



Morning Prayer

Fourth Sunday of Easter

3rd May 2020

An Order for Morning Prayer on Sunday

3rd May 2020

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Hymn

The King of love my shepherd is,
whose goodness faileth never.
I nothing lack if I am his,
and he is mine forever.

Where streams of living water flow,
my ransomed soul he leadeth;
and where the verdant pastures grow,
with food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish, oft I strayed,
but yet in love he sought me;
and on his shoulder gently laid,
and home, rejoicing, brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill,
with thee, dear Lord, beside me;
thy rod and staff my comfort still,
thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spreadst a table in my sight;
thy unction grace bestoweth;
and oh, what transport of delight
from thy pure chalice floweth!

And so through all the length of days,
thy goodness faileth never;
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
within thy house forever.



Preparation

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you
and also with you.

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.

Prayers of Penitence

Christ our passover lamb has been sacrificed for us.
Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all malice and evil
and confessing our sins with a sincere and true heart.

cf 1 Corinthians 5.7,8

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.

May the Father of all mercies
cleans us from our sins,
and restore us in his image
to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Blessed is the Lord,
for he has heard the voice of our prayer;

Therefore shall our hearts dance for joy
and in our song will we praise our God.

Blessed are you, Lord our God,
creator and redeemer of all;
to you be glory and praise for ever.
From the waters of chaos you drew forth the world.
and in your great love fashioned us in your image.
Now, through the deep waters of death,
you have brought your people to new birth
by raising your Son to life in triumph.
May Christ your light ever dawn in our hearts
as we offer you our sacrifice of thanks and praise.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:
Blessed be God for ever.

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;
let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept.

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
so may the light of your presence, O God,
set our hearts on fire with love for you;
now and for ever.

Amen.

¶ The Word of God

Psalmody

Psalm 23

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd;
therefore can I lack nothing.
- 2 **He makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.**

- 3 He shall refresh my soul
and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
- 4 **Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**
- 5 You spread a table before me
in the presence of those who trouble me;
you have anointed my head with oil
and my cup shall be full.
- 6 **Surely goodness and loving mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever**
- Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now:
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

First Reading

Acts 2.42-47

Many were baptised and were added to the community. ⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

⁴³Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. ⁴⁴All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.

⁴⁶Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The reading may be followed by a time of silence.

Old Testament Canticle

The Song of Moses and Miriam

Exodus 15.1b-3,6,10,13,17

- 1 I will sing to the Lord, who has triumphed gloriously,
the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.
- 2 **The Lord is my strength and my song
and has become my salvation.**
- 3 This is my God whom I will praise
the God of my forebears whom I will exalt.
- 4 **The Lord is a warrior,
the Lord is his name.**
- 5 Your right hand, O Lord, is glorious in power:
your right hand, O Lord, shatters the enemy.
- 6 **At the blast of your nostrils, the sea covered them;
they sank as lead in the mighty waters.**
- 7 In your unfailing love, O Lord,
you lead the people whom you have redeemed.
- 8 **And by your invincible strength
you will guide them to your holy dwelling.**
- 9 You will bring them in and plant them, O Lord,
in the sanctuary which your hands have established.

Exodus 15.1b-3,6,10,13,17

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Second Reading

John 10.1-10

Jesus said to the Pharisees: ¹‘Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. ²The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.’ ⁶Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁷So again Jesus said to them, ‘Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.’

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The reading may be followed by a time of silence.

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead

And Christ shall give you light.

You have died and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead.

Set your minds on things that are above,

not on things that are on the earth.

And Christ shall give you light.

When Christ our life appears you will appear with him in glory.

**Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead,
and Christ shall give you light.**

Gospel Canticle

Benedictus

- 1 Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel,
who has come to his people and set them free.
- 2 **He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour,
born of the house of his servant David.**
- 3 Through his holy prophets God promised of old
to save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all that hate us,
- 4 **To show mercy to our ancestors,
and to remember his holy covenant.**
- 5 This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham:
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
- 6 **Free to worship him without fear,
holy and righteous in his sight
all the days of our life.**
- 7 And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
- 8 **To give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of all their sins.**
- 9 In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
- 10 **To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow
of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.**

Luke 1.68-79

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Sermon (There is a reflection at the end of this booklet)

Hymn

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green; he leadeth me
The quiet waters by.

My soul he doth restore again,
And me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness,
E'en for his own name's sake.

Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear no ill:
For thou art with me, and thy rod
And staff me comfort still.

My table thou hast furnished
In presence of my foes;
My head thou dost with oil anoint
And my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me;
And in God's house for evermore
My dwelling-place shall be.

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

Let us pray to the Lord,
who is our refuge and stronghold.

For the health and well-being of our nation,
that all who are fearful and anxious
may be at peace and free from worry:
At this time of need
We wait, we watch, we hope, we pray.

For the isolated and housebound,
that we may be alert to their needs
and care for them in their vulnerability:
At this time of need
We wait, we watch, we hope, we pray.

For our homes and families,
our schools and young people,
and all in any kind of need or distress:
At this time of need
We wait, we watch, we hope, we pray.

For all those of our congregation worshipping at this time,
that we may be supported by our common prayer
and soon return to worshipping together:

At this time of need

We wait, we watch, we hope, we pray.

For a blessing on our local community,
that our neighbourhoods may be places of trust and friendship,
where all are known and cared for:

At this time of need

We wait, we watch, we hope, we pray.

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,
to the mercy and protection of God.

Merciful Father,

**accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The Collect is said.

Almighty God,
whose Son Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life:
raise us, who trust in him,
from the death of sin to the life of righteousness,
that we may seek those things which are above,
where he reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer is said

**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 Conclusion

The Blessing

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,
and keep us in eternal life.

Amen.

Hymn

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;
as thou hast been thou forever wilt be.

Great is thy faithfulness!

Great is thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning new mercies I see:
all I have needed thy hand hath provided--

Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love. [Refrain]

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! [Refrain]

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4th Sunday of Easter

By Bridget Nichols

JESUS's solemn warning that anyone who did not enter the sheepfold by the legitimate route was a thief or a bandit (John 10.1) was intended to make a particular constituency very uncomfortable.

In the sequence of John's Gospel, he had just had another abrasive exchange with the Pharisees, after the healing of a man born blind (John 9). The Pharisees contended that Jesus was a sinner (John 9.24); the man argued that only by the power of God could the miracle he had experienced have taken place (John 10.32-33).

Jesus turns the wrangling over sight and blindness into a metaphor for the paradox of his ministry: he gives sight to those who cannot see, while those who think they see clearly are blind to the signs of the Kingdom of God (John 9.39). What he is attacking is the blinkered arrogance that protests loyalty to Moses (John 9.28), yet forgets that Moses gave them the law touched by direct encounter with divine glory and power (Exodus 19.9-20).

The next chapter explores a different family of metaphors, well-established in the Psalms and in the prophetic tradition: sheep, sheepfolds, shepherds (for example, Psalms 23, 79, and 80; Ezekiel 34; Isaiah 53.6). The obvious failure of the audience to recognise themselves in what is being said suggests that they deserve the earlier accusation. Their sinful behaviour cannot be excused, when they have been given all the resources to see (John 9.41).

It is admittedly difficult to determine, from Jesus's opening description of the workings of a well-ordered flock, securely housed and cared for by an honest shepherd, exactly where he locates himself. Is he the shepherd, or the gatekeeper? Our sympathies might rest briefly with those who did not understand this complicated figure of speech (John 10.1-6).

What is unexpected is his explicit identification with the gate of the sheepfold (John 10.7). Matthew and Luke had spoken of the narrow gate and difficult way leading to life, but they had not actually presented Jesus as the way, or the gate (Matthew 7.13-14, Luke 13.23-24).

Gates are not interesting in their own right; their significance comes from the places to which they give entrance, and from the kinds of people they admit and exclude. On the other side of this gate is salvation, and Jesus has harsh criticism to offer those who assume authority without proper care of their people, or who sneak in among them like thieves (John 10.8-10).

The words are a direct hit, Brendan Byrne suggests, on “rulers such as Herod, high priests, and other religious figures” who have, as the Gospel-writer sees it, “plundered and ravaged the community of Israel” (Life Abounding, Liturgical Press, 2014). No wonder these verses were taken up by a later critic of the clergy and church government of his day, the poet John Milton.

Lamenting a friend and fellow student who died in a shipwreck in 1637, before he could take Holy Orders, Milton contrasted him with those who “for their bellies’ sake Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold!” Their interest was not in pastoral ministry, and “the hungry sheep look up and are not fed” (*Lycidas* ll.114-115, 125).

Later, in *Paradise Lost* (1667), he would describe Satan seeking a way into Eden which avoided passing through the garden’s single gate. He likened the devil to “a prowling wolf”, waiting his chance to leap into the fold when the sheep were safely penned for the night, or to a thief climbing through a window. The description ends devastatingly:

So clomb this first grand thief
into God’s fold;
So since into his church lewd
hirelings climb
(*Paradise Lost*, IV.183-194)

The Church, for its part, has held up the shepherd imagery of John 1 as the highest model for its clergy, and has written it into its rites of ordination. The Book of Common Prayer Ordinal sternly warns new bishops, as they receive the Bible, to “be to the flock of Christ a shepherd, not a wolf; feed them, devour them not.”