

28 November 2021

The Holy Communion - THIRD ORDER

Hymn TIS 265 O come O come Emmanuel

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Matthew 22.37–40, Mark 12.30–31

Let us pray.

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.

Collect

Eternal God, you have taught us that the night is far spent and the day is at hand: keep us awake and alert, watching for your kingdom, and make us strong in faith, so that when Christ comes in glory to judge the earth, we may go out joyfully to greet him; and, with all your saints, may worship you for ever; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Jeremiah 33.14-16

¹⁴ "The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will fulfil the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah. ¹⁵ "In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line; he will do what is just and right in the land. ¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which it will be called: The Lord Our Righteous saviour."

Hear the word of the Lord, **thanks be to God.**

Psalm 25.1-10

- ¹ In you, O Lord my God, have I put my hope: in you have I trusted, let me not be ashamed, nor let my enemies triumph over me.
- ² Let none who wait for you be put to shame: but let those that break faith be confounded and gain nothing. ³ Show me your ways, O Lord: and teach me your paths.
- ⁴ Lead me in the ways of your truth, and teach me: for you are the God of my salvation.
- ⁵ In you have I hoped all the day long: because of your goodness, O Lord.
- ⁶ Call to mind your compassion and your loving-kindness: for they are from of old.
- ⁷ Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: but according to your mercy think on me. ⁸ Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will he direct sinners in the way.
- ⁹ The meek he will guide in the path of justice: and teach the humble his ways.

¹⁰ All the paths of the Lord are faithful and true: for those who keep his covenant and his commandments.

1 Thessalonians 3.9-13

⁹ How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? ¹⁰ Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith. ¹¹ Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. ¹² May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. ¹³ May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

Luke 21.25-38

²⁵ 'There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. ²⁶ People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. ²⁷ At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸ When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.' ²⁹ He told them this parable: 'Look at the fig-tree and all the trees. ³⁰ When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. ³¹ Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near. ³² 'Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. ³⁴ 'Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. ³⁵ For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.' ³⁷ Each day Jesus was teaching at the temple, and each evening he went out to spend the night on the hill called the Mount of Olives, ³⁸ and all the people came early in the morning to hear him at the temple.

The Sermon

The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father;
from there he will come to judge
the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ has promised that you will hear us when we ask in faith: receive the prayers we offer.

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray,

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.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

PREPARATION FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER

We are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. 1 John 3.2–3

CONFESSION

Invitation to Confession

The Lord comes, bringing to light things now hidden in darkness, and disclosing the purposes of the heart.

Let us open our hearts and prepare for his coming, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

**Heavenly Father, you have loved us with an everlasting love,
but we have broken your holy laws and have left undone what we ought to have done.**

We are sorry for our sins and turn away from them.

For the sake of your Son who died for us, forgive us, cleanse us and change us.

By your Holy Spirit, enable us to live for you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God is slow to anger and full of compassion, forgiving all who humbly repent and trust in his Son as Saviour and Lord. God therefore forgives you in Christ Jesus, in whom there is no condemnation. **Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.¹ Peter 2.24

THE GREETING OF PEACE

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

Hymn TIS 518 For the bread and for the wine

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty Creator, everliving God.

We give you thanks and praise for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ,

who by the power of your Spirit was born of Mary and lived as one of us.

By his death on the cross and rising to new life,

he offered the one true sacrifice for sin and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.

We thank you that when he shall come again in power and great triumph to judge the world,

we may with joy behold his appearing, and in confidence stand before him

who redeems us from sin and death and makes us heirs of everlasting life.

Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.**

And now, gracious God, we thank you for these gifts of bread and wine, and pray that we who receive them, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, according to our Saviour's word, in remembrance of his suffering and death, may share his body and blood.

On the night before he died, Jesus took bread, and when he had given you thanks he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat. This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper, he took the cup, and again giving you thanks he gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Drink from 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.'

We eat this bread and drink this cup **to proclaim the death of the Lord.**

We do this until he returns. **Come, Lord Jesus!**

Father, as we recall his saving death and glorious resurrection, may we who share these gifts be renewed by your Holy Spirit and united in the body of your Son.

Bring us with all your people into the joy of your eternal kingdom, there to feast at your table and join in your eternal praise:

**Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive praise and honour
and glory and power for ever and ever. Amen.**

THE COMMUNION

We who are many are one body, for we all share in the one bread.

The body of Christ keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

The blood of Christ keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Prayer after Communion

God for whom we wait, we thank you that you have fed us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation.

As we joyfully await your Son, keep us ever watchful in hope that we may be ready to stand before him on the day of his coming.

Father, **we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.

Hymn TIS 276 There's a light upon the mountains

Blessing

Christ the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you, fill you with great hope and make you ready to meet him when he comes in glory; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord: **In the name of Christ. Amen.**



The first Sunday of Advent, five weeks from yesterday to Christmas. 2021 is nearly over. How does that make you feel? A bit of panic, delight, concern, or hope?

The first Sunday of Advent is the Sunday of Hope, so what are you hoping for? The kids are all hoping for the latest toys, but I doubt many of us have great hopes for what might be under the Christmas Tree, much as we might enjoy something nice, our favourite chocolate, something beautiful, or useful, we also know that these things will make very little real difference in our lives.



We might sincerely hope for good solutions to the Pandemic, greater understanding and wisdom in politicians and leaders all over the world or closer to home, the bishop to be inspired with a wonderful plan for this parish and all the other struggling parishes in this diocese or just possibly we are simply hoping to see our families and to have less ailments and aches next year.

Do we hope for Jesus' return?

Despite the odd inconvenience this is a pretty good existence, this is a lovely place to live, and we have houses with running water, electricity and the more useful of modern conveniences, plus shops, parks, and beauty all around us. Do we really want this to change?

We cannot see the future, understanding what it will be like is when Jesus returns is like expecting an embryo to understand what life will be like.



Have you heard the story of the dog waiting expectantly outside a door? He has no idea what is inside, but he knows his master is in there, so he is hoping to go in as well.

When we think of life after Jesus returns, we have no idea what it will be like. I can tell you for sure there will be no roads paved with gold, but it will be wonderful. No more worries, no more questions, a new heaven, and a new earth. Can you even begin to imagine earth better than it is now? We don't know but we know our master will be there, so we are hoping to be there as well.

In our gospel reading today, Jesus is talking both about things that will happen in the near and the distant future. Many people have tried to make the words *'Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened'* say something different but as Jesus says: God had not told him

the timing of his second coming while he was on earth, and he was expecting to return fairly soon.

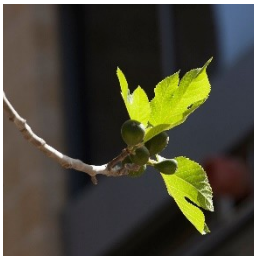


Both when Jerusalem was destroyed and when Jesus returns, there was and will be times of anguish and perplexity for the nations and people will faint with terror but look at the instructions for believers: *stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.* Wow. Everyone else is in terror but we stand in in expectation because our redemption is near.

Throughout the Old Testament the oracles of the prophets foretold what would happen when the Messiah came. Some of these things were fulfilled with his first coming but some will be fulfilled when he returns. There will be terrors and cosmic disturbance, but he will come to all nations.

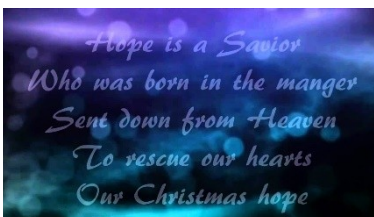
Our reading from Jerimiah today is just one passage which talks about the coming Messiah.

“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will fulfil the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah. ¹⁵ “In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David’s line; he will do what is just and right in the land. ¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which it will be called: The Lord Our Righteous Saviour.”



On the one hand Jesus says the signs will be clear; just as we can predict when summer is coming because all the trees come into leaf so by the signs of the times, we will be able to tell when Jesus will return but he also says that the day will come suddenly, and we need to always keep watch. In Matthew's parallel passage, he also said “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

The fig tree was often used as a metaphor for Israel so this reference to the fig tree and all the trees is saying that Israel and all the nations will be a part of these events.



Our response, like the original disciples is to keep alert and live, in hope. This is what we were told to expect. Patience is important. Pray for strength. There are times when we get so weary, it is not an exciting battle, with adrenalin flowing and banners flying, but the steady tread of prayer and hope and scripture and witness, day by day and week by week. The danger is that if the original disciples or us allow our hearts to be weighed down by worldly distraction, the coming day will catch us, like an animal caught unaware. We need to stay alert.

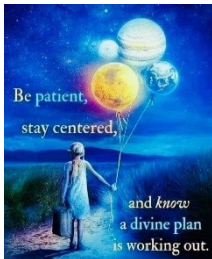


As our Psalm said today is full of assurances that God is faithful, and we can trust in him, he will teach and guide us

In you, O Lord my God, have I put my hope:
in you have I trusted,
Show me your ways, O Lord: and teach me your paths.
⁴ Lead me in the ways of your truth, and teach me:

for you are the God of my salvation.

⁵ In you have I hoped all the day long:
because of your goodness, O Lord



No matter how slow it seems, we can trust God and know that history and the future is running to a divine plan. The Christian conception of history is that it has a goal and at the goal Jesus Christ will be recognised as Lord of all. That is all we know but it is all we need to know. We always live in that certain hope, in the

certainty that we are people who are preparing ourselves to appear in the presence of God.

Beyond the end of time stands the Lord, who has come among us in the person of Jesus. Those whose lives are lived under Jesus' Lordship can live expectantly, hopefully, filling each day with activity that is meaningful because of its divine mandate and its contribution to the fulfilment of God's purposes for our lives.

What do we do when other grow faint' from fear and foreboding' and the 'powers of heavens' are shaken? What gives us direction when things go wrong for yourself or those you love. Because we know that God is in control, we know that our Lord is close at hand, coming with power and great glory. This message of hope needs to be proclaimed at all times. 'Your redemption is drawing near' God's word will never pass away.

How can we thank God
enough for you
in return for all the joy
we have in the presence
of our God
because of you?
1 Thessalonians 3:9

The other side of the coin is that we need never to debase this life through indulgence or worry but to pray, depending on God for strength to meet life's challenges.

May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as mine does for you. ¹³ May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.