

PARISH CHURCH OF ST MARY, PULBOROUGH



THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT (Mothering Sunday)

22nd March, 2020

These are anxious times and to protect ourselves and others we may have to spend time at home that keeps us away from worship and other activities. We shall endeavour to keep our Sunday worship on the website as a reflective Service for Worship at Home

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

Prayer of Preparation

Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open, all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy
Spirit, that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

We come from scattered lives to meet with God. We are never
alone, nor do we pray alone. We join with others in this community
and around the world.

Let us recognise God's presence with us now.

Keep a short silence

Let us pray

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful people, and kindle in
us the fire of your love.

The grace of God has dawned upon the world with healing for all.

Let us come to him, in sorrow for our sins, seeking healing and
salvation.

Keep a short silence

Confession

God be gracious to us and bless us,
And make your face shine upon us:
Lord have mercy.

May your ways be known on the earth,
Your saving power among the nations:
Christ have mercy.

You Lord, have made known your salvation,
And reveal your justice in the sight of the nations:
Lord have mercy.

Absolution:

May the Father forgive us by the death of the Son, and strengthen us to live in the power of the Spirit all our days. Amen.

The Collect for the Day

Merciful Lord,
absolve your people from their offences,
that through your bountiful goodness
we may all be delivered from the chains of those sins
which by our frailty we have committed;
grant this, heavenly Father,
for Jesus Christ's sake, our blessed Lord and Saviour,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Special Collect for Mothering Sunday

God of compassion,
whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary,
shared the life of a home in Nazareth,
and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself:
strengthen us in our daily living
that in joy and in sorrow
we may know the power of your presence
to bind together and to heal;
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 LITURGY OF THE WORD

The First Reading: 1 Samuel 16. 1-13

The LORD said to Samuel, 'How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.' Samuel said, 'How can I go? If Saul hears of it, he will kill me.' And the LORD said, 'Take a heifer with you, and say, "I have come to sacrifice to the LORD." Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; and you shall anoint for me the one whom I name to you.' Samuel did what the LORD commanded, and came to Bethlehem.

The elders of the city came to meet him trembling, and said, 'Do you come peaceably?' He said, 'Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD; sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.' And he sanctified Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, 'Surely the LORD's anointed is now before the LORD.' But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.' Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, 'Neither has the LORD chosen this one.' Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, 'Neither has the LORD chosen this one.' Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, 'The LORD has not chosen any of these.' Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all your sons here?' And he said, 'There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.'

And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.' He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The LORD said, 'Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.' Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah.

The Psalm: 23

***R: The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not be in want.***

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters.

R

He revives my soul.
He guides me along right pathways
for his name's sake.
Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me. **R**

You spread a table before me
in the presence of those who trouble me;
you have anointed my head with oil;
and my cup is running over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
for ever. **R**

***R: The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not be in want.***

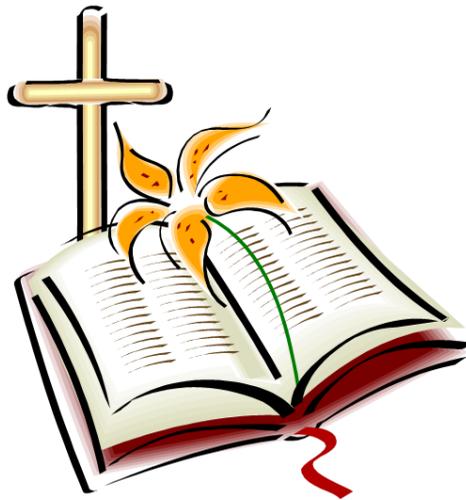
The Second Reading: Ephesians 5. 8-14

For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light— for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, 'Sleeper, awake!

Rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.'

Special Reading for Mothering Sunday Colossians 3: 12-17

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.



The Gospel Reading: John 9. 1-41

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world,

I am the light of the world.’ When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, saying to him, ‘Go, wash in the pool of Siloam’ (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, ‘Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?’ Some were saying, ‘It is he.’ Others were saying, ‘No, but it is someone like him.’ He kept saying, ‘I am the man.’ But they kept asking him, ‘Then how were your eyes opened?’ He answered, ‘The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, “Go to Siloam and wash.” Then I went and washed and received my sight.’ They said to him, ‘Where is he?’ He said, ‘I do not know.’

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, ‘He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.’ Some of the Pharisees said, ‘This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.’ But others said, ‘How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?’ And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, ‘What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.’ He said, ‘He is a prophet.’

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, ‘Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?’ His parents answered, ‘We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.’ His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, ‘He is of age; ask him.’

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, 'Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.' He answered, 'I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.' They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' He answered them, 'I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?' Then they reviled him, saying, 'You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.' The man answered, 'Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.' They answered him, 'You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?' And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?' He answered, 'And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.' Jesus said to him, 'You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.' He said, 'Lord, I believe.' And he worshipped him. Jesus said, 'I came into this world for judgement so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.' Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, 'Surely we are not blind, are we?' Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, "We see", your sin remains.

A Short reflection

As in last Sunday's gospel reading, we hear of an encounter with Jesus that was to change someone's life for ever. This Sunday it is a man born blind who is then able to see. This all happened so unexpectedly and those around this man sought to make sense of what had taken place and who was responsible.

As a nation we are experiencing a situation that has come about very quickly and to some extent, unexpectedly. We are reeling from the ever evolving effects of the spread of the coronavirus. We are seeing many people worried and anxious about their jobs and livelihoods as well as those desperate to avoid contamination. It brings home that truth that we just don't know what's around the corner. Life is truly full of surprises, which are sometimes far from what we desire or hope for. However, there are also those surprises that encourage us on; which lift our spirits and help us keep going.

Some of those who witnessed the giving of sight to the blind man put it down to sinister forces and failed to see God at work in Jesus' ministry. Others could not but see, that this act of compassion and mercy had the mark of the God of surprise; the one who is love. In these coming days and weeks may we be helped to see God at work among us in small and surprising ways, using us as channels of his love and goodness. When we see these things together, I hope we can then see a clearer way forward, and like the blind man in the gospel story, see things in a new light shining in the darkness.

Fr. Paul

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth;
And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten 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 sits at 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;
I believe in the holy catholic church, the communion of saints;
The forgiveness of sin;
The resurrection of the body;
And the life everlasting. Amen.



The Prayers of Intercession

Some or all of the following prayers may be used.

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord Jesus Christ,
you taught us to love our neighbour,
and to care for those in need
as if we were caring for you.
In this time of anxiety, give us strength
to comfort the fearful, to tend the sick,
and to assure the isolated
of our love, and your love,
for your name's sake. **Amen.**

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

For those who are ill

Merciful God,
we entrust to your tender care
those who are ill or in pain,
knowing that whenever danger threatens
your everlasting arms are there to hold them safe.
Comfort and heal them,
and restore them to health and strength;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

For hospital staff and medical researchers

Gracious God,
give skill, sympathy and resilience
to all who are caring for the sick,
and your wisdom to those searching for a cure.
Strengthen them with your Spirit,
that through their work many will be restored to health;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

From one who is ill or isolated

O God,
help me to trust you,
help me to know that you are with me,
help me to believe that nothing can separate me
from your love
revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

For the Christian community

We are not people of fear:
we are people of courage.
We are not people who protect our own safety:
we are people who protect our neighbours' safety.
We are not people of greed:
we are people of generosity.

We are your people God,
giving and loving,
wherever we are,
whatever it costs
For as long as it takes
wherever you call us.

Those who are in particular need: Tenu Elliott, Eleanor Jones,
Jack, Betty Miller and Archdeacon Fiona, Muriel and Robert Fooks

Those who are in need of continued prayer:
Ron Jones, Emmett, Ryan Nichols, Toni Hayes and Lara Dunstall

Pray to rest in peace: Ian Jenkinson and Jackie Smorthwaite,
Audrey Gray and John Fooks from the United Reformed Church

Anniversary of death: George Copeman, Valerie Millwood, Ray
Thomas, Pat Giles, Lallie Capstick, Lucienne Tanner

Those that suffer alone in: hospitals, hospices, care homes and
the like and those who are unable to or restricted in visiting them.

*Together with the other Churches in Pulborough, we pray for those
who live and work Lower Street (west of Sorting Office)
Skeyne Drive, Carpenters Meadow, Barnhouse Close. Barnhouse Lane
Arun Court and Allfreys Wharf*



An act of Spiritual Communion

(As we are unable to physically receive holy communion you might find it helpful to make this act of Spiritual communion)

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the sacrament of Holy Communion. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you. Since I cannot at this time receive You sacramentally, come at least Spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

The Grace

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore.
Amen.

A final thought.....

***Conversations will not be cancelled.
Relationships will not be cancelled.
Love will not be cancelled.
Songs will not be cancelled.
Reading will not be cancelled.
Self-care will not be cancelled.
Hope will not be cancelled.
May we lean into the good stuff that remains.***

(Jamie Tworkowski)

Our efforts must now go into being 'church' to each other and making sure our community is kept encouraged and supported. We have updated our website and each week we will post the Sunday Service so that we can continue to worship together even whilst apart. **www.stmaryspulborgh.org.uk**

Fr. Paul: 01798 875773
pulbpccrector@btinternet.com