

1st Sunday in Lent 2021

Welcome

Welcome as we worship together on the second Sunday of Lent.

Each Sunday during this season of reflection and growth, when we are asked to do all that we can to prepare for Easter, we will focus on key aspects of our faith as Christians.

Today, we explore and reflect on daring to be open without fear of rejection

So we begin today by asking you to look at this image. Not really an image we normally associate with Lent!



(short pause, whilst image remains on screen, the assist leader says)

As you look at this image, try to think about the last week and if you can, try to bring to mind the name of someone you have agreed with. You might also like to think about anyone who has made you smile). You may want to write down their names to help you remember them.

And now something a little different:



(short pause, whilst image remains on screen, the assist leader says)

And now, perhaps you can think of someone you have disagreed with, it might be something really insignificant, or something more important. Can you think of people who may you feel angry, upset.....and those you just can't agree with them?

(short pause)

Today we are going to be reminded that even Jesus and his disciples didn't always agree. But those disagreements didn't mean that Jesus rejected them. In fact, it was through having the courage to argue with Jesus that the disciples learned how to follow him.

Opening Prayer & Reflection

To enter more deeply into any understanding of who Jesus is, we need to be completely honest about ourselves:

If you look at this image for a moment:



As you do so, perhaps you would like to reflect on these questions:

- How easy would you find it to speak up in a group like this?
- What topics would you be prepared to speak up about?
- Would you still speak up if you thought people would reject you?
- How do you react when there is conflict or disagreement?

Penitential Rite

Our journey through Lent draw us towards the cross, Christ's sacrifice of himself for all creation. This journey draws us into the reality of God's love for us. We come face to face with our brokenness and by doing so are ready to receive forgiveness, healing and grace.

Short pause

Words of greeting on the lips; words of love on the lips –
the example you gave us:

forgive us when we fail to act as you do, Lord.

Words of retaliation, insincerity and malice on our lips:

forgive us when we act towards others in this way, Lord.

Overwhelmed by complex relationships and rocky paths:

forgive us for not setting our minds on you and your ways.

Fear of rejection and wary of being our true selves:

forgive us and help us to give of ourselves as you give.

Forgive us, Lord, for our failure to trust you;

for not allowing you to be in the driving seat.

Lord of covenant relationship, lead us

and help us to live your way.

May almighty God have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

The Collect

Let us pray:

Almighty God,
by the prayer and discipline of Lent
may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings,
and by following in his Way
come to share in his glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading

A reading from the Book of Genesis

(7:1-7, 15-16)

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you and will make you exceedingly numerous.' Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, 'As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.

God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.'

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Second Reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Romans (4:13-25)

The promise that Abraham would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation.

For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations'). Abraham believed in the presence of the God who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become 'the father of many nations,' according to what was said, 'So numerous shall your descendants be.' He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore his faith 'was reckoned to him as righteousness.' Now the words, 'it was reckoned to him,' were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in God who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Gospel Acclamation

Praise to you, O Christ, **King of eternal glory.**

If any want to become my followers,

let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

The Gospel:

The Lord be with you

And also with you.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St Mark (8:31-38)

Glory to you, O Lord

Jesus began to teach his disciples that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, O Christ

Address/Sermon

Intercessions

Let us pray:

Blessed are you, Lord God. You have called us into life, to love and serve you. You have promised that you are with us always and that you are our helper and guide.

We give you thanks for all who hear and obey your call: for men and women who willingly sacrifice and deprive themselves for the good of others. We remember all who have spent their lives in your service. We ask you to give strength to all who are quietly seeking to give you their love and their lives. We remember today all who suffer rejection, pain or loss.

Lord, as you have called us: **hear us when we call upon you.**

We remember with gratitude all who have given their lives in research and exploration for the good of others. We ask you to bless all scientists, technicians, and leaders of people. We pray for those working among the poor and the deprived of our world.

Lord, as you have called us: **hear us when we call upon you.**

We give thanks for all our parents and loved ones who do for us, for their love, their sacrifice and their care. We seek your blessing upon our homes and our families. We remember all who have no one to care for them.

Lord, as you have called us: **hear us when we call upon you.**

We give thanks for the dedication of doctors, nurses and all hospital staff. We ask your blessing on all who are in hospital or who are ill at this time and upon all who look after them. We remember all who feel that no one cares about them.

Lord, as you have called us: **hear us when we call upon you.**

We rejoice that you have called us to eternal life and that you have invited us to enjoy your presence for ever. We pray for all who have given their lives in the service of others, and for all our loved ones departed. May they now rejoice in the fullness of your kingdom.

Lord, as you have called us: **hear us when we call upon you.**

Merciful Father,

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

The Peace

Through the psalmist, God says,
'Be still and know that I am God!'
Let us come again into God's presence and still our hearts.
Let us come together to listen to God.
Let us be still, and know that God is indeed God.:

short pause

All-powerful God of past, present and future,
keeper of promises:

We love you, and we come to you.

Son of Man, the way, the truth and the life,
loving despite rejection:

We love you, and we come to you.

Holy Spirit, living Power within,
helping, guiding, testing and transforming:

We love you, and we come to you.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
your unique relationship – open to us:

We love you, and we come to you.

Short pause for silent prayer

The Lord says: 'Those who want to save their life will lose it,
and those who lose their life for my sake will save it.'

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

Preparation of the Altar

God of mercy and compassion,
your Word calls us home to faith and love.
accept all we offer you this day;
in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right and good
to give you thanks and praise,
almighty God and everlasting Father,
through Jesus Christ your Son.
For in these forty days
you lead us into the desert of repentance
that through a pilgrimage of prayer and discipline
we may grow in grace
and learn to be your people once again.
Through fasting, prayer and acts of service
you bring us back to your generous heart.
Through study of your holy word
you open our eyes to your presence in the world
and free our hands to welcome others
into the radiant splendour of your love.
As we prepare to celebrate the Easter feast
with joyful hearts and minds
we bless you for your mercy
and join with saints and angels
for ever praising you and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
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.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; and as we obey his command, send your Holy Spirit, that broken bread and wine outpoured may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends and, taking bread, he praised you. He broke the bread, gave it to his disciples and said: Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine. Again he praised you, gave it to them and said: 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.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did, in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation, we proclaim his death and resurrection until he comes in glory.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus:

Dying you destroyed our death,

rising you restored our life:

Lord Jesus, come in glory.

Lord of all life, help us to work for that day when your kingdom comes and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people, gather us in your loving arms and bring us with *[N and]* all the saints to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Jesus who was handed over to be crucified for us, out of love taught us to call God our Father, and 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 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.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ:

Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread.

Agnus Dei

**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.**

Holy Communion

God's holy gifts
for God's holy people.

**Jesus Christ is holy,
Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.**

The body of Christ, which was broken for you.

The blood of Christ, which was shed for you.

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

Those receiving Holy Communion do so now.

At this time Holy Communion is received in one kind only (bread) and is given to each communicant in silence.

Spiritual Communion

My Jesus,

I believe that you are present in the Holy Sacrament of the altar.

I love you above all things

and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul.

Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,

come spiritually into my soul

so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and forever. Amen.

Meditation

Taizé chant

Prayer after Communion

Almighty God,
you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves:
keep us both outwardly in our bodies,
and inwardly in our souls;
that we may be defended from all adversities
which may happen to the body,
and from all evil thoughts
which may assault and hurt the soul;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Everything I am Lord, and everything I do.
Help me to be always more like you.

Teach me to be yours, Lord, show me when I'm wrong.
Help me to be always more like you.

You accepted all, Lord, help everyone to find the way.
Help me to be always more like you. Amen.

The Blessing and Dismissal

May the almighty God of Abraham daily increase our faithfulness,
may the crucified Christ restore us in his image,
and the ever-present Spirit draw us into heaven's embrace.
And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, + the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
come down upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

The Eucharist is ended, our service must now begin.
Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

A Prayer to sustain us

**We thank you, faithful Lord,
for your patience, provision and power;
for your tenderness, trust and triumph;
for your security and strength;
for your compassion and wisdom.**
**We thank you, Lord, that through your grace and mercy,
the blessings of faith,
and your covenant love,
you equip, teach and guide us
as we traverse today's world,
ever mindful of your steadfast love. Amen.**

