**Morning Praise @ Home 14th May 2023**

**Opening prayer**

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and**

**repent.** **Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us**

**from our sin.** **Renew a right spirit within us** **and restore us to the joy of your salvation,** **through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image

to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Bible Readings Acts 17: 22 – 31 John 14: 15 – 21

**Reflection from Ruth**

It's pretty hard to do a sermon the Sunday after a coronation.

The only thing that’s better about it is that I don’t have 2 million people watching my sermon, like the Archbishop of Canterbury did!

Those of us who loved Queen Elizabeth may have been a bit apprehensive about the whole thing, but I was left feeling profoundly hopeful - it was clear that our new King is a deeply faithful man.

Throughout the coronation ceremony, religious symbolism and rituals were intricately woven into every aspect. The majestic setting of the coronation, within the grandeur of a historic cathedral, served as a reminder of the sacredness of the occasion. The king's solemn oath, taken with his hand on the Bible, demonstrated his commitment to uphold the values and principles of Christianity in his rule. Also, King Charles' choice of scripture readings and hymns during the ceremony were a sign of his personal connection to his faith. The profound reverence and sincerity with which he participated in these religious rituals resonated deeply with the gathered dignitaries and the wider public, fostering a sense of unity and purpose.

For me the most powerful moment was when - to the wonderful sound of ‘ Zadok the Priest’ - the screens were pulled back, and there was the King, stripped down to his shirt, kneeling before God, having been anointed, the Archbishop having asked the Holy Spirit to come down upon him - and there was no doubt in my mind that the Holy Spirit was present.

Which leads us to our scripture reading this morning.

Jesus tells the disciples that he is going to send the Holy Spirit to them. Knowing the challenges and persecution that the early church experienced, we can see how significant Jesus’ words of assurance would have been to his disciples. Our church and our country today are certainly negotiating some uncertain and challenging times, and this passage is a reminder that we are not alone. This lesson can be equally assuring now as it was then; to know that even today we are never abandoned by Jesus. He said,’ I am not going to leave you orphans', and he promised to be “in” the people who keep his commandments, his earliest disciples, and promised too that those disciples will be “in” him. So here are we, who may think of ourselves as the heirs to those disciples, and maybe we are wondering about that “in” too. Is Jesus actually “in” us? How would we know? It is easy for us to hear “Spirit” and immediately think of warm, personal feelings - feelings of security, of connection with God. This understanding offers many of us comfort, especially when the world around us seems to be spinning out of control. But sometimes, that language makes us feel uncomfortable; if we don’t see ourselves as ‘charismatic’ there is a danger that we might miss out. The Holy Spirit is a special gift from God, and it can help us in many ways. The Holy Spirit, being God *in* us, can guide us, give us wisdom, comfort, and strength. Jesus said ‘it is the spirit of truth’ so it can help us make good choices and show us the right path to follow. It can also help us understand God's words and teachings. There are methods of meditating on scripture which focus on having the Holy Spirit help us understand it. Like all gifts, we have to accept it. When we do, it can help us feel closer to God and to have a deeper experience of His love and presence in our lives. It is a wonderful gift that reminds us that we are never alone because God is always with us through the Holy Spirit.

My sister-in-law is from New Jersey, and I love her dearly - but culturally, she is very different. The first Christmas my parents spent with her and my brother, my mother bought her an expensive cashmere jumper. Now my mother was a very quiet, reserved person, and was absolutely horrified when my sister-in-law said 'oh good, you left the label in so I can exchange it'. She didn't mean to be rude, but in her family, if someone wanted to return a gift and get something else that was fine.

So this morning, let's think about that gift Jesus gave us - God in us, from the highest of Kings, to the lowest in society - and reflect on whether sometimes we don't accept that gift because we have cultural ideas about what it means.

What it means is: - we can have God to help us and guide us and comfort us - we just need to accept that gift. Amen

**Affirmation of faith**

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

**We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

**Prayers of intercession**

Holy God, your Son remained with his disciples after his resurrection, teaching them to love all people as neighbours. As his disciples in this age, we offer our prayers on behalf of the universe in which we are privileged to live and our neighbours with whom we share it.  
Open our hearts to your power moving around us and between us and within us, until your glory is revealed in our love of both friend and enemy, in communities transformed by justice and compassion, and in the healing of all that is broken.

Thursday will be Ascension Day. Please pray for Thy Kingdom Come, a 10-day period of prayer sponsored by Archbishop Justin Welby inviting all Christians to pray that with God’s help we may see many new people become Christians. Guide us in the path of discipleship, so that, as you have blessed us, we may be a blessing for others, bringing the promise of the kingdom near by our words and deeds.

This week we also pray for the Mango Tree Project. Praise the Lord for Consolata’s recent visit which was so encouraging. Pray too that it will lead to a greater engagement with the work of The Mango Tree.

Today we pray for Shotwick Church as they hold their AGM. May it be encouraging, focused and forward looking.

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

**The Lord’s Prayer** As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

***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 today 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***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be, that you may live and work to his praise and glory, and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen**