

Tuesday 4 May 2021

English saints and martyrs of the Reformation



This day remembers those who witnessed to their Christian faith during the conflicts in Church and state, which lasted from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, but were at their most intense in the sixteenth century under the Tudors.

Though the reform movement was aimed chiefly at the papacy, many Christian men and women suffered for their allegiance to what they regarded as the truth of the Gospel. Those we specifically remember today were martyred for their faith. Many are listed in the sermon.

Sermon © Revd Jane Hyde.

Liturgy © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

Prayers of intercession © The Book of Common Prayer.

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.

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 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.**

Collect for the English Saints and Martyrs of the Reformation

Merciful God,
who, when your Church on earth was torn apart by the ravages of sin,
raised up men and women in this land
who witnessed to their faith with courage and constancy:
give to your Church that peace which is your will,
and grant that those who have been divided on earth may be reconciled in heaven
and share together in the vision of your glory;
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 the Prophet Isaiah

But now thus says the Lord,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.
For I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.

I give Egypt as your ransom,
 Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you.
 Because you are precious in my sight,
 and honoured, and I love you,
 I give people in return for you,
 nations in exchange for your life.
 Do not fear, for I am with you;
 I will bring your offspring from the east,
 and from the west I will gather you;
 I will say to the north, 'Give them up',
 and to the south, 'Do not withhold;
 bring my sons from far away
 and my daughters from the end of the earth—
 everyone who is called by my name,
 whom I created for my glory,
 whom I formed and made.' *Isaiah 43:1-7*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Second Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness', who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. ¹² So death is at work in us, but life in you. *2 Corinthians 4:5-12*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Cast your eyes upon Jesus

(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.

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour. *John 12:20-26*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

These days, the word '*martyr*' is often used pejoratively to express disapproval with someone who over-emphasises personal suffering ... who 'bleats on' tiresomely to gain sympathy or attention. In reality, a martyr is someone who, by their suffering, and ultimate death, has witnessed to, and paid a heavy price for, advocating or refusing to renounce a religious belief or cause. The martyrs who we remember today, lived in an age where the lines of heresy and treason ... the affairs of Church and State ... were fatally mixed, and they suffered horrific deaths in defence of the Protestant or Roman Catholic cause.

The memory of some of these Reformation martyrs lives on today in the naming of schools and colleges ... Cranmer, Arrowsmith, Fisher, More, Latimer, Ridley ... but many were ordinary men, women and even children some of whose names are not even recorded. The majority were cruelly burned at the stake.

Our readings this morning speak of persecution and suffering ... even to death, but give assurance that God is always with us ... we are never '*forsaken*'. Jesus says '*Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also.*' ... a call witnessed to by the multitude of those who have died a martyr's death throughout the ages.

Martyrdom is considered to be a perfect witness to the love of Christ - being a sacrificial offering which mirrors the sacrifice He made on the cross. It is rare for us to be troubled by thoughts that we might be asked to make such a sacrifice but Jesus calls on his followers to be ready to lose their lives in order to gain life.

Being afraid of death, trying to delay it at all costs, trying to defeat the signs of ageing, all these things preoccupy people in the present age. The obsession with preserving our lives as they are, can sometimes prevent us from attending to the kind of life that really matters ... a life that is full and generous and truthful.

It is hard to face up to death, both our own and that of those we love, and our society certainly does not help us. We live with a nagging fear, buried deep within us, which we push away rather than face up to. But facing up to it, Jesus suggests, is the real way to life ... to a life in which we embrace our limitations, can be honest about them, and not be afraid to take risks for the sake of love and truth. We may not be called to martyrdom ... to suffer death for Jesus' sake ... but we are certainly called live full and useful lives for His sake. The result, according to our Gospel reading, is worth it. The result is eternal life. 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 *Cranmer, from The Book of Common Prayer*

Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's Church militant here in earth.

ALMIGHTY and everliving God, who by thy holy Apostle hast taught us to make prayers and supplications, and to give thanks, for all men:

We humbly beseech thee most mercifully to receive these our prayers, which we offer unto thy Divine Majesty; beseeching thee to inspire continually the universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord: And grant, that all they that do confess thy holy Name may agree in the truth of thy holy Word, and live in unity, and godly love. We beseech thee also to save and defend all Christian Kings, Princes, and Governors; and specially thy servant ELIZABETH our Queen; that under her we may be godly and quietly governed:

And grant unto her whole Council, and to all that are put in authority under her, that they may truly and indifferently minister justice, to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and to the maintenance of thy true religion, and virtue. Give grace, O heavenly Father, to all Bishops and Curates, that they may both by their life and doctrine set forth thy true and lively Word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy Sacraments:

And to all thy people give thy heavenly grace; and specially to this congregation here present; that, with meek heart and due reverence, they may hear, and receive thy holy Word; truly serving thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life.

And we most humbly beseech thee of thy goodness, O Lord, to comfort and succour all them, who in this transitory life are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity.

And we also bless thy holy Name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear; beseeching thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom:

Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate.

All 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 Father hear the prayer we offer ([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 Come Holy Ghost our souls inspire ([please click 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 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, the source of all holiness and 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.**