



The Second Sunday of Lent 1st March 2026

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

HYMN

1 Soldiers of Christ, arise,
and put your armour on,
strong in the strength which God supplies
thro' his eternal Son.

Leave no unguarded place,
no weakness of the soul;
take every virtue, every grace,
and fortify the whole.

Strong in the Lord of hosts,
and in his mighty power,
who in the strength of Jesus trusts
is more than conqueror.

3 To keep your armour bright,
attend with constant care;
still walking in your Captain's sight,
and watching unto prayer.

2 Stand then in his great might,
with all his strength endued;
but take, to arm you for the fight,
the panoply of God.

From strength to strength go on;
wrestle and fight and pray;
tread all the powers of darkness down,
and win the well-fought day.

Introduction to confession

Let us prepare ourselves to receive God's Word.

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart God will not despise.
Let us come to the Lord, who is full of compassion,
and acknowledge our transgressions in penitence and faith.

We confess to you our selfishness and lack of love:
fill us with your Spirit.
Lord, have mercy.
We confess to you our fear and failure in sharing our faith:
fill us with your Spirit.
Christ, have mercy.
We confess to you our stubbornness and lack of trust:
fill us with your Spirit.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Absolution

The Lord enrich you with his grace,
and nourish you with his blessing;
the Lord defend you in trouble and
keep you from all evil
the Lord accept your prayers

and absolve you from your offences, +
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

The Lent Collect

Almighty and everlasting God,
you hate nothing that you have made
and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent:
create and make in us new and contrite hearts
that we, worthily lamenting our sins
and acknowledging our wretchedness,
may receive from you, the God of all mercy,
perfect remission and forgiveness;
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

The Collect for this Sunday

Almighty God,
you show to those who are in error the light of your truth,
that they may return to the way of righteousness:
grant to all those who are admitted
into the fellowship of Christ's religion,
that they may reject those things
that are contrary to their profession,
and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same;
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen

A Reading from The Old Testament
Genesis 12 1-4a

The Call of Abram

12 The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.

2 "I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;

I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.

3 I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."

4 So Abram went, as the Lord had told him.

This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God



¹ I lift up my eyes to the mountains—
where does my help come from?
² My help comes from the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth.
³ He will not let your foot slip—
he who watches over you will not slumber;
⁴ indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
⁵ The LORD watches over you—
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;
⁶ the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.

⁷ The LORD will keep you from all harm—
he will watch over your life;
⁸ the LORD will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore.

A reading from the New Testament
Romans 4 1-5, 13-17

4 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? 2 If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. 3 What does Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

4 Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. 5 However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness

13 It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. 14 For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, 15 because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

16 Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. 17 As it is written: “I have made you a father of many nations.” He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.

This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

HYMN

As pants the hart for cooling streams
when heated in the chase,
so longs my soul, O God, for thee,
and thy refreshing grace.

For thee, my God, the living God,
my thirsty soul doth pine:
O when shall I behold thy face,
thou majesty divine?

Why restless, why cast down, my soul?
hope still, and thou shalt sing
the praise of him who is thy God,
thy health's eternal spring.

To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
the God whom we adore,
be glory as it was, is now,
and shall be evermore

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.
The Lord is a great God, O that today you would listen to his voice.
Harden not your hearts.
Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John
All Glory be to thee O Lord

3 Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. 2 He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”

3 Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”

4 “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”

5 Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”

9 “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked.

10 “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? 11 Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. 12 I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? 13 No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. 14 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.”

16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord
Praise to thee, O Christ

Reflection

Of all the conversations in the Bible this, and the one with the woman at the well, has to be the most well-known. Most often this text is used in an evangelistic setting to call people to a decision in regard to Jesus. The term ‘born again’ needs to be rescued from its rather pejorative use. Jesus used this term, so we need to pay it attention. More correctly translated as in KJV ‘born from above’.

A careful reading of the texts suggests it is a teaching about the Holy Spirit. Nicodemus was not being encouraged to believe in Jesus – he already believed. “Teacher, we know....”. It is incorrect from this text to say “Believe in Jesus and you will be born again”, I don’t think this is what Jesus is saying – alternative views welcomed!

What was Nicodemus to do? No one gives birth to themselves. We can understand his puzzlement. “How can someone be born when they are old?”

What is this 'born again' that Jesus is talking about? It is a birth brought about by the Spirit of God, a spiritual action whereby we are then able to 'see' and 'enter' the kingdom of heaven. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit " The natural life we have from our parents cannot see, in the sense of understand, the things of the Kingdom of God. This requires a spiritual regeneration.

Jesus always teaches from the natural to the spiritual. He takes the example of the wind. In scripture the Spirit of God has at its root the idea of breath or wind. In the act of creation, the 'breath/wind' of God moved over the waters bringing creation into being. Nicodemus would be familiar with these metaphors for God's Spirit. "You cannot see the wind", says Jesus, but you can see its effects, feels its refreshing breeze, be awed by its power. Jesus is talking about the effects of the new birth – it manifests itself in our lives. Now we see and understand in a way we did not before.

The Holy Spirit is at work in our lives long before we recognise that draw towards God. Long before we recognise it, long before we cooperate. We are 'pregnant' with the life of God. There may be a gradual 'birth' or one to which you can give a date; on this day I believed and received Jesus into my life. Like natural birth, there is a period of gestation.

Like natural birth where the child emerges from the darkness of the womb into the light of the world, so spiritually do we. 'I once was blind but now I see...'. We are 'transferred', in St Paul's terminology, from one state to another.

You may not have made a 'decision' to be a Christian, but you would not be reading this were the Holy Spirit not already present in your life. We are drawn by the great love God has for us, drawn to respond. To come to that point where 'birth' happens and now we 'see'. "You cannot see, you cannot enter..." This is not Jesus trying to put up barriers but showing us the process. He is speaking of 'heavenly things'. It is a help in understanding a process. Jesus is our 'midwife' explaining another birth. Just in natural birth there is a 'quickening' – a recognition of life within, just so with the Spirit. Just as with natural birth we need to co-operate with the process.

How do we know? Just as the wind blows where it will, and we cannot see the wind. So we cannot see the working of the Holy Spirit within us, but we will see 'see' the effects. We know ourselves changed, there is a hunger for the things of God, scripture becomes clearer to us as the Holy Spirit is our teacher. We begin to know ourselves loved, forgiven, healed and in a new peace.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

The Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth;
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty.
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Intercessions

We pray to the Lord for courage to give up other things
and to give ourselves to him this Lent.

Give your Church the courage
to give up her preoccupation with herself
and to give more time to your mission in the world.
We pray for our Parishes and their congregations
May the healing life flowing from the side of Jesus
bring forgiveness to your people
and help us to face the cost of proclaiming salvation.
Lord, meet us in the silence,
give us strength and hear our prayer.

Give your world the courage
to give up war, bitterness and hatred,
and to seek peace.
We pray for places where continual warfare and violence
makes any normality impossible and limits potential and life...
May the shoulders of the risen Jesus,
once scourged by soldiers,
bear the burden of political and military conflict in our world.
Lord, meet us in the silence,
give us strength and hear our prayer.

Give us the courage to give up quarrels, strife and jealousy
in our families, neighbourhoods and communities.
We pray for our own lives – search our hearts and help us heal.
May the presence of the risen Jesus,
his body once broken and now made whole,
bring peace and direction as we live with one another.
Lord, meet us in the silence,
give us strength and hear our prayer.

Give us the courage
to give up our selfishness as we live for others,
and to give time, care and comfort to the sick.
We pray for those known to us
and those who have asked the prayers of the Church ...
May the wounded hands of Jesus bring his healing touch,
and the light of his presence fill their rooms.
Lord, meet us in the silence,
give us strength and hear our prayer.

Give us the courage to give up our fear of death
and to rejoice with those who have died in faith.
Especially we hold those who have died recently
and any whose anniversary of death is at this time...
May the feet of the risen Lord Jesus, once nailed to the cross,
walk alongside the dying and bereaved in their agony,
and walk with us and all your Church
through death to the gate of glory.
Lord, meet us in the silence,
give us strength and hear our prayer,
here and in eternity. Amen.

We pray for our Lent observance:

God our Father,
in your love and goodness
you have taught us to come close to you in penitence
with prayer, fasting and generosity;
accept our Lenten discipline,
and when we fall by our weakness,
raise us up by your unfailing mercy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your
Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Lord bless us and keep us, make his face shine upon us, lift up the light of his countenance and grant us peace.

HYMN

1 Stand up, stand up for Jesus
ye soldiers of the cross;
lift high his royal banner,
it must not suffer loss.
From victory unto victory
his army he shall lead
till every foe is vanquished
and Christ is Lord indeed.

2 Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
the trumpet call obey;
forth to the mighty conflict
in this his glorious day.
Ye that are men now serve him
against unnumbered foes;
let courage rise with danger
and strength to strength oppose.

3 Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
stand in his strength alone;
the arm of flesh will fail you,
ye dare not trust your own.
Put on the gospel armour,
each piece put on with prayer;
where duty calls or danger,
be never wanting there.

4 Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
the strife will not be long;
this day the noise of battle,
the next, the victor's song.
To him that overcometh
a crown of life shall be;
he with the King of glory
shall reign eternally.