

Berrow with Pendock, Eldersfield, Birtsmorton and Hollybush



5th. Sunday of Lent

Welcome-do have a candle, glass of juice/wine and cracker/piece of bread ready

HYMN

OPENING PRAYER

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all **and also with you.**

**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.**

Jesus said: Before you offer your gift, go and be reconciled. As brothers and sisters in God's family, we come together to ask our Father for forgiveness.

THE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

**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.**

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**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.**

May Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you your sins, and bring you to everlasting life.
Amen

THE COLLECT

Most merciful God, who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
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.
Amen

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified:
mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace;
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.
Amen.

READINGS : Jeremiah 31. 31-34. John 12. 22-33

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

(Please read at home Hebrews 5. 5-10)

REFLECTION

“I will write my covenant on their heart”

Jeremiah said God would write the Law on their hearts, promising that one day everyone will know God’s rules because of that life will be full of peace and joy for everyone. Is it tattooed on your heart? Well, no literally?

We are familiar with the Commandment tablets in churches. Who can remember learning them by heart? I am reminded each time I see a rainbow of God’s Covenant and those promises God made.

Are you familiar with South American colourful cross with people featured? Or do you relate to the crucifix, the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus.

“Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”

Those who garden, will understand this concept. When Jesus finished telling the parable, he said: The person who has ears to hear, let him understand the riddles about the kingdom of God.

The story for today finds Jesus six days before he was going to die. Jesus is philosophical about death.

When folk approached Philip, it’s Passover time, and literally hundreds of thousands of people are gathered in Jerusalem. In Greek they asked him, “Can we SEE Jesus?” Philip went to Andrew and the two of them went to Jesus and said: “There are two Greeks who want to SEE you.”

Now you think that Jesus would have answered them directly, but he didn't. Distracted, He was preoccupied with his death in six days. So his answers about the grain of wheat.

Now it may seem a weird answer! All the Greeks wanted to do was to see Jesus. But maybe there is a connection: That is, to see Jesus is to see the importance of dying in order to live. St. Francis of Assisi knew this well when he wrote in his famous prayer for peace; “it is in giving that we receive; it is in dying that we are born again.”

The Apostle Paul knew this well when he said: “We will not be united with Christ in a resurrection like his, unless we are first united with Christ in a death like his.”

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I would like to suggest to you that there is a spiritual principle at work here. In the Bible, Jesus talks about dying to self. It means dying to selfishness. It means dying to "the big I," about your own self fulfilment. We in life can become too preoccupied with me and my happiness.

Jesus said, "Unless a seed dies, it remains only one seed; but if it dies, it produces many seeds and seedlings of little love which then grow into great love." Each one of us struggles with our own selfishness.

There is a theme here of limiting our ordinary vision in John's Gospel, of not allowing the refractive grace of the Holy Spirit, to discern our path, our wisdom and the truth. God is willing us to look beyond the immediate and apparent. The church emphasizes Lent as a time of penitence and self-reflection, trying to break into the ordinary and revision how we proclaim the gospel.

Jesus Christ in his actions, revealed the kingdom through the ordinary. During Lent, we too need to be encouraged to grasp the implications of our own lives and the lives of the congregations. Where are we in our ministry and mission? Have we, the church in this Benefice, Deanery, the courage to take risks and refocus our vision for the future?

All relationships are complicated, aren't they? Change is challenging. Our faith journey and the building up the Kingdom of God. Can we look beyond what we are comfortable with? Can we imagine other possibilities? What do I need? But actually -what do others need? I may feel like I am losing my life and myself and my purpose.

Relationships are at the heart of our Gospel text from John on this last Sunday of Lent. Where Jesus does ask us to cast our gaze? There has to be a different way, a different answer, a different plan. As we look at the colourful cross and the crucifix, how do we interpret his death for us?

Jesus said: I am the resurrection AND the life.

It's about what God wants it to be and needs it to be.

Everything that is human, everything that becomes incarnated, must die. And this is what God knows in becoming us, the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us in Jesus. This text does not allow us to explain

away the suffering, to justify the pain, or to rationalize a sort of divine/human exchange. Because if we did, our suffering, our pain, our hopes would be for nothing.

What does Jesus want us to know about his death?

Jesus reminds us here, before Holy Week, before even his parting words to the disciples, that his death is not the end at all. It is no accident that Jesus helps us make sense of the resurrection before he helps us make sense of the cross. The whole order of things is mixed up, turned on its head. Life is death and death is life. The cross is not the answer. It's the question. It's not the moment but a moment in the entire Jesus event, his life, death, resurrection, and ascension, that is God so desperately wanting to be in relationship with us.

The cross is not the end; it's the beginning and was from the beginning. It is about recognizing, accepting, seeing, that God knows a relationship with God is complicated. And that Jesus is no easy answer. Because, it actually matters that God became human, not just that God died. It matters that God wanted to know what it means to live like us and not just die like us.

So as we draw close to Palm Sunday and passion narrative, have we taken stock? Have we re-visioned where we are and where we need to be? Are we able to move on, meet the challenges ahead and build up God's Kingdom here and in the wider communities we serve?

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Please ask for any additional prayers

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

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour taught us.

**Our Father,
which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;**

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thy kingdom come;
 thy will be done ;
 in earth as it is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily bread.
 And forgive us our trespasses,
 as we forgive those who trespass against us.
 And lead us not into temptation;
 but deliver us from evil;
 for thine is the kingdom,
 the power and the glory,
 for ever and ever. Amen.

THE PEACE

“Where two or three are gathered together in my name”, says the Lord,
 “there am I in the midst of them.”

The peace of the Lord be always with you
 and also with you.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
 creator of heaven and earth.
 I believe in Jesus Christ, his 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 again;
 he ascended into heaven,
 he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
 and 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 OFFERTORY PRAYER

Wise and gracious God, you spread a table before us; nourish your people with the word of life and the bread of heaven. **Amen**

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

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 thanks and praise.

It is indeed right and good
to give you thanks and praise,
almighty God and everlasting Father,
through Jesus Christ your Son.
For in these forty days
you lead us into the desert of repentance
that through a pilgrimage of prayer and discipline
we may grow in grace and learn to be your people once again.
Through fasting, prayer and acts of service
you bring us back to your generous heart.
Through study of your holy word
you open our eyes to your presence in the world
and free our hands to welcome others
into the radiant splendour of your love.
As we prepare to celebrate the Easter feast
with joyful hearts and minds
we bless you for your mercy
and join with saints and angels
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.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

All glory be to you, our heavenly Father,
 who, in your tender mercy, gave your only Son our Saviour Jesus Christ
 to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption;
 who made there by his one oblation of himself once offered a full, perfect
 and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole
 world; he instituted, and in his holy gospel commanded us to continue, a
 perpetual memory of his precious death until he comes again.

Hear us, merciful Father, we humbly pray,
 and grant that, by the power of your Holy Spirit,
 we receiving these gifts of your creation,
 this bread and this wine,
 according to your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's holy institution,
 in remembrance of his death and passion,
 may be partakers of his most blessed body and blood;

who, in the same night that he was betrayed,
 took bread and gave you thanks;
 he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:
 'Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
 do this in remembrance of me.'
 In the same way, after supper
 he took the cup and gave you thanks;
 he gave it to them, saying:
 '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.'

Therefore, Lord and heavenly Father, in remembrance of the precious
 death and passion,
 the mighty resurrection and glorious ascension
 of your dear Son Jesus Christ, we offer you through him this our
 sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

Grant that by his merits and death, and through faith in his blood, we and
 all your Church may receive forgiveness of our sins and all other
 benefits of his passion.

Although we are unworthy, through our manifold sins,
to offer you any sacrifice, yet we pray that you will accept this the duty
and service that we owe.

Do not weigh our merits, but pardon our offences,
and fill us all who share in this holy communion
with your grace and heavenly blessing;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
by whom, and with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.
Therefore let us keep the feast

(consume)

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us that what we do for the least of
our brothers and sisters we do also for you: give us the will to be the
servant of others as you were the servant of all, and gave up your life
and died for us, but are alive and reign, now and for ever.

Amen

**We thank you, Lord, that you have fed us in this physical and
spiritual sacrament, united us with Christ, and given us a foretaste
of the heavenly banquet prepared for all peoples. Amen.**

HYMN

THE BLESSING

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing;
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