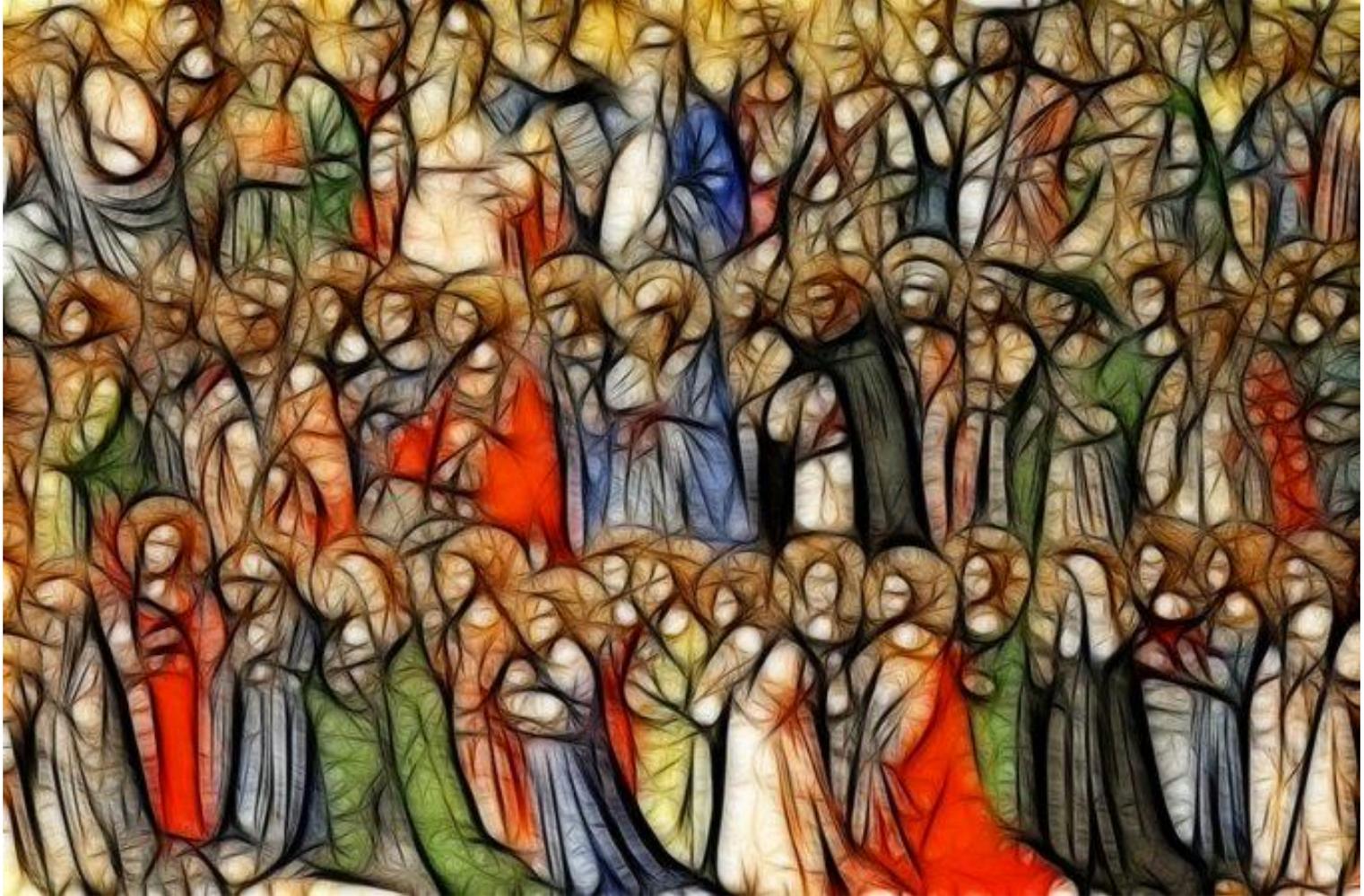


Wednesday 4 May 2022

Saints of the Reformation

(English saints and martyrs from the Reformation era)



Martyrs like Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer died for maintaining adherence to the Church of England in the face of Roman Catholic persecution. In the same era, Roman Catholics died at the hands of Protestants for maintaining their faith and allegiance to Rome.

Today's remembrance recognises there was true Godliness and great courage in martyrs on both sides of that divide and offers an opportunity to explore ecumenism and reconciliation.

Sermon © Revd Denise Owen.

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Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear 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 [When the saints go marchin' in](#) (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 the English saints of the Reformation era

Merciful God,
who, when your Church on earth was torn apart
by the ravages of sin
raised up men and women
who witnessed to their faith with courage and constancy:
give to your Church that peace which is your will,
and grant that those who have been divided on earth
may be reconciled in heaven,
and share together in the vision of your glory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord
who is alive and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the book of Psalms

- 1 Be joyful in God, all the earth; ♦
sing the glory of his name;
sing the glory of his praise.
- 2 Say to God, 'How awesome are your deeds! ♦
Because of your great strength
your enemies shall bow before you.
- 3 'All the earth shall worship you, ♦
sing to you, sing praise to your name.'
- 4 Come now and behold the works of God, ♦
how wonderful he is in his dealings with humankind.
- 5 He turned the sea into dry land;

the river they passed through on foot; ♦
there we rejoiced in him.

6 In his might he rules for ever;

his eyes keep watch over the nations; ♦
let no rebel rise up against him. *Psalm 66*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

A severe persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria. Devout men buried Stephen and made loud lamentation over him. But Saul was ravaging the church by entering house after house; dragging off both men and women, he committed them to prison.

Now those who were scattered went from place to place, proclaiming the word. Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah to them. The crowds with one accord listened eagerly to what was said by Philip, hearing and seeing the signs that he did, for unclean spirits, crying with loud shrieks, came out of many who were possessed; and many others who were paralysed or lame were cured. So there was great joy in that city. *Acts 8:1b-8*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Litany of the saints
Litany of the Saints

(please click on this link to hear the hymn)
(different version: click on this link)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me,

but raise it up on the last day. This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.' *John 6:35-40*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

It's hard to believe these days that were English martyrs; English men and women who gave their lives for their faith, people who felt so passionately about what they believed that they went to the stake, or the gallows, or any of the other ways people were executed, because they wouldn't compromise their beliefs. Today we give thanks for the English Martyrs of the Reformation Era, in other words those faithful people who died in the reign of Henry VIII and the subsequent reigns of Edward, Mary, Elizabeth, and the Stuart kings. That covers a period of more than one hundred years, and includes both Roman Catholics and Anglicans. At one time in this country, Christianity was a matter of life or death, and as I've written, today we remember those who died. We remember those we know by name; Fisher, More, Cranmer, Campion, et al., but perhaps more importantly we remember those who were martyred but remain nameless. It is their sacrifice that this commemoration honours, others have days of their own, but the general term English Martyrs of the Reformation Era covers the anonymous women and men who died.

These days and in this country, Christianity is a matter of indifference for many, and hostility for some, and it's hard to imagine anyone, clergy included, being willing to go to their death to defend the truth and practice of their denomination. And there is the heart of the difficulty, these martyrs died for their allegiance to a denomination, or branch if you like, of the faith. Roman Catholics killed Anglicans and Protestants, and Protestants and Anglicans killed Roman Catholics. They killed each other because they truly believed the other side was in the wrong, wrong enough to be endangering their immortal souls and the souls of their co-religionists. Again, hard to imagine these days. And I have to say not a state of affairs to be mourned, ecumenism, working together and learning from each other are much more productive and Godly ways of behaving. So, when we look back to the years of the English Reformation what do we make of the violence and willingness to be martyred?

Well, I suggest those people should be honoured. Those nameless people who died deserve our respect; their fervour and conviction are to be admired and perhaps emulated, because they took the gospel seriously. They took today's reading from

John seriously. They believed that Christ was the way to the Father and the door to eternal life, and that their particular way of worshipping and understanding were God's will, and that denying this or the Church which preached it, would lead to eternal death or damnation. They took Christ at his word, and trusted him to fulfil his promises in response to their faith. Imagine having a faith as strong as that. A faith that is willing to endure appalling torture in order to gain the heavenly reward. For them the heavenly reward was far beyond anything the world could offer.

We struggle in our much more reasonable and moderate times to understand how such a state of affairs could arise; Christians deliberately killing other Christians. They killed each other because of their understanding of Holy Communion, or how the Bible should be read or who should be baptised or any number of other questions, questions we possibly don't really consider. Perhaps, the English martyrs are a lesson in what it says in St Peter's first letter 'be prepared to give an account of your faith', or alternatively be prepared to explain or defend your faith. Is that something we feel confident doing? Is our faith something we even speak about to other people? Could we answer questions about our understanding of Holy Communion, or baptism or worship, or even why we go to church? The martyrs we remember today would be able to answer those questions and many others with great conviction. Perhaps this thought might prompt us to look at our faith, to consider what we believe about what the Church teaches, and to value what the Church offers as highly as those martyrs.

Is our faith a matter of life and death for us? Do we hold to the teaching of the Church and the benefits of Christ's Passion with the same fervour or deep conviction as our martyred sisters and brothers? We have, I hope, gone beyond the absolute certainty of our own correctness, in opposition to the wrongness of other denominations, but we should be thinking about what we believe and why. We should be exploring and asking questions about the faith, not to undermine what we believe, but better to 'give an account' to others. We do this not only for our own good, and the good of the Church, to strengthen our faith and attract others to it, but I suggest in honour of those martyrs we commemorate today, and praying that we will one day join them at the heavenly banquet. Amen

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

Lord God,
you have taught us
that anything we do without love is worth nothing,
for whoever lives without love
is counted dead before you;
send your Holy Spirit,
and pour into our hearts
that most excellent gift of love,
the true bond of peace and of all virtues;
grant this for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ
who is alive with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God now and for ever.

Amen. *Thomas Cranmer*

To the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us,
with the Father who made and created us,
and the Son who redeemed us,
be given all honour and glory,
now and forever.

Amen. *Thomas Cranmer*

We ask thee this, O merciful Father,
not in respect of our deserts,

but for thy dear Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's sake.

Thou knowest, O heavenly Father, that the controversy about the sacrament of the blessed body and blood of thy dear Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, hath troubled, not of late only, thy church of England, France, Germany, and Italy, but also many years ago.

The fault is ours, no doubt, thereof, for we have deserved thy plague...

Amen. *Nicholas Ridley*

O God,

the King of saints,

we praise and glorify your holy Name for all your servants who have finished their course in your faith and fear:

for the blessed Virgin Mary;

for the holy patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs;

and for all your other righteous servants, known to us and unknown;

and we pray that, encouraged by their examples, aided by their prayers, and strengthened by their fellowship,

we also may be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;

through the merits of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. *Hugh Latimer*

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 Father of Light

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

God give you grace to follow his saints
in faith and love and steadfastness
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 [For all the Saints Celtic version](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)
[For all the Saints Organ version](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)
[For all the Saints Modern version](#) (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 ** 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.