

Sunday after Ascension 2020

Words of welcome

Welcome to our worship on this Sunday after Ascension, which, as you can see comes, in part, from St. Christopher's.

And behind me you can see an image of our Ascended Lord.

Opening words

God raised Christ from the dead

And enthroned him at his right hand in the heavenly realms

God put all things in subjection beneath his feet

And gave him as head over all things to the Church

We died, and our life lies hidden with Christ in God

We set out minds on things above

When Christ, who is our life, is revealed

We too will be revealed with him in glory

Christ has gone up on high

Alleluia!

Today's Collect

Risen, ascended Lord, as we rejoice at your triumph,
fill your Church on earth with power and compassion,
that all who are estranged by sin may find forgiveness and know your peace,
to the glory of God the Father. **Amen.**

A reading from John's gospel

¹Jesus looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, ²since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. ⁵So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

⁶I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. ⁷Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; ⁸for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. ⁹I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. ¹⁰All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.'

For the word of God in scripture

For the word of God among us

For the word of God within us

We give thanks

Reflection – Barbra

Recently I have been encouraged by people who have been grateful for small acts of kindness during the Covid-19 pandemic. There have been many reports of those who have recovered and are indebted to the NHS for the care and attention they have received.

Last Friday we remembered those who lost their lives in May 2017 in the Manchester Arena bombing of 2017. So many families were affected and are living today with the consequences.

In our gospel reading Jesus prays, not only for the Apostles, but for all his disciples, throughout history, including you and me.

'Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.'

This is a call both to unity and to witness. In order to bring the good news of the Gospel to our hurting world we must be united with Christians from all traditions in proclaiming that good news. And we cannot do it in our own strength, but only through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus said to the apostles: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

On Thursday we celebrated Ascension Day. For nine days after Ascension we are asked to pray for the coming of the kingdom and there are resources to help us on the Diocesan website under the title - Thy Kingdom Come. We can do this simply in our own homes by praying the Lord's prayer very slowly and reflecting on each phrase. At the same time we can pray for people we know, family members, neighbours or friends who have not

experienced the love of God for themselves and ask that the Holy Spirit may reveal the good news of the Gospel to them.

Today's gospel also included the words "And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent."

A quotation from Pope Francis:

'How I long to find the right words to stir up enthusiasm for a new chapter of evangelization full of fervour, joy, generosity, courage, boundless love and attraction! Yet I realize that no words of encouragement will be enough unless the fire of the Holy Spirit burns in our hearts. A Spirit-filled evangelization is one guided by the Holy Spirit, for he is the soul of the Church called to proclaim the gospel. . . .'

So as we prepare to celebrate Pentecost next Sunday, let us pray for the willingness to share our faith, trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit:

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful
and kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.
And you will renew the face of the earth.

Prayers of Intercession

Gracious God,
whose Spirit helps us in our weakness and guides us in our prayers,
we pray for the Church and for the world
in the name of Jesus Christ.

Renew the life and faith of the Church;
strengthen our witness and make us one in Christ.

We hold in your love those who exercise public ministry:

our Bishops, David, Mark and Mark

our Archdeacon, Karen, and our Area Dean, Rachel

Anne, Tom and Barbra as they seek to bring good news among us.

Grant that we and all who confess that Christ is Lord
may be faithful in your service and filled with the Spirit,
that the world may be turned to you.

Lord, in your mercy:

hear our prayer.

Guide the nations in the ways of justice, liberty and peace;
and help them to seek the unity and welfare of all people.

We hold in your love:

Governments and health agencies responding to uncertain futures.

Education authorities and teachers making decisions for the children in their care.

Muslim nations and neighbours spending Eid under lockdown.

Give to all in authority

wisdom to know and strength to do what is right.

Lord, in your mercy:

hear our prayer.

Comfort those in sorrow;

heal the sick in body or in mind and deliver the oppressed.

We hold in your love:

the people of Pakistan as they grieve loss of life.

those struggling with separation from family and friends.

those who are shielding and fear themselves forgotten.

Grant us compassion for all who suffer,

and help us so to carry one another's burdens

that we may fulfil the law of Christ.

Lord, in your mercy:

hear our prayer.

Receive our thanks and praise

for all who have served you faithfully here on earth,

those who have revealed to us your grace in Christ.

We hold in your love:

the names held in our hearts

and those whose anniversaries fall at this time,

Connie Beeley, Jack Peyton, Dorothy Saunders,

Thomas Dennis Rooks and Fred Pilkington.

May we and all your people

share the life and joy of your kingdom

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

We join all our prayers together in the prayer that Jesus gave us.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;

thy kingdom come, thy will be done on 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.

Closing Gospel from Luke

Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and they were continually in the temple blessing God

Closing words and prayers

When we stand gazing upwards, bring us down to earth:
with the love of a friend
through the song of the sorrowing
in the faces of the hungry.

When we look to you for action, demand some work from us:
by your touch of fire
your glance of reproof
your fearful longing

As ruler over all:
love us into action;
fire us with your zeal;
enrich us with your grace
to make us willing subjects of your just and gentle rule.

Let us pray
Eternal God, giver of love and power
your Son Jesus Christ has sent us into all the world
to preach the gospel of his kingdom:
confirm us in this mission, and help us to live the good news we proclaim;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing

May the God of hope full us with all joy and peace in believing,
Through the power of the Holy Spirit, and the blessing

Waiting expectantly for the promised Holy Spirit,
let go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia

Thanks be to God, Alleluia, alleluia

Hymn

Lord enthroned in heavenly splendour

Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour
first-begotten from the dead,
thou alone, our strong defender,
liftest up thy people's head.
Alleluia, alleluia,
Jesu, true and living bread,

Paschal Lamb, thine offering, finished
once for all when thou wast slain,
in its fullness undiminished
shall for evermore remain,
Alleluia, alleluia,
cleansing souls from every stain.

Life-imparting heavenly manna,
stricken rock with streaming side,
heaven and earth with loud hosanna
worship thee, the Lamb who died,
Alleluia, alleluia,
risen, ascended, glorified!

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