

Sunday 22 May 2022

The Sixth Sunday of Easter



Sermon © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

Prayers of intercession © Vanderbilt Library.

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 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>

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 Father in Heaven whose love profound [\(please click on this link\)](#)

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

During the night Paul had a vision: there stood before him a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them. We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days.

On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home.' And she prevailed upon us. *Acts 16:9-15*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Revelation of St John the Divine

In the spirit, I was carried away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. It has the glory of God and a radiance like a very rare jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal. It has a great, high wall with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates are inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of the Israelites; on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city has twelve foundations, and on them are the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The angel who talked to me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city and its gates and walls. The city lies foursquare, its length the same as its width; and he measured the city with his rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. He also measured its wall, one hundred forty-four cubits by human measurement, which the angel was using. The wall is built of jasper, while the city is pure gold, clear as glass.

The foundations of the wall of the city are adorned with every jewel; the first was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, the fifth onyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, the twelfth amethyst.

And the twelve gates are twelve pearls, each of the gates is a single pearl, and the street of the city is pure gold, transparent as glass. I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. Its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. People will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his

name will be on their foreheads. And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever. *Revelation 21:10—22:5*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Father in Heaven (instrumental: [click on this link to hear the hymn](#))
Father in Heaven (Wellspring: [click on this link to hear the hymn](#))
Father in Heaven (Enya: [click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus said, ‘Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.

‘I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

‘You heard me say to you, “I am going away, and I am coming to you.” If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe.’ *John 14:23–29*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

There is a rumour going round—an outrageous rumour that God not only exists but that He wants us to speak with Him and know him. And he wants us to talk to him so that we may know Him, know what he wants of us, and if we do what He wants, He will even give us eternal life. I have even heard a rumour that this God is not the authoritarian God of myth and hearsay but is a God whose very nature is love.

Over these past few weeks of Easter, our Bible readings have asked us to think

about God and our image of who He is. We've looked at a God who yearns for us like a shepherd seeking lost sheep. We've heard of Jesus giving new commandments. Today we talk about seeking God (we've heard about visions in dreams of wanting an evangelist; we've hear of worship in Heaven pleasing God; today's Gospel tells of Jesus asking for the Holy Spirit to live within us). It's all about knowing God.

Christians generally grow in proportion to how close they become to God. They become closer to God in proportion to how big He is in their hearts and the extent to which they submit to Him in their relationships with God, His commandments, and the way of living He requires of us. There is a simple word for this type of relationship in which God is increasingly vast and we are entirely wanting to please him. That word is 'holy'. Today, the word 'holy' gets a bad press: it's a term of abuse to say 'Holier than thou!' But holiness is essential for all Christian growth. And we need that growth into holiness if we are to know what and who God is.

Holiness is a key concept in the Bible. It means literally, set apart, sanctified, different. Each word, on its own, is wholly unsatisfactory. But taken together they somehow circumscribe a way of being that is wholly attractive, wholly clean and pure in a moral sense, and wholly other. And, if genuine, devastatingly attractive.

Holiness is key because it's the lens through which God himself chooses to become visible. The early disciples were lucky because they could talk to Jesus directly but, of course, we can't. The early church soon learnt another way of seeing and conversing with Him: for example, in the letter to the Hebrews (in its chapter 11) we're told that 'without holiness, no one can see the Lord.' Or, if you'd prefer, the beatitudes in Matthew 5 rephrase these words as a positive command: 'blessed are the pure in heart, for they *will* see God.' Taking these verses together demonstrates how holiness in our lives leads to the kind of purity that tries to be like Jesus. As a popular worship song puts it, 'Holiness is your life in me ...'

Actually, these two Bible verses, Hebrews and Matthew, say much the same thing: those who foster a healthy moral holiness will see God. Such people will be able to understand God in a way that is frankly impossible otherwise. They then acquire an ability to speak with God. God honours that response and calls them his own.

This insight into the character of God allows us to understand better the Laws in the Bible. Anyone who's read the books of Law that kick-start the Old Testament will surely notice a refrain that's repeated often and used each time that God deals with His people, 'Be holy as I am holy.' We're not to understand by this that God is saying, 'behave or I'll punish you.' Quite the reverse. He's actually giving us the key to unlock and thence fully access His presence. If we are holy as He is holy, we will see Him (as it were) through a better lens, with a new clarity, in spirit and in truth. If we are holy, we will see God, and thereby have eternal life.

There are many ways of acquiring the gift of holiness, although ultimately all involve hard graft, thinking before each action, every task, each and every sentence, asking 'Is this of God?' Holiness requires acts of will inspired by our wanting of God. But there are short cuts of sorts. The first is to regard God as our overlord and king of everything in our lives. By adopting this theme as a mindset, we're being asked to consider our relationship with God. God is vast and mighty as a King: we, by contrast, are his subjects, so we're being invited—better, instructed and even commanded—to live lives of total submission to him. As Jesus says in today's Gospel, 'Those who love me will keep my word ...' *We will grow in holiness if we adopt a radical sense of submission and obey his loving, gentle and perfect rule.*

That submission requires us to know what God is like. How can we submit if we don't know what it is that He wants? We discern that Christian growth follows a path that is something like a spiral: we do as God wants, so we grow in holiness, so we know God better; and as we know God better; we know better what he wants (and do it), and thereby become holier still, and so forth. That doing will involve loving God and loving neighbour, so it will both involve prayer and also feeding the hungry and helping the destitute. As we ascend the spiral I mentioned, it will involve pushing boundaries, pushing them aside to find God; it will involve challenging the systems that promote a gap between rich and poor. It will involve using our mind, poring over the scriptures to better know the purposes of God. It will involve yearning to become more like Jesus. Holiness in a soul causes those desires. To be honest, without them real holiness is probably not worth having.

There is a rumour going round that it's possible to know God and converse with Him. There is a rumour that God desires us, loves us, and yearns for us. It's a rumour that God wants the very best for us, wants to support us, want us to be entirely His. There is a rumour that God wants us to give us the fullness of life that comes from Him living in us. All that he asks in return is for us to give Him our. That way of life is called 'holiness'. Without holiness no one can see the Lord.

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

Mighty God,
in whom we know the power of redemption,
you stand among us in the shadows of our time.
As we move through every sorrow and trial of this life,
uphold us with knowledge of the final morning
when, in the glorious presence of your risen Son,
we will share in his resurrection,
redeemed and restored to the fullness of life
and forever freed to be your people.
Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Creator of the universe,
you made the world in beauty,
and restore all things in glory
through the victory of Jesus Christ.
We pray that, wherever your image is still disfigured
by poverty, sickness, selfishness, war and greed,
the new creation in Jesus Christ may appear in justice, love, and peace,
to the glory of your name.
Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

O God, your Son remained with his disciples after his resurrection,
teaching them to love all people as neighbours.
As his disciples in this age,

we offer our prayers on behalf of the universe
in which we are privileged to live
and our neighbours with whom we share it.

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Guide us in the path of discipleship,
so that, as you have blessed us,
we may be a blessing for others,
bringing the promise of the kingdom near
by our words and deeds.

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Gracious God,
through a vision you sent forth Paul to preach the gospel
and called the women to the place of prayer on the Sabbath.
Grant that we may be like Paul
and be found like Lydia,
our hearts responsive to your word
and open to go where you lead us.

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

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 All Heaven declares (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

HYMN 4 Praise my soul the King of Heaven (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.