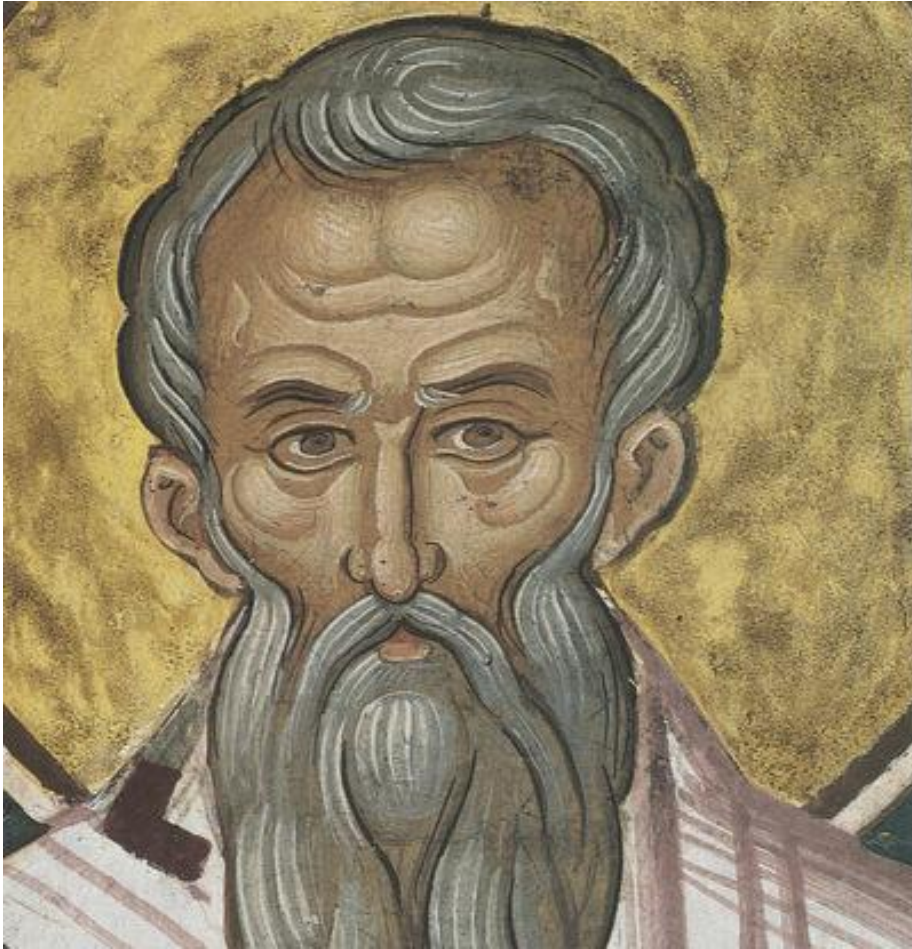


Wednesday 23 November 2022

St Clement of Rome



Clement was active as an elder in the Church in Rome towards the end of the first century. He was said to have been a disciple of the apostles. He wrote an epistle to the Corinthians which witnessed to ministry in the Church and concerned their authority and duties. That letter clearly showed the authority of one senior presbyter intervening in a conflict in another Church and is full of valuable information about the history of the developing Church and its ministry at this time.

Clement's rather hierarchical view of Church order set a future pattern for episcopal practice and ministry. He seems to have been president of a council of presbyters which governed the Church in Rome and his letters are clearly written on their behalf.

A fourth-century document suggests he was exiled to the Crimea where he was then put to death by being thrown into the sea with an anchor around his neck.

Sermon © the Revd Denise Owen.

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.

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 For all the saints

(please 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.

Christ calls us to share the heavenly banquet of his love with all the saints in earth and heaven. Therefore, knowing our unworthiness and sin, 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 St Clement

Creator and Father of eternity,
whose martyr Clement bore witness with his blood
to the love he proclaimed and the gospel that he preached:
give us thankful hearts as we celebrate your faithfulness
revealed to us in the lives of your saints
and strengthen us in our pilgrimage as we follow your Son,
Jesus Christ 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

A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise dispenses knowledge, but the mouths of fools pour out folly. The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good. A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit. *Proverbs 15:1-4*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Letter of St Paul to the Philippians

Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who live according to the example you have in us. For many live as enemies of the cross of Christ; I have

often told you of them, and now I tell you even with tears. Their end is destruction; their god is the belly; and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things.

But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life. *Philippians 3:17—4:3*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Kyrie Eleison ('Lord have mercy') ([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 noticed how the guests chose the places of honour, so 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.'

Luke 14:7-11

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

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

Do you know the hymn 'Will you anchor hold?'

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife?
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,
Will your anchor drift or firm remain?

We have an anchor that keeps the soul
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll,
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love.

Inevitably for me at least, this is one of the hymns I associate with Clement of Rome, because of the method by which he was reputedly martyred. As a curate at St Clement's, we always sang this hymn at the Patronal Festival and we were always asked to consider where the anchors in our own lives might be found. This is a fair enough subject for a sermon, and one I'll return to a little later, but for Clement of course, the anchor meant death not safety.

The hymn reassures us that the only true 'anchor' is Jesus, or more accurately the Holy Trinity. The Trinity is the source of our safety amidst storms, as well as being the source of our spiritual growth and human flourishing etc., but what does safety really mean?

You may be aware of the many Christians across the world who are in real physical danger of arrest, torture and death because of Christ. These situations don't look like the safety and assurance of an anchor that will hold 'when the clouds unfold their storms of strife'. These situations seem to me to be to situations of extreme fear and hate. Situations as Christians living in the liberal and generally safe and stable West, we can only read about and pray for. However, Jesus himself warned his followers of the storms and dangers that lay ahead for them and of which Clement of Rome was a victim. Jesus didn't tell his followers everything would be fine, clearly everything isn't fine, but what he did promise was to be with us, *in* us as in John's Gospel, in fact. He promised safety, or an anchor as in the hymn, for our souls, that part of us which is most deeply us; the part of us which the torturer, or executioner, or atheist mocker, most wishes to damage; the part of us which is made new and pure and whole every time we confess our sins, and return to Christ.

For me that is the point of having Jesus as the anchor, whatever the outside challenges and disturbances, Jesus surrounds and grounds the very core of me,

who I am, and the person he calls me to be. In fact, this is the 'me' that can only be truly me when I recognise Christ as Saviour, and God as my creator.

In the hymn this is described as the 'anchor that keeps the soul'. It offers the safety, as I've been describing it, of a truth and integrity that the world can't see, and possibly doesn't even value, but which martyrs such as Clement exemplify with their very lives. For people like Clement, death is preferable to compromise, and the possible loss of our soul.

Dramatic stuff, perhaps, but sometimes as Christians we should confront the seriousness of the issues our faith deals with, and although the words of that hymn are full of optimism and hope, they also offer food for thought. So, as I said earlier, what is your or my anchor? Is it Jesus? Or is it in the words of St Paul in that reading from Philippians the 'belly', by which I think he meant appetite and material desires? Where is salvation found? And how far are we willing to go to secure it?

Dramatic stuff, again perhaps, but not only do we have the True anchor, we also have a Lord and Saviour whom we can also call Friend, and who calls us Friends. Even more than that, we put our trust in God who forgives our sins, and accepts our weaknesses.

The anchor we look to keeps us secure in so many different ways, and I've mentioned just a few in this short reflection. If you have time, why not spend a few moments contemplating the anchor that holds you steadfast and sure?

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

Loving heavenly Lord, help us to follow the real Jesus. Give us the courage to leave behind all the many, many imposter Jesuses.

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer.

Loving Heavenly Lord, help your Church to reflect you. Help us to put aside compromise with the world and return to you everything that is properly yours.

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer.

Loving Heavenly Lord, help the world to stop worshipping itself and to transfer its worship to you. We pray for those who, like Caesar long ago, who take the glory that is yours.

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer.

Loving heavenly Lord, we pray for those who are poorly, whether in body, mind, or spirit. We pray especially for those whose healing requires a readjustment of life: show them how to turn to you.

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer.

Loving heavenly Lord, we pray for those who have today passed from this world and into the next. We pray for their families, friends and all you mourn them.

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

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 Will your anchor hold in the storms of life?

[\(please click here\)](#)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

May Christ who makes saints of sinners,
who has transformed those we remember today,
raise and strengthen you that you may transform the world;
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 Holy Spirit come to us

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

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.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
And now we give thanks, most gracious God,
surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses
and glorified in the assembly of your saints.
The glorious company of apostles praise you.
The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.
The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.
We, your holy Church, acclaim you.
In communion with angels and archangels,
and with all who served you on earth and worship you now in heaven,
we raise our voice to proclaim your glory,
for ever 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 Clement and 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

God our Redeemer,
whose Church was strengthened
by the blood of your martyr Clement:
so bind us, in life and death, to Christ's sacrifice
that our lives, broken and offered with his,
may carry his death and proclaim his resurrection in the world;
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.