



Wednesday 25 November 2020

Since the earliest days of Church, St Catherine has been venerated at the monastery on Mount Sinai in Palestine.

A very early legend says that she was a young Christian in Alexandria. She rejected the advances of the Emperor Maximinus and was martyred in about 305 in Alexandria, Egypt.

Her cult was first popularised in the West during the eleventh century after the crusaders returned to Europe. A later legend says that her prayers helped rout a meeting of learned men who had gathered together to induce her to deny Christ, which helps explain why she is the patron saint of philosophical faculties.

- All the Bible readings come from the *New Revised Standard Version*.
- The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration have been included at the end rather than in situ because many following the service will be in isolation and unable to celebrate the sacrament.
- 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 I cannot tell

(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 Catherine

Almighty ever-living God,
who gave Saint Catherine of Alexandria to your people
as a Virgin and an invincible Martyr,
grant that through her intercession
we may be strengthened in faith and constancy
and spend ourselves without reserve for the unity of the Church;
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the Revelation of Saint John the Divine

I saw another portent in heaven, great and amazing: seven angels with seven plagues, which are the last, for with them the wrath of God is ended.

And I saw what appeared to be a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name standing beside the sea of glass with harps of God in their hands. And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb:

'Great and amazing are your deeds,

Lord God the Almighty!

Just and true are your ways,

King of the nations!

Lord, who will not fear

and glorify your name?

For you alone are holy.

All nations will come
and worship before you,
for your judgements have been revealed.' *Revelation 15:1-4*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Philippians

Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if I may somehow attain the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. *Philippians 3:7-14*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Father in Heaven

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

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus said, 'Before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. This will give you an opportunity to testify. So make up your minds not to prepare your defence in advance; for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. You will be hated by all because of

my name. But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your souls.' *Luke 21:12-19*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

Above Westminster Abbey's Great West Door stand ten statues commemorating twentieth century martyrs—Christians who gave up their lives for, or because of, their beliefs. Among them are Dr Martin Luther King—the American Civil Rights activist who was assassinated; the Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer—killed by the Nazis in 1945; and Archbishop Oscar Romero—who spoke out against oppression and was murdered by the authorities in El Salvador. Unlike Catherine of Alexandria, whom we remember today, their stories are better documented but, like her, these modern martyrs embraced physical death rather than compromise their firmly held faith in, and obedience to, the teachings of Christ.

Just before the beginning of today's gospel passage, Jesus has been telling his disciples what must happen before the 'end times' and, as we near the end of another Church year—with Advent approaching (when we focus on Christ's second coming)—we may also pause to reflect on such things. But Jesus goes on to outline the trials and tribulations which will face His followers before He comes in glory at the end of time. Not just those who followed Him at the time, but a message for us all ... here and now.

Jesus doesn't promise us an easy time here on earth. In fact, He makes it quite clear to us, and His disciples, that we will be scorned, laughed at, and in extreme cases, even hated and persecuted.

While we in 'the West' do not expect persecution to be a possible consequence of faith, Christians (indeed other people of Faith) in more volatile or repressive areas of the world regularly face imprisonment, intimidation, harassment, beatings and even death for their beliefs. Many refugees who are able to escape such regimes and find sanctuary, as Christians, in our country, have fled such terrors but have still sacrificed successful careers, a financially secure way of life, a familiar culture, language and the love of family (who they know they will never see again) for the love of Christ; and yet, shockingly, they are still treated with suspicion and often suffer mindless discrimination.

We may not be called upon to leave our homes and families or die for our faith but we should be prepared, nevertheless, to give our lived lives ... all that we have to give ... in the service of Christ. This giving will not be easy. We may get tired as

it is hard to consistently put others' needs ahead of our own and to keep on doing it week after week, month after month, year after year. As Jesus says, at the end of the passage, *"By your endurance you will gain your souls"*. As faithful disciples, we don't get time off and there are no shortcuts. At times when we feel tired or discouraged, we need to focus on that vision of Christ's return to sustain us ... keeping it alive ... through service, prayer and worship. In these ways we can top up our spiritual 'fuel tanks' giving us the energy and reserves to continue ... to 'endure'.

Today in the Church calendar, we also commemorate the life of Isaac Watts (1674–1748) regarded as the 'Godfather of Hymnody' who is credited with some 750 hymns. One of the most well loved is *'When I survey the Wondrous Cross'*. The final verse seems to sum up the essence of what commitment to Christ, regardless of troubles and difficulties, is all about:

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were an offering far too small;
love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all. 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

Let us pray,

Loving Lord,

grant us, your Church, the courage to be true to our calling whatever the cost.

Help us to endure in the face of indifference and hostility giving our whole lives to your service.

Lord in your mercy,

All hear our prayer.

Loving Lord,

pour into the hearts of all who have authority, and the responsibilities of leadership,

your spirit of compassion, and a willingness to defend and care for all who are dispossessed and friendless.

Help them to govern with integrity.

Lord in your mercy,

All hear our prayer.

Loving Lord,

mindful of your gospel of love,

help us to give ourselves to the service of others

and by our example kindle in them,

the same attitude of generous giving.

We pray for our families, friends and communities.

Lord in your mercy,

All hear our prayer.

Loving Lord,

draw near to all who suffer at this time,

those who are ill at home, in hospital or hospice,

those who are lonely, isolated or in despair.

Help us to notice where we can be your agents of healing, relief and love.

Lord in your mercy,

All hear our prayer.

Loving Lord,

receive all who have died,

that they may win the prize of your heavenly call
and rest in your love forever.

Comfort all who mourn
with the assurance that love never dies.

Lord in your mercy,

All hear our prayer.

Loving Lord,
in gratitude for your guidance and help,
we offer you our loving obedience.

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 [Amazing love](#)

(please click on this link to hear the hymn)

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 [All I once held dear](#)

(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 St Catherine 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

Go, the source of all holiness and the giver of all good things:
may we who have shared at this table
as strangers and pilgrims here on earth
be welcomed with all your saints
to the heavenly feast on the day of your kingdom;
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.