

07 August 2022

The Holy Communion - THIRD ORDER

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Blessed be God's kingdom, now and forever.**

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.
And also with you.

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.

Prayer of the Day

Kindle in our hearts, Father, the same faith that impelled Abraham to set out from his home and to live as a pilgrim in a foreign land. As we, like him, look for the city that none but you can design and build, keep us watchful for your Son's coming, that we may be found faithful stewards of all that you have entrusted to us. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Isaiah 1.1, 1.10-20

¹ The vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah son of Amoz saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

¹⁰ Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom; listen to the instruction of our God, you people of Gomorrah! ¹¹ 'The multitude of your sacrifices – what are they to me?' says the Lord. 'I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats.

¹² When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? ¹³ Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations – I cannot bear your worthless assemblies.

¹⁴ Your New Moon feasts and your appointed festivals I hate with all my being. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. ¹⁵ When you spread out your hands in prayer, I hide my eyes from you; even when you offer many prayers, I am not listening. Your hands are full of blood!

¹⁶ Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight; stop doing wrong. ¹⁷ Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.

¹⁸ 'Come now, let us settle the matter,' says the Lord. 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.

¹⁹ If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good things of the land; ²⁰ but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword.' For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

Psalm 50.1-8, 50.23-24

¹ The Lord our God, the Mighty One, has spoken: and summoned the earth, from the rising of the sun to its setting in the west. ² From Zion, perfect in beauty: God has shone out in glory.

³ Our God is coming, he will not keep silent: before him is devouring fire, and tempest whirls about him.

⁴ He calls to the heavens above: and to the earth, so he may judge his people.

⁵ 'Gather to me my faithful ones: those who by sacrifice made a covenant with me.'

⁶ The heavens shall proclaim his righteousness: for God himself is judge.

⁷ 'Listen my people, and I will speak: O Israel, I am God your God, and I will give my testimony.

⁸ 'It is not for your sacrifices that I reprove you: for your burnt-offerings are always before me.

²³ 'O consider this, you who forget God: lest I tear you in pieces, and there be no one to save you.

²⁴ 'He honours me who brings sacrifice of thanksgiving: and to him who keeps to my way I will show the salvation of God.'

Hebrews 11.1-3, 11.8-16

¹ Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. ² This is what the ancients were commended for. ³ By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible. ⁸ By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. ⁹ By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. ¹¹ And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she considered him faithful who had made the promise. ¹² And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

¹³ All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. ¹⁴ People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ Instead, they were longing for a better country – a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

Luke 12.32-40

22 He said to his disciples, 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. 24 Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! 25 And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? 26 If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest?

27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. 28 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! 29 And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying.

30 For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. 31 Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. 32 'Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

33 Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Sermon

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

One or more members of the congregation may pray

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.

CONFESSION

Knowing the goodness of God and our failure to respond with love and obedience, let us confess our sins, **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.**

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

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have these gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. **Blessed be God for ever.**

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.**

You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, making us in your own image. We praise you for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who by his death on the cross and rising to new life offered the one true sacrifice for sin and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people. Therefore, we lift our voices to praise you, 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.

We who are many are one body, for we all share in the one bread. The gifts of God for the people of God. Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts with thanksgiving.

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

Almighty and eternal God, may we who have received this sacrament of your Son's body and blood worship you in all we do, proclaim your word to all the world, and live in the power of your Spirit.

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.



What do you treasure? When we hear the word treasure we often think of gold and jewels, like pirate's treasure, but what we treasure is not always wealth, it can be the people in our life, our relationships, it can be our position in the community, our standing, it could be our job, our calling, or it could be our home, the place where we feel secure, we might treasure things that come from our family, our inheritance, or just things which remind us of precious people or moments in our lives, our memories, or perhaps we treasure our relationship with God, our faith and liberty.

God continually blesses Phil and I so I don't think much about money but I do really care about my family, I really appreciate being able to be a priest, especially to this community, and I am blessed with two homes but anywhere I can have a bit of our stuff, be with Phil, and be secure feels like home, and there are things, currently packed up, and in the rectory and our Canberra flat, that I cherish because they remind me of lovely people and precious memories, but none of it is as important as knowing that God loves me and will always be with me.

Last week the gospel reading included the young man asking Jesus to make his brother share the inheritance and the parable of the rich fool and today's reading follows with a collection of sayings linked by the catchwords 'worry' and 'self'. Jesus is speaking of the basic human worries about what we need to survive: food and clothing.



Israel was in danger of becoming like the man in the story, wanting enough possessions to last a long time. Societies and individuals alike can think themselves into this false position, to which the short answer is God's 'you fool! Life isn't like that; the kingdom of God is not like that.'



The Greek word for to be anxious means to 'take anxious thought' or 'to put forth an effort' or 'to strive after'. The instruction not to worry can be understood as an encouragement to start making decisions that are not controlled by anxiety.

We now know, as God has always known, that worry itself can be destructive. Stress and worry can cause disease, which leads to the prospect of people worrying about worry, which is a downward spiral that only a good sense of humour can break. What Jesus says about worry goes to the heart of the way we are. To inhale a bracing lungful of his good sense is health giving at every level.

If God is 'Abba', who loves you, his child, what stops you from trusting him?



Abba who provides for the birds and the grass, knows what we need to sustain life. Freed from such mundane concerns, Jesus disciples are to be concerned, rather, with the things of God's kingdom. On the one hand, disciples should strive for the kingdom, on the other hand, they are assured that it is God's purpose to give us the kingdom.

The kingdom of God, at its heart is about God's sovereignty sweeping the world with love and power, so that human beings, each made in God's image and each one dearly loved may relax in the knowledge that God is in control. God the creator, loves to give good gifts, loves to grant you the kingdom - loves to share his sovereign care and liberation with you.



Jesus reminds us of three reasons why his disciples should not allow anxiety to control them. V23 'Life is more than food and the body more than clothing'. V24 'Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, but God takes care of them'. And in verse 25 - Being anxious does not solve our problems.

These words are not intended for those who do not have enough to eat but to those who have enough and yet spend their lives trying to acquire more. If God cares for the creatures, then will not God also care for you? A vigorous trust in God's ability to care for God's own will go a long way toward freeing us from anxiety. No matter how much we worry we cannot make ourselves taller or add a day to our lives.

Anxiety reveals a lack of faith in God our heavenly father and if one's life is devoted to the pursuit of things of the kingdom one will not be anxious about earthly things.



We can lay up treasure in heaven or on earth but not in both places. The choice must be either/or - either our own advancement or the advancement of the kingdom, either earthly goods or heavenly treasures, either our own concerns or God's.

The way we handle material goods reveals where our true commitments lie; determines whether we have earthly treasure or treasure in heaven and determines where our heart lies.

Treasure in Heaven is not treasure that we will possess only after death, not wealth that we will have nothing to spend on. Heaven is God's sphere of created reality, anywhere that God is in control is heaven, which as the Lord's prayer attests will one day be all of earth but now is wherever we give him control. The treasure of Heaven are those wonderful things: an unencumbered relationship with God, peace, joy, salvation, and love.

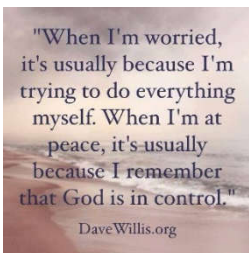


What greater denial of a life controlled by anxiety or greed could there be than a life devoted to providing for the needs of others? Will we live God's way or our own way? The two opposing impulses, either to grasp or to give, are set right with God when we do not possess or control. This releases us from anxiety and set us free to be the person God wants us to be.

The call to sell your possessions and give to the poor is not for all followers of Jesus to get rid of all possessions. Luke describes in Acts how the believers lived in their own homes with their own things. Jesus is returning to the theme of greed in last weeks' passage and is advocating the entirely opposite attitude. We do need to consider this call. Most of us have possessions we do not need, yet we hold on to them while others are homeless, hungry, or doing it tough. Perhaps it is time for us to look at what we don't need and either give it away or sell it and give the money away.



In moving into the flat in Canberra, we packed away a lot of stuff which we will need in the new house but also put aside lots of stuff which we will not need. It was quite a cathartic exercise but the most fun has been that I've been selling it off through social media. I've put quite low prices on most things and people who need it are very grateful. Meeting lovely people, knowing I'm helping, getting rid of the stuff, and creating some space are all enjoyable and the few hundred dollars I've made is actually irrelevant.



Faith in Jesus awakens our consciousness of the spiritual dimensions of life. By so doing, faith allows and even forces us to see our lives from a new perspective. Then we can see that some of the things which we have been so concerned about are not all that important. We may also see that we have not given enough attention to important things: family, friends, a more just and peaceful society or our own personal, intellectual, and spiritual development.

Jesus does intend us to be 'so spiritually minded that we are no earthly use', he intends us to live life abundantly. He expects us to treasure all the wonderful things he has given and especially the wonderful people he has brought into our lives to love and cherish but most of all he expects us to love him, strive to do his will and love his people. When we do that, he showers blessings on us, more love, more peace, more joy, and an even closer relationship with him. True security is to be found not in wealth or any earthly treasure but in God's loving, abundant provision.