

Thursday 10 February 2022

St Scholastica



Scholastica is a more shadowy figure than her famous brother, St Benedict.

She was born around the year 480, also in Nursia, central Italy. At an early age she chose to consecrate herself to God, but probably continued to live at home. Only after Benedict moved to Monte Cassino did she settle at Plombariola nearby, joining (or maybe founding) a nunnery under his direction. As abbess she sought to follow his Rule, and met him each year at a house near his monastery where they would praise God together and discuss spiritual matters.

Scholastica died in about the year 543. Benedict had a vision of her soul rising up to heaven and, collecting her body, he had her buried in the tomb prepared for himself.

Scholastica soon became a figure for veneration by all nuns who followed Benedict's Rule.

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The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear 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 All glory laud and honour

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

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.

God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world,
that we should be holy and blameless before him in love.

Let us confess our sins and failings

and ask him who is rich in mercy for forgiveness and peace.

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 St Scholastica

As we celebrate anew the memorial of the virgin saint Scholastica,
we pray, O Lord,
that, following her example,
we may serve you with pure love
and happily receive what comes from loving you.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the Book of Psalms

- 1 I will bless the Lord at all times; ♦
his praise shall ever be in my mouth.
- 2 I will glory in the Lord; ♦
let the humble hear and rejoice.
- 3 Proclaim with me the greatness of the Lord; ♦
let us exalt his Name together.
- 4 I sought the Lord, and he answered me ♦
and delivered me out of all my terror.
- 5 Look upon him and be radiant, ♦
and let not your faces be ashamed.

- 6 I called in my affliction and the Lord heard me ♦
and saved me from all my troubles.
- 7 The angel of the Lord encompasses those who fear him, ♦
and he will deliver them.
- 8 Taste and see that the Lord is good; ♦
happy are they who trust in him!
- 9 Fear the Lord, you that are his saints, ♦
for those who fear him lack nothing.
- 10 The young lions lack and suffer hunger, ♦
but those who seek the Lord lack nothing that is good.
- 11 Come, children, and listen to me; ♦
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
- 12 Who among you loves life ♦
and desires long life to enjoy prosperity?
- 3 Keep your tongue from evil-speaking ♦
and your lips from lying words.
- 14 Turn from evil and do good; ♦
seek peace and pursue it.
- 15 The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, ♦
and his ears are open to their cry.
- 16 The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, ♦
to root out the remembrance of them from the earth.
- 17 The righteous cry, and the Lord hears them ♦
and delivers them from all their troubles.
- 18 The Lord is near to the brokenhearted ♦
and will save those whose spirits are crushed.
- 19 Many are the troubles of the righteous, ♦
but the Lord will deliver him out of them all.
- 20 He will keep safe all his bones; ♦
not one of them shall be broken.
- 21 Evil shall slay the wicked, ♦
and those who hate the righteous will be punished.

22 The Lord ransoms the life of his servants, ♦
and none will be punished who trust in him. *Psalm 34*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. *Acts 4:32-35*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 All creation worships you (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus said, 'And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

'When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. *Matthew 6:5-8*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

As you may have read above, Scholastica, is a 'shadowy' figure, meaning very little is known about her or her life. What is known, is inevitably mediated by the writings of men, Gregory the Great, and men who knew her brother Benedict. I think this does Scholastica an injustice, and the fact that we have only a very sketchy understanding of her life and achievements, is to be regretted.

We can only assume that as Abbess, she lived by, and encouraged her community to live by, the Rule for religious life written by Benedict.

Today, we might think of the choice to commit to the religious life, as strange and eccentric but, for Scholastica, it may well have been joyous and liberating. It would also have given her the opportunity to use her God-given gifts to their fullest extent. She would have led a group of women, making decisions for their lives together, organising the daily round of worship and household tasks, and dealing with the annoyances and disruptions that inevitably arise when people live and work together. So, I'm assuming that as well as being a woman of deep and sincere faith, she was also intelligent and highly competent. We know that she met her brother regularly, and no doubt they had lively discussions about their lives and communities.

The readings above reflect the purpose of her life as a religious, and the foundation of the communal life. In Acts we read of the faithful in the early church sharing resources, making sure no one among them was in need, and the generous use of personal possessions and finances. This is an incredible example of commitment and trust in the Lord on behalf of those who undertook the task, and it is, in effect, what the religious life demands both then, at the time of Scholastica, and now. I have to say, of course, that the impulse to generosity and care for those in need, remains a duty of all Christians, hence our churches frequently have special collections for charity. What the early church did, and what Scholastica and her sisters did, was, however, at a much higher level. She would have given up almost all her worldly goods, and they would have been used for the good of the whole religious community. It's quite an undertaking, when you think about it, to give what you have for the common good, and not to expect to have a particular say in how it is used. That also appears to be what those first members of the church did in Acts, an amazingly selfless thing to do.

It is perhaps, a reminder to us that our giving should be 'sacrificial', that is, our giving should almost hurt. Our giving shouldn't just be from what is left over when we have all that we want or think we need, it should involve some kind of sacrifice. I mean that we should perhaps, especially as we look to Lent, think about what we can do without in order to be generous to the Church and to those in need. I should

also say that all that we have is a gift from God, and belongs ultimately to God. When did you or I last say 'Thank you', for what we have and enjoy?

Of course, for Scholastica, her life as an Abbess didn't only involve the giving up of 'worldly pleasures.' It also involved a deep and disciplined commitment to communal prayer and worship. There would have been a regular round of the prayer throughout the day and even at night, in between which would come work and time for rest. It was for Scholastica and her sisters, and remains today, a life of openness to God and honesty before others.

So, although details about Scholastica are scanty, and much of what I have written is speculation, she is a woman well worth commemorating. Her life of discipline, and deep trust, is an example of Godly living which is rare to find today, but there are many things we could emulate which would lead us to our ultimate vocation which is to follow the example of Christ.

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 every age you have raised up holy men and women to reflect the light of Christ and to teach us the way of holiness.

We thank you for those who have been teachers in the school of Christ: give understanding to those who study the faith the Church has handed on, and clarity to those who communicate the gospel in a changing world ...

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

We thank you for those who have been Christian rulers in the world, and for those who carried the good news to lands where it had not been before: give wisdom to all who have power and influence among the nations, and establish God's sovereignty among people of every race ...

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

We thank you for those whom you have called to live in community: establish mutual love among those drawn into fellowship in your service, and bless with Christ's presence all the communities to which we relate ...

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

We thank you for those who have brought wholeness through the medicine of the gospel: give skill to all who minister healing and reconciliation in your name, and comfort all who cry out to you from any sort of distress ...

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

We thank you today for St Scholastica.

As we celebrate her memory and rejoice in her friendship, we ask you to bless ...

Keep in one communion and fellowship all those for whom Christ died.

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Hasten, Lord, the day when people will come from east and west, from north and south, and sit at table in your kingdom, and we shall see your Son in his glory.

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Merciful Father,

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

The peace

Jesus says, 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.
I do not give to you as the world gives.'

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 Behold the lamb

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

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

God give you grace to follow his saints
in faith and hope and steadfastness;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 And can it be

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

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 truly right and good,
our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This day we honour you in Saint Scholastica,
who consecrated his/her life to Christ
for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.

In him/her you show us your saving love
as you call the human race back to its first holiness,
and invite us to taste on earth
the gifts of the world to come.

In communion with angels and archangels,
and 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 Scholastica 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

Merciful God,
who gave such grace to your servant Scholastica
that she served you with singleness of heart
and loved you above all things:
help us, whose communion with you
has been renewed in this sacrament,
to forsake all that holds us back from following Christ
and to grow into his likeness from glory to glory;
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.**