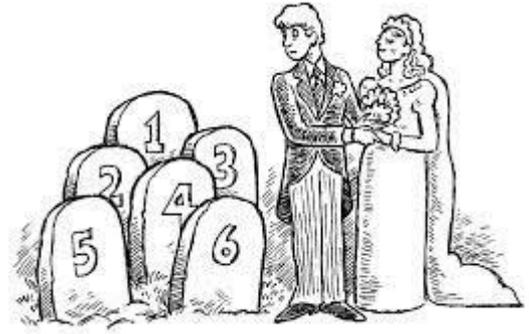


The Third Sunday before Advent

6th November 2022



In the name of the + Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Prayer of Preparation

God of glory,
touch our lips with the fire of your Spirit,
that we with all creation
may rejoice to sing your praise;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

HYMN

1 New every morning is the love
our waking and uprising prove;
through sleep and darkness safely brought,
restored to life and power and thought.

2 New mercies, each returning day,
hover around us while we pray;
new perils past, new sins forgiven,
new thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.

3 If on our daily course our mind
be set to hallow all we find,
new treasures still, of countless price,
God will provide for sacrifice.

4 The trivial round, the common task,
will furnish all we need to ask,
room to deny ourselves, a road
to bring us daily nearer God.

5 Only, O Lord, in thy dear love
fit us for perfect rest above;
and help us, this and every day,
to live more nearly as we pray.

Invitation to Confession

Seek the Lord while he may be found,
call upon him while he is near.
Let the wicked abandon their ways
and the unrighteous their thoughts.
Turn back to the Lord, who will have mercy;
to our God who will richly pardon cf Isaiah 55

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 us to the joy of your salvation,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. cf Psalm 51
Amen.

Absolution

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

The Collect

God, the giver of life,
whose Holy Spirit wells up within your Church:
by the Spirit's gifts equip us to live the gospel of Christ
and make us eager to do your will,
that we may share with the whole creation
the joys of eternal life;
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.

A Reading from The Old Testament

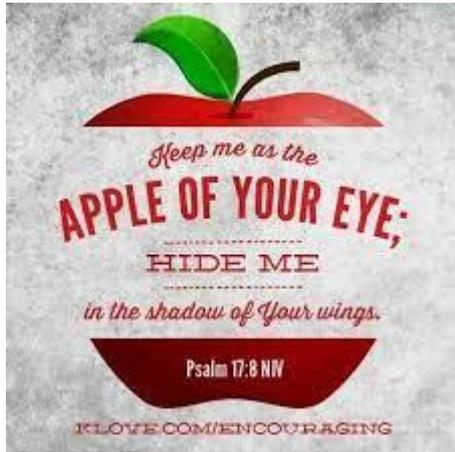
Job 19 23-27a

23 'O that my words were written down!
O that they were inscribed in a book!
24 O that with an iron pen and with lead
they were engraved on a rock for ever!
25 For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and that at the last he will stand upon the earth;
26 and after my skin has been thus destroyed,
then in my flesh I shall see God,
27 whom I shall see on my side,
and my eyes shall behold, and not another.
This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

The psalm Psalm 17

1 Hear a just cause, O Lord; attend to my cry;
give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit.
2 From you let my vindication come;
let your eyes see the right.
3 If you try my heart, if you visit me by night,
if you test me, you will find no wickedness in me;
my mouth does not transgress.
4 As for what others do, by the word of your lips
I have avoided the ways of the violent.
5 My steps have held fast to your paths;
my feet have not slipped.
6 I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God;
incline your ear to me, hear my words.
7 Wondrously show your steadfast love,



O saviour of those who seek refuge
from their adversaries at your right hand.

8 Guard me as the apple of the eye;
hide me in the shadow of your wings,
9 from the wicked who despoil me,
my deadly enemies who surround me.

Reading from The New Testament

2 Thessalonians 1-5, 13-end

2 As to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we beg you, brothers and sisters, 2 not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as though from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord is already here. 3 Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come unless the rebellion comes first and the lawless one is revealed, the one destined for destruction. 4 He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God. 5 Do you not remember that I told you these things when I was still with you? 6 And you know what is now restraining him, so that he may be revealed when his time comes. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work, but only until the one who now restrains it is removed. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will destroy with the breath of his mouth, annihilating him by the manifestation of his coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is apparent in the working of Satan, who uses all power, signs, lying wonders, 10 and every kind of wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11 For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion, leading them to believe what is false, 12 so that all who have not believed the truth but took pleasure in unrighteousness will be condemned.

13 But we must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth. 14 For this purpose he called you through our proclamation of the good news, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by our letter.

16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, 17 comfort your hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

HYMN

Blest are the pure in heart,
for they shall see our God;
the secret of the Lord is theirs,
their soul is Christ's abode.

Still to the lowly soul
he doth himself impart
and for his dwelling and his throne
chooseth the pure in heart.

The Lord who left the heavens
our life and peace to bring,
to dwell in lowliness with men,
their pattern and their king

Lord, we thy presence seek;
may ours this blessing be:
give us a pure and lowly heart,
a temple meet for thee.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

My sheep hear my voice, says the Lord
I know them, and they follow me

Alleluia.

The Gospel

The holy Gospel is written in the 20th Chapter of the Gospel according to Luke beginning at the 27th verse.

Glory be to thee, O Lord

27 Some Sadducees, those who say there is no resurrection, came to him 28 and asked him a question, 'Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, leaving a wife but no children, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother. 29 Now there were seven brothers; the first married, and died childless; 30 then the second 31 and the third married her, and so in the same way all seven died childless. 32 Finally the woman also died. 33 In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had married her.'

34 Jesus said to them, 'Those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage; 35 but those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. 36 Indeed they cannot die any more, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection. 37 And the fact that the dead are raised Moses himself showed, in the story about the bush, where he speaks of the Lord as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. 38 Now he is God not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all of them are alive. Lapidary

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise be to thee, O Christ

Reflection

The gospel reading is one of several questions opponents of Jesus set up to trip him in his reply, to discredit him publicly. The religious authorities sent spies pretending to be just ordinary people in order *that 'they may take hold of his words so that they might deliver him into the power and authority of the governor'*. You will remember the question about paying taxes to Caesar. Each time Jesus's reply walks right through their trap.

Now it is the turn of the Sadducees who were an academic, philosophical sect who worked with questions and ideas. Significantly they had no belief in life after death, so why ask about the resurrection as if they were really interested? They invent a question so complex and improbable that it does not really warrant a serious answer.

It sounds like a philosophical thought experiment which has no basis in reality but can become a form of debating topics of no practical value, or questions whose answers hold no intellectual consequence, it is just a debating exercise.

Some people, when an opportunity to discuss things 'spiritual' let alone Christian, arises, will bring up unanswerable questions about the nature of evil, whether anything be regarded as true etc. The inexplicable is thereby a 'mystery' for which there is, and never will be an answer. It is possible to get so absorbed with the questions that one becomes blind to the majestic reality of God that is clear to a child or a person of faith. Mystery does not mean the unknowable rather an acknowledgement of that which is evident and lived with – we can live with mystery. Can we fully explain love for instance, beauty or the experience of wonder?

Jesus uses Moses to make the point. For the people of Israel, the incident of Moses and the burning bush is one of the most significant stories of the revelation of the divine. It also shows to the Sadducees that their own scripture attests to the resurrection. When God reveals the Divine Name it includes the description of one who is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – all long dead but alive in God. *'For ..God is not a God the dead, but of the*

living for all live unto him'. Moses did not enter into a philosophical discussion rather he covers his face as a sign of extreme reverence.

Jesus's answer to the Sadducees is to shift the earthbound question of relationships, to the resurrection life beyond death where there is no marriage or death but rather we are equally children of God *'equal unto the angels'*. Which gives us a clue to a state of being that is beyond this time and space. Especially relevant to this week when we have commemorated the faithful departed. Luke records Jesus's response to the Sadducees as describing those who are considered worthy of a place in the resurrection from the dead. This worthiness is characterised by a capacity for worship.

Worship can be rephrased as worth-ship – what do we really value. A trip to the local refuse collection point is salutary – piles of things that people once strived to possess and had transient value. A lot of what we value is quite 'light weight'. That is not a 'put down' but step back to consider just how much we need. What really holds value.

At the end of the day, it probably won't be things, rather it will be expressions of faith and truth so forged by life that, like Job, we would seek to chisel the words into stone as a testimony to our life. In a world where we tweet, blog and email almost mindlessly, if we could only leave 20-30 words what would they be?

The Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

We pray for the coming of God's kingdom.

You sent your Son to bring good news to the poor,
sight to the blind,
freedom to captives
and salvation to your people:
anoint us with your Spirit;
rouse us to work in his name.
Father, by your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us to bring help to the poor in many different ways
to be a friend, to be generous with our time and money
and to graciously accept those who meet our poverty.
Help us to speak and be freedom to the oppressed,
to include and accept the many who are different to us
for we are all one before you.
Father, by your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us to tell the world
the good news of your healing love.
enable us by your spirit to be bold in our witness
gracious in our words and deeds.
Father, by your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us to those who mourn,
as we would welcome those who comfort us
Help us each to bring joy and gladness instead of grief.
Father, by your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Send us to proclaim that the time is here
for you to save your people.
That the time is now always for us to be open to your love.
Father, by your Spirit
bring in your kingdom.

Lord of the Church,
hear our prayer,
and make us one in mind and heart
to serve you in Christ our Lord. Amen.

These and all the silent prayers of our hearts we offer to you.
Merciful father, accept these prayers for the sake of your son, Jesus Christ
our lord. 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.

God our Father,
whose Son, the light unfailing,
has come from heaven to deliver the world
from the darkness of ignorance:
let these holy mysteries open the eyes of our understanding
that we may know the way of life,
and walk in it without stumbling;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

We pray for God's blessing

The peace of God,
which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
All Amen.

HYMN

At the name of Jesus
Every knee shall bow,
Every tongue confess him
King of glory now;
'Tis the Father's pleasure
We should call him Lord,
Who from the beginning
Was the mighty Word.

Humbled for a season,
To receive a name
From the lips of sinners
Unto whom he came,
Faithfully he bore it
Spotless to the last,
Brought it back victorious
When from death he passed:

In your hearts enthrone him;
There let him subdue
All that is not holy,
All that is not true:
He is God the Saviour,
He is Christ the Lord,
Ever to be worshipped,
Trusted, and adored.

At his voice creation
Sprang at once to sight,
All the angel faces,
All the hosts of light,
Thrones and dominations,
Stars upon their way,
All the heavenly orders,
In their great array.

Bore it up triumphant
With its human light,
Through all ranks of creatures,
To the central height,
To the throne of Godhead,
To the Father's breast;
Filled it with the glory
Of that perfect rest.

Brothers, this Lord Jesus
Shall return again,
With the Father's glory,
With his angel train;
For all wreaths of empire
Meet upon his brow,
And our hearts confess him
King of glory now.

