

Friday 23 July 2021

St Bridget of Sweden



Bridget was born 'Birgitta Birgersdotter' in 1303 in Sweden.

From a young age she kept records of what came to be known as her *Celestial Revelations*, which became popular throughout Europe. She was also known for her *Fifteen Oes*, prayers she said were from Christ in revelation, which also spread widely and featured in many liturgical texts.

Bridget was contemporary to Julian of Norwich and Catherine of Siena. They each wrote books describing their revelations. Bridget also founded the Bridgettine Order. She is also unique among saints of the second millennium in that she was also the mother of a saint—Catherine of Vadstena.

Bridget died in Rome on this day in 1373. She was 70 years of age.

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Prayers of intercession © [This is Church](#) (adapted).

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration are included at the end.

The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page, <http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 [As we are gathered, Jesus is here](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)

The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Christ calls us to share the heavenly banquet of his love with all the saints in earth and heaven. Therefore, knowing our unworthiness and sin, let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

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,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.

Almighty God,
who forgives 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 Gloria

This Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

All Glory be to God in Heaven,
Songs of joy and peace we bring,
Thankful hearts and voices raising,
To creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,
Glory be to God our King:
Glory be to God our King.

Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,
Bore the load of this world's sin;
Only Son of God the Father,
You have brought us peace within.
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,

**Now your glorious reign begin:
Now your glorious reign begin.**

**You O Son of God are Holy,
You we praise with one accord.
None in heav'n or earth is like you,
Only you are Christ the Lord.
With the Father and the Spirit,
Ever worshipped and adored:
Ever worshipped and adored.**

The Collect for Bridget of Sweden

O God, who guided Saint Bridget of Sweden
along different paths of life
and wondrously taught her the wisdom of the Cross
as she contemplated the passion of your Son,
grant us, we pray,
that, walking worthily in our vocation,
we may seek you in all things.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

All Amen.

Responsorial psalm

R. I will bless the Lord at all times.

I will bless the Lord at all times;
praise shall be always in my mouth.
My soul will glory in the Lord
that the poor may hear and be glad.

R. I will bless the Lord at all times.

Magnify the Lord with me;
let us exalt his name together.
I sought the Lord, who answered me,
delivered me from all my fears.

R. I will bless the Lord at all times.

Look to God that you may be radiant with joy
and your faces may not blush for shame.

In my misfortune I called,
the Lord heard and saved me from all distress.

R. I will bless the Lord at all times.

The angel of the Lord, who encamps with them,
delivers all who fear God.

Learn to savour how good the Lord is;
happy are those who take refuge in him.

R. I will bless the Lord at all times.

Fear the Lord, you holy ones;
nothing is lacking to those who fear him.
The powerful grow poor and hungry,
but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

R. I will bless the Lord at all times. *Psalm 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9, 10-11*

Second reading

A reading from the Letter of St Paul to the Galatians

Brothers and sisters, through the law I died to the law, that I might live for God. I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me. *Galatians 2:19-20*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Fruit of the Spirit ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

Fruit of the spirit song (for kids) ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples, 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does he prunes so that it bears more fruit. You are already pruned because of the word that I spoke to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing. Anyone who does not remain in me will be thrown out like a branch and wither; people will gather them and throw them into a fire and they will be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.' *John 15:1-8*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

Wine is of vital importance in middle eastern cultures like first-century Palestine. The hot climate requires drinking frequently; yet water is always in short supply. Much of the small amount of naturally-available water is unsafe to drink for it carries disease: think of cholera or polio. For most people, it was therefore only safe to drink fruit juice, and the most easily-cultivated source came from grapes.

To preserve this vital commodity, the juice was allowed to ferment slightly then stored. That's why most folk drank a lot of weak wine. But large quantities of juice required a great many grapes. And vines grow slowly, which limits the number of grapes. For that reason, vine-growers devised the grafting of vines. That way, the vine yielded more grapes. And more graphs meant better health for more people.

That's the context for Jesus' metaphor of grapes, vines, and abiding. Jesus here speaks the same terminology as that used by a vine dresser; later in John's Gospel he is more explicit still. Taken together, Jesus is wanting a high yield of that which saves life. And he knows the only realistic way to achieve that goal is by ingrafting.

The work of a vine dresser was hard and required great skill. The branch to be ingrafted was taken from a pre-existing plant. Most of the plant was cut away and the stem sharpened to form a sharp spike. This blade-like portion was then inserted into a small cut in the main stem of the host vine. The area was then bound tight to prevent infection by fungus or blight, and to prevent the loss of water. The ingrafted branch was then held in place with strong twine to minimise movement.

This, then, is Jesus' metaphor for fruitful discipleship. He wants us to become part of him so that we yield life-giving fruit. Just as the deep roots of a host vine extracts water from the ground and passes it to the grapes, so Jesus passes life from God through the church to us. But that life is intended to yield spiritual fruit. To that end, we must stay in the vine, in Him; we must stay in the positions he dictates. He regulates our actions even before the process of ingrafting because otherwise, like a key in a lock, there is little scope for a close-enough fit to unlock our spiritual potential. Otherwise, the goodness cannot pass properly from Him to us. It will fail.

St Paul is saying much the same thing in today's epistle when he says, 'I no live longer but Christ lives in me.' And today's psalm lists some of the fruits we should expect; and think of Galatians 5 which cites a longer list the fruits of the Spirit. It names, 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, thankfulness, selflessness, and self-control.' Elsewhere, that fruit is described in ways of Jesus living in us.

Today's choice of Scripture is citing Jesus' instruction for discipleship. Using a closely observed metaphor, he is saying that (in a spiritual sense) we have been invited, adopted, ingrafted directly into him. By implication, nothing less drastic will work. Other, lesser, ways of discipleship do not lead to fruitful life.

Today in the Church calendar, we remember the life of St Bridget. We continue to remember her because her discipleship was so fruitful. Through Scripture, Jesus is also inviting us to yield spiritual fruit. Like her, he wants us to change the world.

The Creed

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

All 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?

All 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?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Prayers of intercession

We have come from different places, with different prayers in our hearts, and different challenges in our lives. But united now, with one voice, we say, thank you, Jesus, for uniting us through your love and rooting us in our church fellowship, where we can grow and play and learn.

You are the vine, we are the branches

All **May we bear the fruits of love**

Dear God, when we are tempted to go our own way, forgive us, and draw us back to the vine of your Church. When we are tempted, help us to draw us back to the vine of your kindness. When we are tempted to stop praying for the needs of the world, forgive us and help us to draw us back to the vine of your love.

You are the vine, we are the branches

All **May we bear the fruits of love**

Loving God, we thank you that we can always come to you, and trust you with the things in our lives that need to be quietly nurtured and regularly pruned. Shape us and keep us rooted in your love, that we may be strong in our faith, and gentle in our lives.

You are the vine, we are the branches

All **May we bear the fruits of love**

Lord Jesus, thank you for connecting us all through your love. We pray for all who feel alone, disconnected or abandoned in any way. We pray for those having a difficult time, who need special reassurance and understanding. Help them to feel your presence with them. Help us to bring hope and love to others.

You are the vine, we are the branches

All **May we bear the fruits of love**

Let us be strong in Jesus and flourish. Let us be rooted in Jesus and fruitful. Let us abide in Jesus and be blessed. We ask this in your name, Lord.

You are the vine, we are the branches

All **May we bear the fruits of love**

Jesus Christ is the light of the world, a light no darkness can quench. We remember before God those who have died and light a candle to symbolise the light of Christ which eternally shines and brings hope. You turn our darkness into light; in your light shall we see light.

You are the vine, we are the branches

All **May we bear the fruits of love**

Merciful Father,

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

The peace

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 You are the vine, we are the branches ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

May Christ who makes saints of sinners,
who has transformed those we remember today,
raise and strengthen you that you may transform the world;
and the blessing of God the Almighty:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 The Lord of sea and sky ([please click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
And now we give thanks, most gracious God,
surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses
and glorified in the assembly of your saints.
The glorious company of apostles praise you.
The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.
The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.
We, your holy Church, acclaim you.
In communion with angels and archangels,
and with all who served you on earth and worship you now in heaven,
we raise our voice to proclaim your glory,
for ever praising you and saying:

**All 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 them 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.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together 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 Bridget 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.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

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

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

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

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us.
Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

God of ** our Lord.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.