

The Bride Valley Service for Sunday 27th September 2020

Trinity 16

(We will be lighting a candle in church and you may wish to do so at home, if it is safe to do so)

Greeting

Let us worship God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The Lord be with you, **and also with you.**

This is the day that the Lord has made, **we will rejoice and be glad in it.**

Let us pray

Lord, direct our thoughts and teach us to pray.

Lift our hearts to worship you in spirit and in truth,

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Prayer of Confession

God our Father, we come to you in sorrow for our sins.

For turning away from you and ignoring your will for our lives;

Father, forgive us: **Save us and help us.**

For failing you by what we do and think and say;

Father, forgive us: **Save us and help us.**

For letting ourselves be drawn away from you

By temptations in the world around us;

Father, forgive us: **Save us and help us.**

For living as if we are ashamed to belong to your Son;

Father, forgive us: **Save us and help us.**

Absolution

The almighty and merciful Lord

Grant you pardon and forgiveness of all your sins,

Time for amendment of life,

And the grace and strength of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Praise

Blessed is the Lord, **for he has heard the voice of our prayer;**

Therefore shall our hearts dance for joy, **and in our song we will praise our God.**

Collect

Lord of creation, whose glory is around and within us, open our eyes to your wonders, that we may serve you with reverence and know your peace at our lives' end, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

First reading Philippians 2 verses 1-13

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Gospel reading Matthew 21 verses 23-32

When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

"What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

Reflection

"You can talk the talk, but can you walk the walk?" Back in the early 2000s I used to lead a Youth Group and this was our motto. It's basically the theme of today's gospel reading, isn't it! What those religious leaders needed to see was that talking about faith and religion is not enough, you actually have to live it out in your actions, in your daily life. It is the son who gets around to taking action who is recommended, rather than the one who airily talks about it, yet does nothing.

Having been to the dentist for a routine check-up recently we discovered that there was something terribly wrong with one of my front teeth and I was heading for disaster. The thing was I had no pain or trouble warning me that there was a problem. It was just the vigilance of the dentist that she was able to warn me that there was an issue. And that the issue needed to be dealt with in order to avert the inevitable future pain and potential loss of the tooth. I've yet to come across someone who likes going to the dentist and most people I talk to are similar to me – I hate going to the dentist! But I definitely hate toothache more. Low and behold on removing the original filling the situation was much worse than first thought and I ended up having root canal treatment. It hurt! I'm not going to go into any more detail than that for fear of traumatising you or bringing back memories of your own dental experience. I decided that while I was sat there unable to talk for over an hour I would use the time to pray for everyone I knew that needed my prayer, including the poor dentist! I feel sorry for them, it can't be an easy job, the intricate skill required to undertake the treatment as well as the fact that most people are so afraid of them.

And it made me think, we hand over our dental treatment to the dentist, (or not, in some cases.) We trust the dentist to put things right, to look after our dental health, even though it's sometimes painful, to look ahead and alert us to future problems. To show us what steps to take now to avoid future pitfalls and problems, to help and advise us how to maintain good oral health and hygiene.

Isn't that a bit like a regular check in with God? Now I'm not suggesting we do that on a 6 monthly basis, no, no, no! Regular check-ins with God need to be at least daily. That way we can put things right immediately, look after our relationship together, even though it's sometimes painful, we can plan ahead and be alert to face future problems. Even alert us to what steps to take now to avoid future pitfalls and problems, and help us maintain good and healthy spiritual choices.

The truth is that God promises to teach us how to make good choices and through Jesus and the Holy Spirit he is working within us, inspiring both the will to do good and also the act of carrying it out.

We can also be involved in the kind of caring, encouraging relationship with God which really does make a difference. It really does enable us to tackle those wrong areas in our life, head on. We are never too old, too set in our ways or too busy to take God up on his offer of live-in help in our daily lives. **Amen.**

The Apostle's 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.**

Prayers of Intercession

As we gather in God's name let us bring to him our prayers which come from love and concern.

Lord, we thank you for all the help and encouragement we are given from the Church – from its worship, teaching and fellowship;

From its faithfulness in prayer.

Bless and further all loving ministry in word and sacrament throughout the world Church;

Inspire us all to want your will and to do it.

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

Lord, we pray for the world, where the misery and tragedy of wrong choices grieves your heart of love.

Let there be wisdom and compassion in all negotiations and decisions;

Let there be humility in leadership and responsibility for right action shared by all.

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

Lord, we bring to you the joys and worries, the frustrations and accomplishments of this week in the lives we have met and shared.

As we pray, let your light shine into all these lives

For fresh directing and lasting good.

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

Lord, we bring to you those we know who are ill or suffering in any way.

Give them healing, restore them in body, mind and spirit,

And provide them with your indwelling.

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

Lord, we remember in your presence all those who have died,

And particularly those we have known and loved.

Thank you for them and their example to us.

Thank you for your promise of eternal life and peace.

May we comfort one another through your love.

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

Lord, we thank you for your offer of life in all its abundance;

May we accept it with joy every day of our life.

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

The Lord's Prayer

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.

Lead us not into temptation

But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power

and the glory, forever and ever.

Amen.

Final Prayer

Almighty God,

we praise you for the many blessings you have given to those who worship you in this house of prayer:

and we pray that all who seek you in this place may find you, and, being filled with the Holy Spirit, may become a living temple acceptable to you; 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.**

Blessing

Christ, whose glory is in the heavens,

fill this house and illuminate your hearts; and the blessing of God almighty,

the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**