The Kindness of Christ

Sunday of Passiontide

29 March 2020
Preparing for Worship

As we continue to live through strange times, unable to meet together in person in order to protect the health of the community, we continue to seek new patterns and to become a different kind of church: constant in prayer, in self-giving love and acts of service, continuing to pray for one another and to be bound together in love even whilst we must maintain physical distance, and worshipping together in our own homes with familiar words and patterns, even as we cannot come together in person.

It may still feel strange and sad to meet ‘virtually’ for worship, unable to gather in our cathedral for our familiar pattern of prayer. Yet we are still the people of God. We are not Christians because we go to church, but because we worship, love and serve our living God, made known to us in Jesus Christ.

Our service for this Passion Sunday was recorded by the Dean, the Very Revd Professor Martyn Percy, with his wife, Revd Canon Dr Emma Percy. We add voices from around the cathedral community, recorded in their own homes during the week, for readings and intercessions; and the service begins and ends with organ music recorded by the Organist, Professor Steven Grahl, on the Rieger organ in the Cathedral.

Try to actively share in the service, not just have it on in the background; and look at the images we offer or perhaps images of your own. Join in the words in bold. You may not want to stand or kneel as usual but find a comfortable position that helps you and perhaps think about how you hold your hands, maybe holding them palms upwards to receive God’s love and blessing. At the heart of the service is communion but communion we cannot physically share and so we are invited to each make a spiritual communion as the Prayer Book teaches.

As the Dean reflects on the self-giving love of Jesus, tenderness and kindness shown abundantly on the cross and poured out upon us all, may God’s love meet all of you to empower and strengthen and sustain you for all that you face and all that lies ahead. May God bless you as we worship him together.

You can find our Sunday worship, alongside other resources for worshipping at home, at www.chch.ox.ac.uk/onlineworship
The Gathering

President  In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
All  Amen.

President  The Lord be with you
All  and also with you.

The Dean welcomes the congregation.

Confession

Full of compassion and mercy and love
is God, the Most High, the Almighty.
Trusting in his love and mercy,
we bring to him all for which we ask forgiveness.

You may like to adopt a prayer posture such as sitting with your head
bowed, as we remember our brokenness and call to mind our sins.

All  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.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
for us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.
Absolution

President Almighty God, whoforgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Collect

President Let us pray.

Silence is kept.

President Gracious Father, you gave up your Son out of love for the world: lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion, that we may know eternal peace through the shedding of our Saviour’s blood, Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.
The Liturgy of the Word

Sit comfortably to listen to God speaking through the Scriptures.

First Reading
Psalm 130 (CW)

read by Sarah Meyrick, Cathedral Public Engagement Manager

A reading from Psalm 130.

1 Out of the depths have I cried to you, O Lord;
   Lord, hear my voice;
   let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication.

2 If you, Lord, were to mark what is done amiss,
   O Lord, who could stand?

3 But there is forgiveness with you,
   so that you shall be feared.

4 I wait for the Lord; my soul waits for him;
   in his word is my hope.

5 My soul waits for the Lord,
   more than the night watch for the morning,
   more than the night watch for the morning.

6 O Israel, wait for the Lord,
   for with the Lord there is mercy;

7 With him is plenteous redemption
   and he shall redeem Israel from all their sins.

Reader This is the word of the Lord.
All Thanks be to God.
Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

All Glory to you, O Lord.

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, ‘Lord, he whom you love is ill.’ But when Jesus heard it, he said, ‘This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God’s glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.’ Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, ‘Let us go to Judea again.’ The disciples said to him, ‘Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?’ Jesus answered, ‘Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.’ After saying this, he told them, ‘Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.’ The disciples said to him, ‘Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.’ Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, ‘Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.’ Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, ‘Let us also go, that we may die with him.’

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Your brother will rise again.’ Martha said to him, ‘I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?’ She said to him, ‘Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.’
When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, ‘The Teacher is here and is calling for you.’ And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.’ When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, ‘Where have you laid him?’ They said to him, ‘Lord, come and see.’ Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, ‘See how he loved him!’ But some of them said, ‘Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?’ Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, ‘Take away the stone.’ Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, ‘Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?’ So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, ‘Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.’ When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come out!’ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘Unbind him, and let him go.’ Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

Deacon
This is the Gospel of the Lord.
All
Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection
The Dean

You can find the text of the Dean’s reflection on our cathedral website at www.chch.ox.ac.uk/onlineworship
After the reflection, we keep silence together for a few moments before affirming our faith together in the words of the Creed – words which have been said across the world for over fifteen hundred years in times of sorrow and of joy.
The 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 from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.
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.
Prayers of Intercession
led by Janet Proudman, Cathedral Licensed Lay Minister

Minister Let us pray.

You may like to adopt a prayer posture with your hands open and lifted up to God as we hold out all the prayers of our hearts to him.

Minister Lord, in your mercy
All hear our prayer.

The prayers end with:

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

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Peace

President Jesus says: ‘Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.’

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

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

We know that Christians have shared a sign of peace since the very earliest days of the Church. In these times when we are unable to touch those outside our immediate family, and in many cases not even them, and when we are unable to meet together as communities of God’s people, it may seem strange to ‘share the Peace.’ But peace is from the heart and from God. God’s peace in the Spirit moves among us and unites us, physically distanced yet one in the Body of Christ.
Preparation of the Table

President  Be present, be present,  
Lord Jesus Christ,  
our risen high priest;  
make yourself known in the breaking of bread.  
All  Amen.

The Eucharistic Prayer

President  The Lord be with you  
All  and also with you.  
President  Lift up your hearts.  
All  We lift them to the Lord.  
President  Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
All  It is right to give thanks and praise.  
President  It is indeed right and just,  
our duty and salvation,  
always and everywhere  
to give you thanks and praise,  
almighty and everlasting Father,  
whose hands enfold us all.

In Jesus Christ, your all sustaining love stretches out through the whole creation,  
bears our loss, becomes food for our souls.

Your Spirit calls us out with him  
into the wilderness,  
beyond familiar patterns and into something new.  
It binds the broken together,  
bridges our isolation and roots us in your hope.

And so from this mother church,  
through our villages and towns,  
your song of praise rings out.  
Each home becomes a church,  
beacons of service and of prayer,  
light against the darkness,  
with angels and archangels, to glorify your name:
All

Holy, holy, holy
Lord God of hosts:
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.

President

Accept our praises, heavenly Father,
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,
and as we follow his example and obey his command,
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit
these gifts of bread and wine
may be to us his body and his 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, heavenly Father,
we remember his offering of himself
made once for all upon the cross;
we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension;
we look for the coming of your kingdom,
and with this bread and this cup
we make the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.

President

Jesus Christ is Lord.

All

Lord, by your cross and resurrection
you have set us free.
You are the Saviour of the world.
Accept through him, our great high priest, this our sacrifice of thanks and praise, and as we eat and drink these holy gifts in the presence of your divine majesty, renew us by your Spirit, inspire us with your love and unite us in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, with all who stand before you in earth and heaven, we worship you, Father almighty, in songs of everlasting praise:

Blessing and honour and glory and power be yours for ever and ever.

Amen.
The Lord’s Prayer

President

In times of hope, in times of trouble,
in times of sorrow, in times of praise,
as our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

All

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.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.

Breaking of the Bread

The President breaks the consecrated bread.

All

Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.
Giving of Communion

The President says the Invitation to Communion.

President Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

All Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word, and I shall be healed.

For most of us as we listen, this will be a very strange experience. We are invited to Communion: not through the physical bread and wine we can touch but into a Spiritual Communion with the God who always comes to meet us.

There are no special words or prayers for this. All the Church has ever thought necessary is true desire, lively faith and genuine love. So you are invited to come honestly before God the way you know how. You may like to close your eyes, or to look at a picture; to pause the recording in order to find stillness; or to pray quietly one of these prayers to help you:

My Lord and my God. (Confession of St Thomas, Jn. 20:28)
Lord, you stand at the door of my heart and knock. You wait for me and only I can let you in. I believe and trust in you and ask you now to fill me with your presence. Feed me with your body and unite me in your blood, that I may be your blessing to a world in need. Amen.

In union, O Lord with the faithful at every altar of thy Church, where the Holy Eucharist is now being celebrated, I desire to offer thee praise and thanksgiving. I present to thee my soul and body with the earnest wish that they may always be united to thee. And since I can not now receive thee sacramentally, I beseech thee to come spiritually into my heart. I unite myself to thee, and embrace thee with all the affections of my soul. Let nothing ever separate thee from me. May I live and die in thy love. Amen.

Traditional Anglican for use by armed forces
Prayer after Communion

President  Let us pray.

A time of silent prayer is kept.

All  You have opened to us the Scriptures, O Christ, and you have made yourself known in the breaking of the bread. Abide with us, we pray, that, blessed by your royal presence, we may walk with you all the days of our life, and at its end behold you in the glory of the eternal Trinity, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

The Dismissal

Blessing

President  God the Father hold you in his tender care surround you with his kindly love and comfort and encourage you in all that lies ahead; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

All  Amen.

Go in the peace of Christ.

All  Thanks be to God.

Music after the service

O Lamm Gottes unschuldig (BWV 656)  J.S. Bach (1685–1750)

recorded by the Organist, Professor Steven Grahl, on the Rieger organ in the Cathedral.
The daily rhythm of prayer continues at Christ Church as the clergy pray daily in their homes; although we cannot meet together, we continue to pray for you. Please pray for one another and for those who need God’s love and care.

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen.
National Call to Prayer

Prayer is more important now than ever. There are two prayer initiatives with which we invite you to join:

the first, *A Light in the Window*, is a national call to stop at 7pm daily to pray for our nation. You may wish to place a light in your window (something safe, without naked flames!) to shine out in hope as a light in the darkness, bringing hope to others.

the second, is an international and ecumenical call to stop at 11am daily to pray Psalm 23 and the Lord’s Prayer, in company with Christians across the world.

Prayer Resources from the Cathedral and the Diocese

You can find resources for worship and spirituality, including a written daily reflection on a Psalm and a weekly reflection on a piece of music; a weekly audio service and additional recorded sermon; and a guide to other materials available; on our cathedral website:

www.chch.ox.ac.uk/onlineworship
www.chch.ox.ac.uk/cathedralblog
www.chch.ox.ac.uk/cathedral/covid
@chchcathedralox

The diocese has also produced extensive resources which are available at

www.oxford.anglican.org/coronavirus-covid-19/
www.facebook.com/dioceseofoxford
@oxforddiocese

There is a livestreamed diocesan service every Sunday at 10 am and a recorded service from the Cathedral available every Sunday at 9 am.
Prayer for the Week

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.

Blessed Frideswide, pray for us. May all the saints pray for us.


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