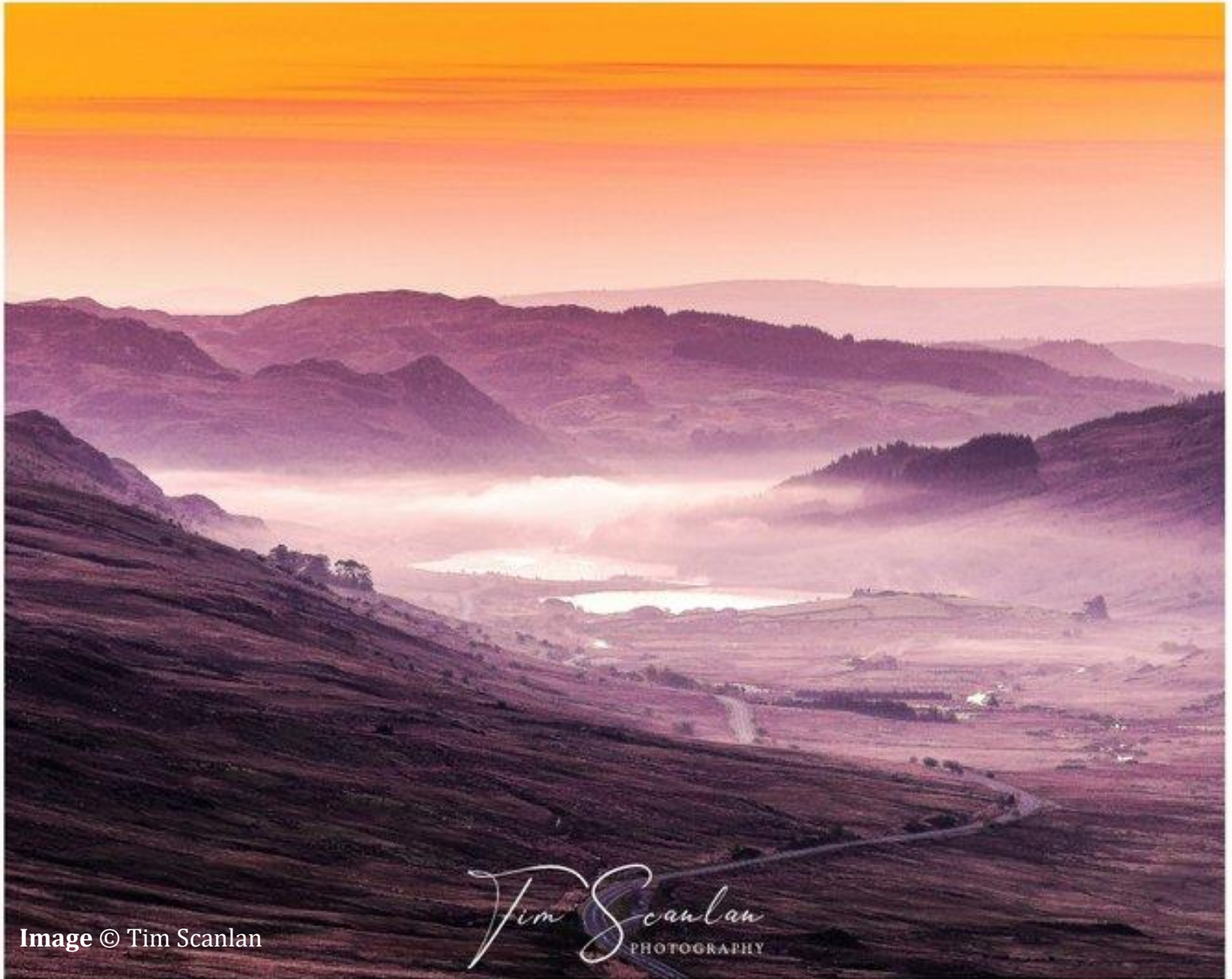


**Sunday 16 July 2023**

# The Sixth Sunday after Trinity



**Sermon** © Lucie Reilly.

**Liturgy** © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

**Prayers of intercession** © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

**Bible readings** © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration are included at the end.

The hymn can be accessed via a YouTube link. 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 For the beauty of the earth**  
**For the beauty of the earth**

(traditional tune)

(different tune)

## 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 so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, to be our advocate in heaven, and to bring us to eternal life. Therefore, 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**

Click [here](#) for the tune of this version of the Gloria ('Cwm Rhondda').

**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 after Trinity**

Merciful God,  
you have prepared for those who love you  
such good things as pass our understanding:  
pour into our hearts such love toward you  
that we, loving you in all things and above all things,  
may obtain your promises,  
which exceed all that we can desire;  
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

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David. See, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples. See, you shall call nations that you do not know, and nations that do not know you shall run to you, because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, for he has glorified you.

Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts; let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

*Isaiah 55:10-13*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

## Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Romans

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

*Romans 8:1-11*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

HYMN 2 [All creation worships you](#)[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

## Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

**All    Glory to you O Lord.**

Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

He continued, 'Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.'

*Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All    Praise to you O Christ.**

## Sermon

I'm sure we all remember Jesus' parables from Sunday School, in Church and reading our Bibles but, why did Jesus teach and preach using parables? Today, we are going to start at the end, after giving the parable, which is recorded in three of the Gospels (all the Gospels but John's) and, before He had explained its meaning, Jesus' disciples asked him, 'Why do you speak to the people in parables?'

Jesus answered by quoting Isaiah, concerning people who have eyes but do not see and ears but do not hear. In telling the parables, Jesus was bringing pressure upon his listeners, to either open their spiritual eyes and ears and be enlightened, or to shut their eyes and ears tighter and be condemned.

The parables not only make people think, but they also make people choose. They bring people out of the grey area into the clearly black or white. The parables were a kind 'sorting fork' for Jesus, by which he was able to separate the wheat from the chaff. Jesus based His parables on the customs at that time. In the case of the Parable of the Sower, farming was something His disciples knew and would be familiar with.

Today we have heard The Parable of the Sower. Just a quick summery/recap, Jesus' story is about a farmer who sows seed indiscriminately. Some seed fall on different types of land ... on the path (wayside) with no soil, some on rocky ground with little soil, some on soil which contains thorns, and some on good soil. On the path, the seed is taken away; in the second and third soils, the seed fails to produce a crop; but when it falls on good soil, it grows and yields thirty-, sixty-, or a hundred-fold.

Sowers sow seeds hoping for and wanting a crop. Sowers want to see growth. They want a harvest. Isn't that what we want when our plant seeds? In early Spring when we plant seeds in our window pots or wildflower garden, we hope that by Summer they will have grown, and we will have beautiful plants or flowers to admire.

The same applies to us in terms of ourselves, when I give myself to another, invest my life in a relationship, or offer my time, energy, effort, and love, I do it with the intention and hope that something will come of it. I want my seeds and their soil to be fruitful.

I can't imagine anyone sowing seeds knowing they won't grow, knowing that they'll be eaten by birds, fall among rocks, or be choked by thorns. Yet, that's exactly what the Sower does in our Gospel reading, these seeds are scattered indiscriminately.

Why does the Sower do that? It doesn't make sense and that makes me think there is more to this parable than we usually see or hear. Today we are going explore—God as the Sower and the seed is his word!

Sometimes when it comes to our lives and hearing the word, we can be much more like the hard, or rocky or thorny soil than the good soil. I'm sure we all wish we could pray more and pray better. We all wish that we gave more to the church, more time and money. We all wish we could share our faith more easily, that we could tell our friends and neighbours just why this place means so much to us. But we don't feel like good soil ... we can see and feel in ourselves what we know to be failure. We can see and feel the rocks, the thorns, and the hardness within us.

When exploring this parable, we can get caught up in the business of the seeds and the soil. Imagining the details of where we fit, and we can be hit by the reality of what it means to be soil, good or otherwise.

But today we are going say it isn't about seeds or soil. Jesus gives us a clue when he says, 'Hear then the parable of the Sower'. This parable is not about soil: *it is about the Sower.*

God the Sower. God who can seem extreme, messy, and all over the place when his seeds end up everywhere. When Jesus explains this parable, he says that the parable is about the Sower. The one who owns and works the fields, the one who owns and plants the seeds. This parable is about God who is willing to see that there is possibility and opportunity, even in the rocky, hard, shallow and thorny soil. Even knowing that the seeds may not grow in poor conditions, God scatters and plants them anyway.

This parable shows a God who declares that hard packed soil, the rocky soil and even the thorny soil, all the soils, are acceptable. All these soils are good enough to sow. Good enough for the Word to be scattered on.

The Sower is scattering seed, knowing that it probably will not grow, but seeing the possibility that it might. This parable shows us is God, who scatters grace, mercy, and love in all directions. This parable shows God who has decided to scatter good soil but also on the rocky, the shallow, and the thorny soil. We are shown here a God who wants the Word of the Kingdom to be heard everywhere and anywhere. A God who shows us that we are cherished and loved, imperfections and all.

This sowing God is showing us that the lenses of good and bad soil that we see the world through are not how the Sower sees. The productivity of the soil does not determine where the Sower sows. Whether are good and holy, or if we are hard, rocky or thorny... it doesn't determine God loves.

'Listen!' Jesus says, 'a Sower went to sow ...' and with those first few words gives us the good news. The good news that God has decided to love us, and give us His word, even if we don't feel good enough to receive it. Because God's love is given indiscriminately, he has declared it and given it—FOR US. 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

These prayers are inspired by today's Gospel and the 'parable of the sower'.

We pray for all those who preach the Good News by word of mouth or, better, by goodness of heart and faithfulness of service. Speak your Good News through them. Lord of the Harvest, spread the Good News.

**All Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for all those who hear the Good News. We ask that you inspire the hearts of those who do not understand it, or cannot accommodate it, that the evil one cannot come and snatch away what is sown.

Lord of the Harvest, spread the Good News.

**All Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for all those who hear the Good News. We ask that you strengthen the hearts that seem like rocky ground, that the roots growing there are strong enough to withstand trouble or persecution.

Lord of the Harvest, spread the Good News.

**All Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for all those who hear the Good News. We ask that you give resilience to the hearts that seem like thorny ground, that the shoots growing there are not choked by the cares of the world or the lure of wealth.

Lord of the Harvest, spread the Good News.

**All Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for all those who hear the Good News. We pray that you improve the soil of all our hearts, that we may hear your word, understand it and bring forth fruit that will last, and itself feed the world.

Lord of the Harvest, spread the Good News.

**All Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father,

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

## The peace

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy and peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

**All And also with you.**

**HYMN 3 [Angel voices ever singing](#)**      ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

## The Dismissal

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you and  
be gracious to you.

The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you  
and give you his peace;

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 [The sower's song](#)**      ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))  
**[Seed scattered and sown](#)**      ([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.**

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 of our pilgrimage,  
you have led us to the living water:  
refresh and sustain us  
as we go forward on our journey,  
in the name of 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.