

**Friday 10 February 2023**

# St Scholastica



Scholastica is a more shadowy figure than her famous brother, St Benedict. She was probably born around the year 480 AD in Nursia, central Italy. At an early age she chose to consecrate herself to God, but probably continued to live at home. When Benedict moved to Monte Cassino she moved to Plombariola, joining (or maybe founding) a nunnery under his direction. As abbess she sought to follow his Rule.

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.

**Sermon** © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

**Liturgy and prayers of intercession** © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

**Bible readings** © Publishers of the NRSV translation. Reading choices: <http://www.satucket.com>

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 click on the links.

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

Scholastica was a woman of deep and profound prayer yet we know almost nothing about her except that her entire life was centred around prayer, so let's talk about that aspect of her life. In a book I recently read, I was startled to read the author's opinion that the primary purpose of a church is to teach its members to pray. I'm not sure I completely agree, but the assertion has a great deal of truth in it. The church is a prayer establishment.

Prayer is an encounter with the living God on His terms and in His Spirit. It's the start of a relationship. It's the medium of our relationship. It *is* our relationship.

It's common to think of prayer as being a stream of words, usually flowing in one direction, but analogies with human conversation and human communication readily tell us that the analogy is extremely limited.

I'll start with two stories. First, think about Peter and Paul who live nearby. Perhaps you know them. They've been neighbours for decades and went to school together. And they see each other every single day, for example when they meet in the paper shop. 'Hello' says Peter. 'Nice day!' and Paul responds, 'Yes, lovely isn't it?' And so they go about their way. One day Peter discovers that he has cancer; by coincidence, the same day Paul discovers that he's won a million on the lottery. They meet at the same counter in the same paper shop. 'Hello' says Peter. 'Nice day!' and Paul responds, 'Yes, lovely isn't it?'

And the other story isn't a story at all, really. It describes Darby and Joan sitting either side of the fire with a mug of cocoa, delighting in each other's company. And they utter not a word.

In our reading from Matthew's Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples to pray. He tells them to first go to their room in silence—in order to avoid all distractions—and to pray according to the template we now call the Lord's Prayer. The commentaries refuse to take the passage seriously; their quibbles centre round whether Jesus calls his Father 'daddy' or not. The doctors argue and the patients die. The point surely is the *relationship* between Jesus and his Father in Heaven. And as just about everything Jesus did was intended as a model for us, we are to recognise our goal as an intense, intimate relationship with God.

No human can tell another human how to pray. I can't, in part because I don't know your schedule, when you feel at your best, etc. And I can't because I'm not you, so I don't know how God wants to reveal Himself to you. But I can suggest a few pointers that will help start the communication and let it develop into a living, deep relationship.

The **first** key to any living relationship depends on our wanting it to work. We must be sincere in wanting it. Peter and Paul did not really want a relationship—that's fine for them, but tragic if they wanted more. We must want a relationship with God. That statement sounds so obvious it would be tragic but for the fact it needs to be stated. You see, when you meet with God, your life changes. You come face to face with reality, perhaps for the very first time. And, as T.S. Eliot once famously said, 'Humankind cannot cope with much reality.' I think that we all know this fact deep down, so many people do not really want to pray because they know that getting close to God is going to cost not less than everything. This explains

why there are so few great saints. But saints are not special people with a special destiny. They are not people given special powers. They are merely people who have a special desire, cultivated by constant immersion in God's love, in prayer.

The **second** key to prayer is a knowledge of who God is. There is nothing wrong with a three-year old who thinks that God has a long white beard and sits on a cloud. There is everything wrong when a teenager has the same image. It is tragic when an adult thinks of such an infantile God. I once talked with a student who said he was an atheist. He did not believe in God and knew that I did. 'Tell me about this God' I said. At the end, I had to say, 'I don't believe in your God either.' It was infantile. No: when we truly want God, we need to seek Him where He is—in truth, as described in Scripture, for example. We pray to a false God if we try to pray to a false image of God. Such prayer becomes nothing less than idolatry, if we are unwilling for our image of God to grow. Of course we cannot truly know God this side of the veil, but as long as we are willing and desiring for our image of God to grow, He will love us into a deeper awareness of His enormous love.

And the **third** way in which we can grow in prayer is to learn who we are. This is the hardest of the lot. But if we have a false image of who we are, then we are unlikely to understand when things happen. A bat travels by a form of sonar, bouncing sound waves from solid objects and listening for their echo. Similarly, a healthy personality gauges whom it by how people respond to its actions, its words, and the like. But an unhealthy personality is unwilling to engage and analyse people's reactions—maybe it fears to find out. Come what may, a refusal to acknowledge whom we are is as fatal to a relationship with God as it is with a spouse. The truth of who we really are can only come about through a ruthless determination to find out the truth, asking, 'Who am I?' That's why people of prayer are humble. That's why the Bible speaks so consistently against the sins of pride and conceit.

We are made to live in God's presence. We are made to live in a close, intimate and loving relationship with God. We cannot do that unless we are honest. We must be honest in wanting a relationship. We must seek a true vision of God, and we must seek to truthful about self. And then long but satisfying growth into prayer can begin.

## 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.