did attack. Amongst other things, they had been revellers, while he himself kept true to his faith. V18: Why is my pain unending? He asks God. He is called to repent, to be God's spokesman. God says in V19: If you repent, I will restore you. v20 the Jews will “fight against you but will not overcome you” V21 God will save him from the hand of the wicked.

If we read further into Jeremiah, we would read that, in fact Babylon did over run Israel; because, as Jeremiah saw it, they had failed to keep the faith. He, personally, in our verses this morning, was strengthened in his time of need.

Let's have a look at Peter's situation next. Last week we had heard how Jesus had praised Simon, son of John, because he had recognised Jesus as Messiah. Because of this, Jesus had said to him, "I tell you, that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church."

While this morning's verses follow last week's, the disciples and Jesus have moved on to somewhere else. Jesus begins to warn them of His future – not rosy, we might say.

v21 "He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and on the third day raised to life."

Peter, as I guess we might have been, didn't like to accept that. If Jesus was the Messiah, the one to clear out the Romans, what was Jesus saying?

Jesus knew that He had to suffer. He couldn't die and rise again and so give Hope to the world, unless he suffered publicly and was crucified.

Jesus went on to tell the disciples that theirs was the same calling...suffering for the cause of truth, peace and love. For following this path in life, they would be rewarded. I wonder how we would have reacted, had we been one of the disciples, Peter even??

Likewise, going back to Jeremiah, how would we have reacted, when the Jews, who were supposed to follow the lead of a prophet, didn't?

Christianity is often offered to people because of the promise of a Life to Come, a feeling of peace, strength and healing. Of course, this is true BUT, it appears to me, and I guess to everyone in church this morning, doing right, following Jesus, does bring an element –sometimes a huge one of suffering.

This is the challenge; I think from this morning's readings – from Jeremiah and Matthew's writings.

We shall all have our own ways of coping with suffering and be aware that it is something which everyone faces.

I try to take strength from Peter. I spent the first 37 years of my life being in the congregation, choir and running a Boys' Club at St Peter's Knowl. So, I heard many sermons on Peter. When the church closed, I went to the site and picked up two bits of blue-painted wood, which had been part of a window frame. I keep them as a cross (show it) and know where I know it is...it reminds me of Peter and helps me to cope when suffering comes along.

Perhaps we can all find something which helps us? Perhaps we already have that something?

May God give all of us the courage and strength we need to live for Jesus this week.
AMEN

Hymn: [Just as I am](#)

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 Jane Hearson [Click Here](#)

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

Almighty and everlasting God,
you are always more ready to hear than we to pray
and to give more than either we desire or deserve:
pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy,
forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid
and giving us those good things
which we are not worthy to ask
but through the merits and mediation
of 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: [Guide me, O thou great Redeemer](#)

Final Prayer

God of constant mercy,
who sent your Son to save us:
remind us of your goodness,
increase your grace within us,
that our thankfulness may grow,
through 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.**

[Carillon: Louis Vierne](#)

Played on the Conacher organ, St John the Divine, Rastrick
by Gordon Balmforth for the congregation during lockdown