

Sunday 21 May 2023

The Seventh Sunday of Easter



Sermon © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

Prayers of intercession © Lay Anglicana.

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 [Let our praise be to you as incense](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)

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 Seventh Sunday of Easter

O God the King of glory,
you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ
with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:
we beseech you, leave us not comfortless,
but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us
and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before,
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

When [the disciples] had come together, they asked [Jesus], 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.'

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting

themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers. *Acts 1:6-14*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the First Letter of Peter

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in so far as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. Discipline yourselves; keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters throughout the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Kyrie eleison

Kyrie eleison

Kyrie eleison

Kyrie eleison

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

[\(Russian version\)](#)

[\(Plain chant\)](#)

[\(modern version\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified

you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

‘I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. *John 17:1-11*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

Some of the disciples have been followed Jesus for years. They’ve seen miracles, seen lives changed, heard parables and even a new commandment. They are quite literally different people from when they first left everything to follow Jesus. But discipleship lived under human power can only go so far: during the few hours before the crucifixion they all ran away; immediately after the resurrection some of the disciples did not understand resurrection—think of those walking on the road to Emmaus, those who came to the tomb or Thomas’ statement of doubt in the upper room.

The disciples worshipped Jesus every time he reappeared after the resurrection. He re-filled the Jesus-shaped hole in their lives and was re-instated as a pillar of their sky. And then he disappeared for good. The disciples witnessed his return to Heaven on the first Ascension Day. They felt themselves in limbo and didn’t know what to do.

Following a human being is always easier than following a God who is pure spirit. A human has a reassuring physical presence and is easier to touch, listen to and hear. Following Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, was always going to be easier than following God the Father. Discipleship was easier under Jesus than previously, before God came to earth, before the Incarnation.

It’s likely that, immediately after the Ascension, the disciples will have wondered how they were to follow God. They will probably have promised themselves

to 'never forget' and keep true to what they'd learned. But what about the second generation of Christians who never saw Jesus? And what about the third generation who never knew a first-hand witness of Jesus? And what about us? We cannot follow Jesus in the same way as those first disciples so we experience the same problems as the people of faith before the Incarnation. Has discipleship gone back to square one?

The Holy Spirit came to earth at Pentecost and filled the disciples with God. From that instant they no longer needed to follow a physical Jesus because they were filled with the same Spirit who spoke marvellously through Jesus and directed his every action. Being Spirit-filled means they each became a mini-Jesus. Each was mandated to follow God and each was required to live a life of holiness and commitment because otherwise the indwelling Spirit would be neutered, thwarted, or even cast out.

From the moment of Pentecost, the physical Jesus multiplied to become a whole congregation of mini-Jesuses. They were soon a world-wide Church of mini-Jesuses. No-one now needed to see, touch and hear the physical Jesus because they could see a person who was filled with the Spirit of Jesus and lived the life of Jesus.

When Jesus was alive on earth his existence was space-bound and locked in time. If Jesus had remained on earth his scope for interacting and teaching would have become ever smaller as his human body aged and deteriorated. But, following Pentecost, every disciple can grow into a new life as a mini-Jesus. Each is called to bring God into their own, customised part of the world.

Today in the Church calendar we remember the first disciples during a short time during which they lived through a kind of limbo existence. They each lived in the in-between time after the Ascension and before Pentecost. They were waiting and preparing to receive the Holy Spirit and (though they probably didn't understand it this way) waiting to become mini-Jesuses.

In a sense we too live in a time of limbo. God provokes us too, telling us to prepare to receive the Spirit. But there is a difference: the disciples experienced a single and once-for-all moment of spiritual infilling. Subsequent disciples usually experience a continual series of mini-Pentecosts, each bringing us closer to becoming a mini-Jesus.

So, as we await the imminent reception of the Holy Spirit, we prepare for the next spiritual encounter and anticipate growing so much closer to God that we become Jesus-like.

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

Let us pray to the Lord, who calls us to be one in him, and one with him.

Lord, grant to your Church the unity that your son prayed for on our behalf. Bathe the Church in the fire and light of your glory and burn away the dross of our lives as we strive to be made one with you, and one with each other. Kindle in us your love that our lives may reflect your glory to the world and your light and life may be revealed to all people.

Lord, set our hearts on fire with love for you

All in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for the leaders of the nations, that they may serve with integrity and justice. May our leaders recognise that you are the ultimate source of their gifts, their positions and their power. And may they strive to prove worthy of the trust and confidence which has been placed in them. We praise you for the glories of nature, and the world that you have made which still holds so many wonders for those who take the time to look around them.

Lord, set our hearts on fire with love for you

All in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord, who has made us one community in Christ, may the glory of your presence transform our lives. When we feel discouraged or dispirited by events in our neighbourhood, may we all be suffused by your Holy Spirit and transformed by your grace. Help us to find the green shoots of regeneration, and then to water and weed them so they may come to fruition in your service.

Lord, set our hearts on fire with love for you

All in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord, we pray for all those who are weak or discouraged, ill or simply weary. We have confidence that you will support them and us all the day long of this troublous life, until the shadows lengthen, the evening comes, and our work in this busy world is done.

Lord, set our hearts on fire with love for you

All in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord, when the fever of life is over, in your mercy grant us safe lodging, a holy rest, and peace at the last. We pray for all who have passed through death into life eternal and union with you. We pray through the grace of your son, Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you in glory.

Lord, set our hearts on fire with love for you

All in your mercy, hear our prayer.

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 Peace to you (please click on this link to hear the hymn)
Come Jesus, prince of peace (click on this link to hear the hymn)
Make me a channel of your peace (click here)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

HYMN 4 [Lord, for the years](#)
[Lord, for the years](#)
[Lord, for the years](#)

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)
[\(more modern version\)](#)
[\(instrumental\)](#)

May 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,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
be among you now and remain with you always.

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

Eternal God, giver of love and power,
your Son Jesus Christ has sent us into all the world
to preach the gospel of his kingdom:
confirm us in this mission,
and help us to live the good news we proclaim;
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.