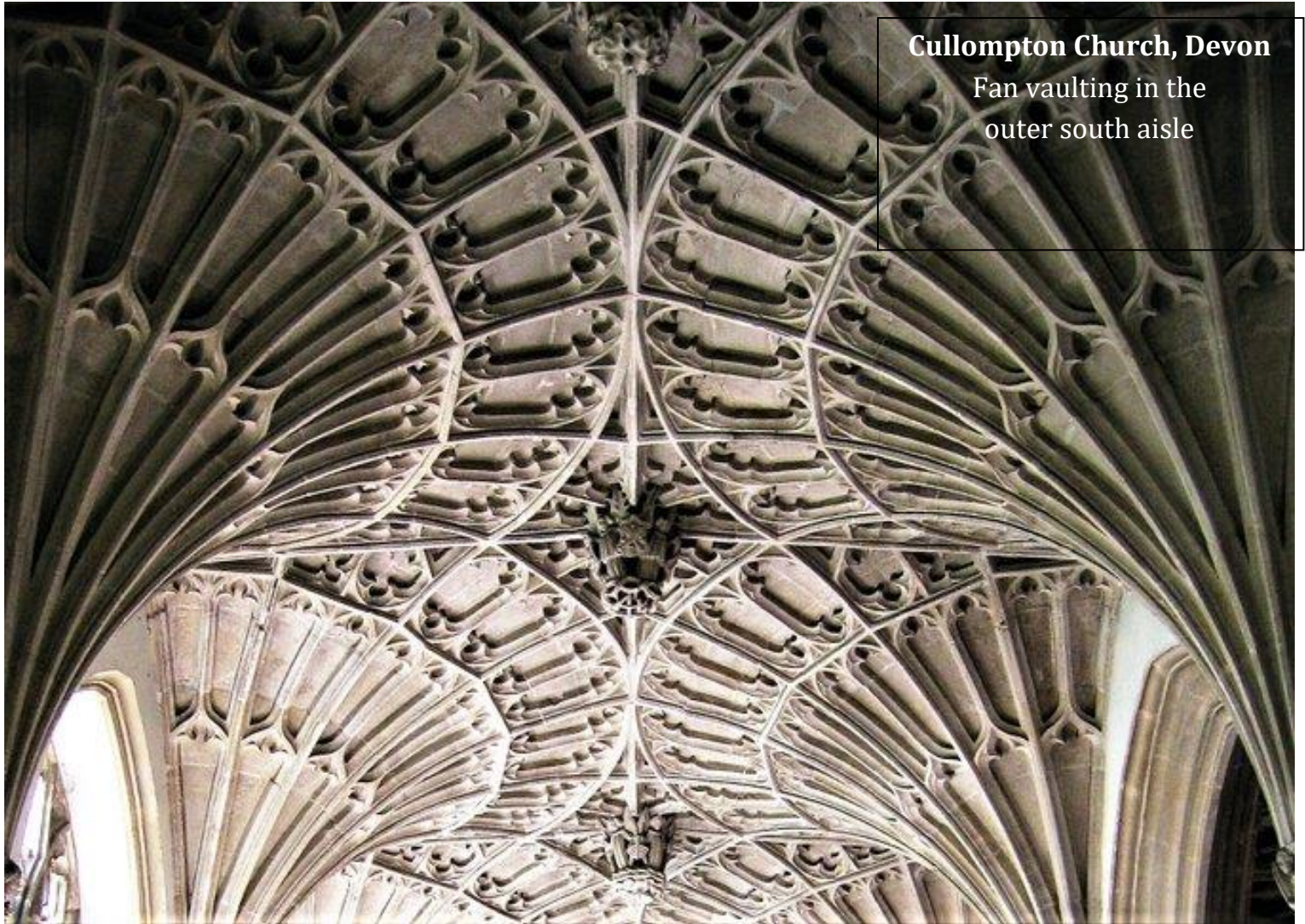


Sunday 6 March 2022

The First Sunday of Lent



Cullompton Church, Devon
Fan vaulting in the
outer south aisle

Sermon © Rosie Kingham.

Liturgy and prayers of intercession © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

- The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.
- The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.
- To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page, <http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 [In these days of Lenten journey](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)

The Welcome

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

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**All 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.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

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 confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

All **Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.**

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

It is usual to omit the Gloria during Lent.

The Collect for the First Sunday of Lent

Almighty God,
whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness,
and was tempted as we are, yet without sin:
give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit;
and, as you know our weakness,
so may we know your power to save;
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.

All **Amen.**

First reading

A reading from the Fifth Book of Moses called Deuteronomy

God said, 'When you have come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, "Today I declare to the Lord your God that I have come into the land that the Lord swore to our ancestors to give us."

'When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the Lord your God, you shall make this response before the Lord your God: "A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labour on us, we cried to the Lord, the God of our ancestors; the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O Lord, have given me."

'You shall set it down before the Lord your God and bow down before the Lord your God. Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the Lord your God has given to you and to your house.' *Deuteronomy 26:1-11*

This is the Word of the Lord

All **Thanks be to God.**

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Romans

Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that 'the person who does these things will live by them.' But the righteousness that comes from faith says, 'Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?" ' (that is, to bring Christ down) "or "Who will descend into the abyss?" ' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For one believes with the heart and so is

justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame."

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!' *Romans 10:5-15*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Ashes

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Come back to me

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. The devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread.' Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "One does not live by bread alone".'

Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the devil said to him, 'To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.' Jesus answered him, 'It is written, "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him".'

Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, for it is written, "He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you," and "On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone".' Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test'."

When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time. *Luke 4:1-13*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

When I'm chatting to colleagues before and after meetings, I quite often hear them say 'I need to lose half a stone, so I'm giving up chocolate for Lent'—or similar. Then they get round to me, as they know I'm a Christian, and they ask me what I'm giving up. So I tell them I'm not necessarily giving anything up. Instead I'm taking things on—prayer, charitable giving, etc. At which point I usually get some variation on 'Why?'

This is a very good question, and makes me think about why I **am** doing what I do for Lent. The simple answer would be that Lent is a time for prayer, and penitence, in order to get closer to God and understand His purpose for us, and that we are walking with Jesus in the desert. So let's expand on this a bit.

In the Gospel reading, Jesus went into the desert for forty days. He did not choose to do this, but was 'led by the Spirit'. There was a tradition that by going into the wilderness, it was possible to get closer to God, so Jesus went to prepare for His great work, to learn God's purpose for him and to obtain the necessary grace and strength to do it. There would have been wild beasts, dust, sand, heat during the day, cold during the night, no food, no water for forty days of fasting and prayer. He would have been lonely, hungry and afraid—but He didn't turn back.

As if that wasn't enough, He was tempted by the devil three times. Once when He was hungry to turn stones into bread; once when He felt alone and helpless, to have the angels catch Him as He threw himself from the high place: once when He was powerless, He was offered the kingdom of the world with all its power and riches. But He resisted. The desert had given Him the inner strength and calm and resolve to trust God's love and fulfil His purpose, even though that meant dying a painful and unjust death on the cross.

Forty days and forty nights Jesus suffered and prayed in the desert. Now, we don't have a convenient(!) desert to go into to get closer to God. So we have to do it here, in the midst of our busy, sometimes chaotic and difficult lives, where bad things happen and we can be afraid or alone ... I just realised, as I wrote that, that we can see similarities. Maybe our lives are the desert? The devil is certainly at work here! We are tempted by power (look at Putin and his desire to gain other lands and riches). We are tempted to lack of compassion (what are our attitudes to refugees?). We are tempted to greed, to pride, to laziness, in small things and large.

We need to enter the desert of Lent on a spiritual quest of our own. Lent is not a domesticated kind of pious self-improvement where we give up a treat to make us feel or look good; the quest we're on for these forty days is not tame or flippant. Jesus left his family and entered a desert with wild beasts, hunger, bodily discomfort and all the temptations of Hell. If we want to follow Him, we should make

our Lent a time of fasting, reflection, penitence, searching and prayer. By doing this we will come to understand God's purpose for us, and most importantly, to trust that He will always guide us and hold us, whatever happens. We have advantages in our desert that Jesus did not have—we are not alone as Jesus was alone. We have each other, and we have the opportunity to encounter God as Jesus did, to wrap ourselves in God's word to us that we are His beloved children, to claim the only identity that really matters—that of a child of God.

The discipline of Lent is preparation for truly participating in the death and glorious resurrection of Jesus. But we can't have the resurrection without the desert and the death. So let's have forty days where we truly open ourselves to God through prayer and meditation and inviting God to live through us as never before; forty days where we examine ourselves, face who we are and strive once again to be all that we can be confident in the love and acceptance of God; forty days in which we remember that with God's grace our spirits will be transformed and we can live and work to God's glory, trusting and leaning on His love.

May we all come safely through the desert not turning back when it gets difficult or unpleasant. May we be transformed by God's love, with the grace to know His purpose for us and trusting that He will give us the strength to do it. Amen.

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
the source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

Amen.

Prayers of intercession

With confidence and trust let us pray to the Father.

For the one holy catholic and apostolic Church ...

let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion,

All in your mercy hear us.

For the mission of the Church,

that in faithful witness it may preach the gospel

to the ends of the earth,

let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion,

All in your mercy hear us.

For those preparing for baptism [and confirmation] ...

and for their teachers and sponsors,

let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion,

All in your mercy hear us.

For peace in the world ...

that a spirit of respect and reconciliation may grow

among nations and peoples,

let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion,

All in your mercy hear us.

For the poor, the persecuted, the sick, and all who suffer ...

for refugees, prisoners, and all in danger;

that they may be relieved and protected,

let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion,

All in your mercy hear us.

For those whom we have injured or offended,

let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion,

All in your mercy hear us.

For grace to amend our lives and to further the reign of God,
let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion,

All in your mercy hear us.

In communion with all those who have walked in the way of holiness ...
let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion,

All in your mercy hear us.

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.

All Amen.

Merciful Father,

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

The peace

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us access to his grace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 Attende Domine (Gregorian Chant) [\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)
What wondrous love is this [\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

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
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
and the blessing of God the Almighty:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 Forty days and forty nights

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

Father, you made the world and love your creation.
You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour.
His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death.
And so we gladly thank you,
with saints and angels praising you, and saying,

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All 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.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us. Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

Lord God,
you have renewed us with the living bread from heaven;
by it you nourish our faith,
increase our hope,
and strengthen our love:
teach us always to hunger for him who is the true and living bread,
and enable us to live by every word
that proceeds from out of your mouth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory. Amen.