

**Sunday 14 May 2023**

# The Sixth Sunday of Easter



**Sermon** © Lucie Reilly.

**Prayers of intercession** © Lay Anglicana (slightly adapted)

**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.

The hymn can be accessed via a YouTube link. Please click on the links.

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

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

## 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.**

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

**All He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

**HYMN 1 My Jesus, my saviour**

[\(please click on this link\)](#)

## 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 our Passover lamb has been sacrificed for us.

Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all malice and evil

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.

## **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 Sixth Sunday of Easter**

God our redeemer,  
you have delivered us from the power of darkness  
and brought us into the kingdom of your Son:  
grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life,  
so by his continual presence in us he may raise us  
to eternal joy;  
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 Acts of the Apostles

[Paul said], 'As I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, "To an unknown god." What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said,

"For we too are his offspring."

Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.' *Acts 17:23-31*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

## **Second reading**

A reading from the First Letter of Peter

Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight people, were saved through water.

And baptism, which this pre-figured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him. *1 Peter 3:13-end*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN 2 Refiner's fire ('Purify my heart')**

[\(click here\)](#)



## Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

**All**      **Glory to you O Lord.**

Jesus said, 'If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

'I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.'

*John 14:15-21*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All**      **Praise to you O Christ.**

## Sermon

'I will not leave you orphaned.'

At some point, I'm sure we have all needed to hear these words ... maybe not the exact quote but, I will not leave you, I will not abandon you. They speak directly to some of our greatest fears and challenges: abandonment, isolation, loneliness, vulnerability. They remind us that we are not destined to walk this earth without an identity or direction. We are not meant to stand alone.

There are different phases of life, moments, when the transitions, changes or tragedies can leave us feeling like orphans. Whether we voice them out loud or they are circling in our minds the questions begin. What do we do now? Where do we go? What happens next? Who will love, nurture, and guide us? Who stands on our side? What will become of us?

Those are an orphan's questions. Those are the questions I imagine running through the heads and hearts of the disciples in the Gospel.

It is the last supper. The disciples have been fed, had their feet washed, the betrayer has left. It is night and it is dark, then Jesus announces he is leaving. The one who they left everything for is now saying he is leaving them.

'We do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' 'Show us the Father.' More orphan questions. Anyone who has ever loved and lost—a spouse, a child, a friend, security, hope—knows orphan's questions.

We fear being orphaned, being alone. That fear points to the deeper reality that by ourselves we are not enough. It is not, however, because we are lacking. It is rather because we were never intended or created to be self-sufficient. We were never intended to stand alone as individuals. Way back in Genesis 2, The Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'

We were created to love and be loved, to live in relationship as people who give themselves to each other, to dwell, abide, and remain within each other, as the Father is in Jesus and Jesus is in the Father.

'I will not leave you orphaned.' That is the promise. Regardless of the circumstances of our lives, storms, death, separation, we have never been and will never be orphaned by God.

How confusing must this have been for the disciples. In the same conversation Jesus tells them that he is leaving and coming. Leaving and coming are opposites. If we are not careful, we will get struck trying to figure this out. It is not, however, something to figure out. It is rather a means to see and live in a different way.

Leaving and coming ... Presence and Absence. These pairs of opposites must be held in tension, a constant pushing and pulling force, not mutually limited or restricted. That is what Jesus has set before us in today's gospel.

That tension can confront us with the question of whether Jesus, for us, is a past memory or a present reality, is it all an emotional story that makes us feel warm and fuzzy inside or a living experience that challenges, guides, and nurtures us and our life.

According to Jesus, the answer to that question is determined by love that is revealed and fulfilled in keeping his commandments. The commandment to love our neighbour as ourselves, to love our enemies, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Whose feet do we wash and whose feet to ignore? What are the boundaries of love?

Do we keep the commandments? Is our love growing and transformative of ourselves and the world? If so, Jesus is probably for us a present reality and we know the fulfilment of his promise that we are not left orphaned.

However, if we are not loving so much and we remain self-enclosed and isolated, we consign ourselves and each other to the orphanages of this world.

Jesus' promise is still real, and he remains faithful ... we simply have not claimed it for ourselves. Keeping the commandments is our ticket to Jesus' promise that we will not be left orphaned. Keeping the commandments does not make Jesus present to us. It makes us present to the already unending reality of Jesus' presence. The commandments do not earn us Jesus' love they reveal our love for him, a love that originates in his abiding love and presence within us.

Every time we expand the boundaries of our love, we push back the scary potential of becoming orphaned in the world and create space within us where the Father and Jesus make their home.

'I will not leave you orphaned.' Over and over, day after day, regardless of what is happening in our lives that is Jesus' promise. We have not been abandoned. Do not abandon yourselves or others to the orphanages of this world. Love with all that you are and that you have. As the Father and Jesus love us with all that they are and that they have. 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

In today's Gospel passage, God is asking to continue to make him present, as Jesus does, and he is giving them his own life and presence to make that possible. Over and over again, in God's great and gracious plan, we see that we are asked to do and to give what has already been done and given to us by God. We are given forgiveness and asked to forgive, we are given love and asked to love, we are given God and asked to make him a home with us. *(Jane Williams: Lectionary Reflections)*



**The Church of Christ** Lord, may we and your whole Church live as those travelling deeper into your presence and into your love. As we share the Eucharist in this church, may we also share with all parts of our Church the love that you have shown us. Lord, from whom all thoughts of truth and peace derive, set our hearts on fire with the true love of peace, and let us begin with your Church, that all those who confess your name may be united in the desire to be reconciled one with another. Lord, by your continual presence in us may you raise us to eternal joy.

In your mercy

**All Hear our prayer.**

**Creation, human society, all those in authority** Lord, we ask you to guide your Church so that we may love others as you have loved us. Then in tranquility your kingdom may go forward and your way will be known upon earth. May all people everywhere praise you, Lord: let all the nations rejoice till the whole earth is filled with the knowledge of your love.

Lord, by your continual presence in us may you raise us to eternal joy.

In your mercy

**All Hear our prayer.**

**The local community** Lord, inspire us with your love and refresh us with the water of the river of life. Then may we in turn through you be enabled to bring light to those with whom we live and work. Daily renew in us all the sense of joy, filling every corner of our hearts with love and gladness so that we may be diffusers of life and meet all that comes with gallant and high-hearted happiness, giving you thanks always for all things.

Lord, by your continual presence in us may you raise us to eternal joy.

In your mercy

**All Hear our prayer.**

**Those who suffer** Lord, we pray for all those who suffer, whether physically, mentally or spiritually. We thank you with all our hearts that, though the human condition may speak to us of hope unfulfilled, the mark missed, the fading bloom, the autumn chill and beyond that the dark, yet the Christian condition, through the promise of your son, is one of joy.

Lord, by your continual presence in us may you raise us to eternal joy.

In your mercy

**All Hear our prayer.**

**The communion of saints** Lord, your risen son came and stood among his disciples and said, 'I am the first and the last, and the living one; I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.' Grant to the faithful departed that they shall indeed see the face of Christ and live with him forever, where light perpetual shall shine. Lord, by your continual presence in us may you raise us to eternal joy.

In your mercy

**All Hear our prayer.**

Receive these prayers, O God,  
and transform us through them,  
that we may have eyes to see and hearts to understand  
not only what you do on our behalf,  
but what you call us to do  
so that your realm will come to fruition in glory.

**All Amen.**

Merciful Father,

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

## **The peace**

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

**All And also with you.**

**HYMN 3 How deep the Father's love for us** ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

**HYMN 4 Amazing grace**

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

## The Dismissal

God the Father,  
by whose love Christ was raised from the dead,  
open to you who believe the gates of everlasting life.

**All Amen.**

God the Son,  
who in bursting the grave has won a glorious victory,  
give you joy as you share the Easter faith.

**All Amen.**

God the Holy Spirit,  
whom the risen Lord breathed into his disciples,  
empower you and fill you with Christ's peace.

**All Amen.**

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

**All Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**All In the name of Christ. Amen.**

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

**All He is risen indeed! Alleluia!**

## 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**

God our Father,  
whose Son Jesus Christ gives the water of eternal life:  
may we thirst for you,  
the spring of life and source of goodness,  
through him who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

**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.