

Sunday 28 August 2022

The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity



Sermon and prayers of intercession © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

Liturgy © 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.

All the hymns are hosted on YouTube. Please click on the links to hear them.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,

<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 [Guide me O thou great redeemer](#)
[Guide me O thou great redeemer](#)

([please click on this link](#))
([different version](#))

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.**

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, to be our advocate in heaven, and to bring us to eternal life.

Therefore, let us 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.

The Gloria

This Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

All Glory be to God in Heaven,
Songs of joy and peace we bring,
Thankful hearts and voices raising,
To creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,
Glory be to God our King:
Glory be to God our King.

Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,
Bore the load of this world's sin;
Only Son of God the Father,
You have brought us peace within.
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,
Now your glorious reign begin:
Now your glorious reign begin.

**You O Son of God are Holy,
You we praise with one accord.
None in heav'n or earth is like you,
Only you are Christ the Lord.
With the Father and the Spirit,
Ever worshipped and adored:
Ever worshipped and adored.**

The Collect for the Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

O God, you declare your almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity: mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace, that we, running the way of your commandments, may receive your gracious promises, and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure; 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 Book of Proverbs

Do not put yourself forward in the king's presence
or stand in the place of the great;
for it is better to be told, 'Come up here,'
than to be put lower in the presence of a noble. *Proverbs 25:6-7*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from Letter to the Hebrews

Let mutual love continue. We can say with confidence, 'The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?' Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

For here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. *Hebrews 13:1, 7-8, 15-16*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Companions on the journey [\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

All Glory to you O Lord.

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely.

When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honour, he told them a parable. 'When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honour, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, "Give this person your place," and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, "Friend, move up higher"; then you will be honoured in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.'

He said also to the one who had invited him, 'When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbours, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.' *Luke 14:1-14*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

I wonder if you're watching the cricket, the Commonwealth Games, or the winter Olympics? If so, you'll be in awe of the superheroes on show there

If you think about it, there are so many different kinds of superhero. The most

powerful are not human at all, though they look it: think of Superman or maybe the ever-popular Doctor Who. Then there are those superheroes who are definitely human but have somehow changed and mutated: this time, think of the Incredible Hulk who was human until a chance dose of radiation or Spiderman and a strange bite; maybe in similar vein, think of the countless films and stories about vampires—such as *Twilight*. Or again, we have more-or-less normal people who become a superhero because of technology, like Iron Man. And again, we see those who are human through and through but are so brilliant at something that they're almost unreal: this time, think of Batman and his ability to stop those who are evil, or then think of the many modern takes on Sherlock who is utterly brilliant. Some of these last superheroes are not good but evil like the Joker whose gifts are terrible. But all of them *are* superheroes.

On the basis that superheroes can do superhuman things, we must quiz the Bible, asking it how we who are human and normal can do something that is superhuman. The answer in today's Bible readings is clear: we can enter the presence of God.

Two of today's readings talk about kings and the third says 'leader', so we're talking about an encounter with power. One reading speaks in terms of hospitality and a banquet, surely a metaphor for the afterlife. Taken together, we're talking about the benefits we expect or want as a consequence of our encounter with power—we come into the presence of God and, if we get it right, live with Him forever. We have immortality—we become superheroes. But behind the metaphor and parable, the Gospel also discusses what happens when we enter the presence of God in the everyday which might occur through prayer, in the Eucharist, as well as seeing God in the people we meet. They may be chance encounters but, as it says in Scripture, we can entertain angels unaware. We don't want to start as a superhero and botch it so thoroughly that we lose that chance of immortality—going from hero to zero.

So, our encounters with God can lead to several significantly different conclusions. Jesus, in the Gospel passage, implies that we can try blagging it and pretend to be great in the presence of God or we can be more realistic, more humble. And that honesty is essential.

What is the honest way to start that process of becoming a superhero? Blagging can't work because our God—the real God, the Lord Almighty, the creator of heaven and earth—is a being of unimaginable majesty and indescribable holiness. He is a being of inexpressible power and therefore we are very, very different. That's why Proverbs and Jesus in the Gospel warn us against entering the presence of this King while thinking it's a right. It's not a right but His gift, so pretence is at best hopeless and can run the risk of straying into blasphemy. Superheroes want to win, so they must start where God tells them to start.

It's therefore time to look at the middle reading, from the Letter to the Hebrews. This letter was probably written to a group of believers with a Jewish background (hence 'to the Hebrews'). In context, many of those to whom the letter was written had accepted the Christian faith but were now having second thoughts. Perhaps they felt it wasn't working, itself implying they were starting with the wrong motive. The writer therefore seeks to encourage them, telling them the benefits of following this new faith. He's stripping away the false ideas of Christianity and emphasising again and again that it's about Jesus, about faith, about pleasing God, about sharing, and about an afterlife. In recent weeks, we've been hearing from Hebrews about the 'cloud of witnesses'—superheroes again—in effect, saying, this life is possible.

The reading from Hebrews says that God is not remote but wants to help. He helped in the past, He helps today, and He will continue to do so. In fact, Hebrews cuts through the mix of provisos and motives by saying that we should enter the presence of God as a way of responding to his help. That's why he says, 'Continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name.'

... and then a mini time-bomb goes off in our soul. This giving thanks is the right lens through which we look at entering the presence of God, *but it's a fruit not a motive*. It follows and does not precede. We enter the presence of God when we (to use the phrase in Hebrews) 'confess the name'. It means living the life. It means discipleship. It means Christlikeness.

Christians, therefore, must not think they can enter the presence of God in order to access privilege, blag power, or seek favour. We don't become Christians because we want eternal life. Even less, do we follow Jesus with a view to becoming a superhero. Rather, we live the humble life of everyday discipleship. We serve the Lord Jesus, identifying with his humanity as well as looking up to His divinity. It's in that serving that we most truly know God and become superheroes of the faith. We relate to God with acts of love, acts of service, acts of loyalty, acts of obedience. It's when we deliberately perform acts of Christlikeness that we most truly enter God's presence. And ironically, we don't gain power through that encounter. We gain God Himself.

To recap: ironically we become superheroes when we become His servants. As Jesus said, 'All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.'

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

These prayers are inspired by today's Gospel reading.

We ask your blessing on all of us today as we seek a place at your table. Feed us
and sustain us, that we may grow in goodness and Godliness.

Lord, in your mercy.

All Hear our prayer.

We pray for your Church and ask your blessing on all who share in the eternal
banquet of your table—a place where earth and heaven combine and we eat the
bread of heaven and drink the cup of Your Kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy.

All Hear our prayer.

Jesus often spoke in parables involving food and plenty, banqueting and feasting.
We pay for those who are hungry, and the many today who struggle to make ends
meet. We ask your blessing on those who seek to improve their lives: growers,
campaigners, those seeking to bring material relief

Lord, in your mercy.

All Hear our prayer.

Many illnesses are caused by food and many maladies of the soul are caused by a
lack of God. We pray for those who are ill for whatever reason. For those who are
starved for

Lord, in your mercy.

All Hear our prayer.

Eternal life is often described in terms of a banquet with God. We pray for those who share the eternal banquet. Lord, in your mercy.

All Hear our prayer.

Merciful Father,

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

The peace

Peace to you from God our heavenly Father.

Peace from his Son Jesus Christ who is our peace.

Peace from the Holy Spirit, the Life-giver

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 Bread of heaven on thee we feed (please click on this link)
Broken for me, broken for you (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 of God the Almighty,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 Lord of the dance (please click on this link to hear the hymn)
Lord of the dance (different version)
Lord of the dance (different version)

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 of all mercy,
we your faithful people have celebrated that one true sacrifice
which takes away our sins and brings pardon and peace:
by our communion
keep us firm on the foundation of the gospel
and preserve us from all sin;
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.