

Morning Praise @ Home 29th October 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 Reading

Matthew 22: 34 – end

Reflection

‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart....’

The Pharisees’ challenge to Jesus continues. In response, Jesus takes the love principle first expounded in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5) and stresses again its central importance to the life of discipleship. And, as so often happens with Jesus, his answers are double-hinged. As Tom Wright puts it: ‘Jesus’ answer was so traditional that nobody could challenge him on it, and so deeply searching that everyone else would be challenged by it’ (*Matthew for Everyone*, Part 2, p. 93).

So where is the challenge for us? The Greek word for love (*agape*) is here used to refer to both love of God and love of neighbour. The priority is to love God with all the deepest God-given capacities of our being, but there is to be no either/or about this love. From a true love of God must flow love of neighbour: it cannot be otherwise, because both ‘loves’ are of the same substance. Any supposed love of God that denies or despises the neighbour has no place in this understanding, in which Jesus has extended the interpretation of ‘neighbour’ to include our ‘enemy’ (Matthew 5:43-44).

It is up to each one of us, under God and in the particular life circumstances in which we find ourselves, to work out how best this dual commandment can be lived. Only if the love of God has priority will it then be possible to love our neighbour as ourselves.

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 A Prayer for Israel and Gaza

God rich in mercy and love,
We pray for the people of Israel and Gaza.
For the innocents, broken, scared, frightened, confused.
God who weeps with the weeping, have mercy.

We think of those who have lost their lives and those who grieve.
God who meets us in the darkness of the valley
and in the stillness of the night,
Oh God, meet with the bereaved.

For families shattered and children torn,
Oh God, have mercy.

To the injured, bring healing.
To the bereaved, bring comfort.
To the frightened, bring love.
To the weary, bring hope.

God of grace, we pray for an end to bloodshed.
May peace come quickly.

We pray that peacemakers may find a voice and offer a way forward.
Father, have mercy.
Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy.
Holy Spirit, bring hope.

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**