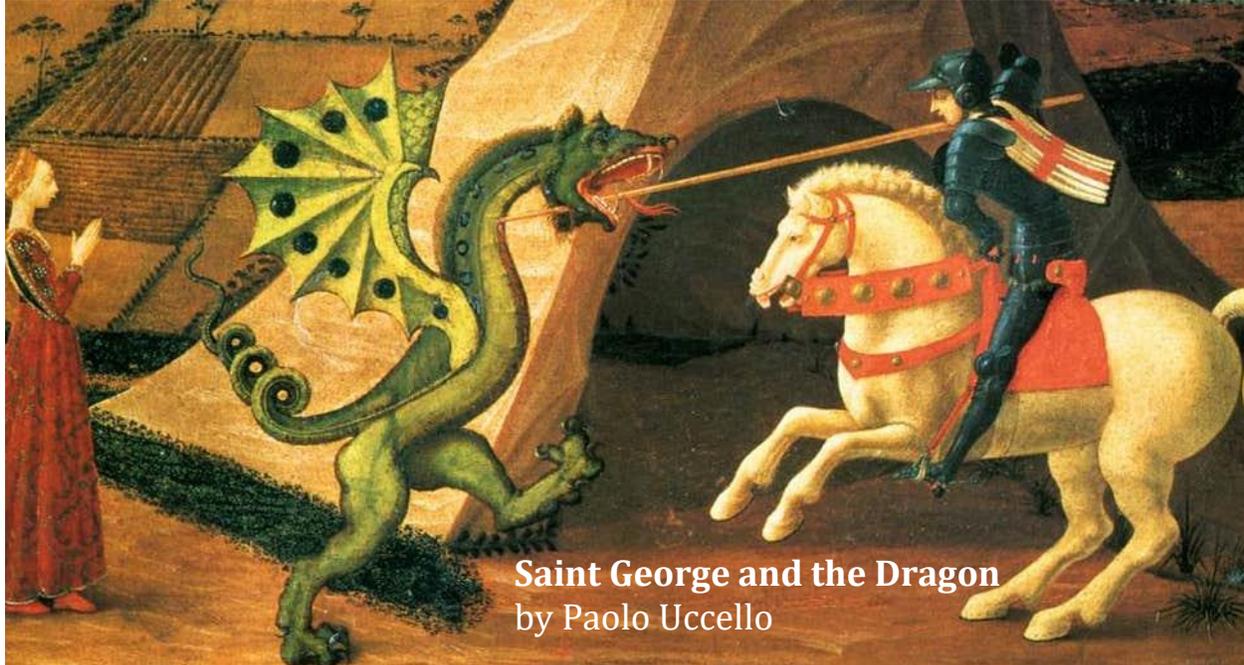


St George

Thursday 23 April 2020



St George was probably a soldier living in Palestine at the beginning of the fourth century. He was martyred at Lydda in about the year 304 AD, the beginning of the Diocletian persecution, and became known throughout the East as 'The Great Martyr'.

The story of his slaying the dragon may be due to his being mistaken in iconography for St Michael, himself usually depicted wearing armour; or it may again be a mistaken identity representing Perseus's slaying of the sea monster, a myth also associated with the area of Lydda.

Many English churches were dedicated to St George before the Norman conquest. George replaced Edward the Confessor as England's Patron Saint after the Crusades when soldiers brought back with them a renewed cult of St George. His position was confirmed when Edward III made St George patron of his new Order of the Garter.

- All the Bible readings come from the *New Revised Standard Version*.
- The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration have been included at the end rather than in situ because many following the service will be in isolation and unable to celebrate the sacrament.
- The hymns is a Youtube link. Please hover the mouse over the link, press Ctrl and then return.

HYMN For all the saints

(please 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 version of the 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 St George

God of hosts,
who so kindled the flame of love
in the heart of your servant George
that he bore witness to the risen Lord
by his life and by his death:
give us the same faith and power of love
that we who rejoice in his triumphs
may come to share with him the fullness of the resurrection;
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 Revelation of St John the Divine

War broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought back, but they were defeated, and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient

serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven, proclaiming, 'Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Messiah, for the accuser of our comrades has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. But they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they did not cling to life even in the face of death. Rejoice then, you heavens and those who dwell therein! But woe to the earth and the sea, for the devil has come down to you with great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!' *Revelation 12:7–12*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Second Letter of Paul to Timothy

Share in suffering like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving in the army gets entangled in everyday affairs; the soldier's aim is to please the enlisting officer. And in the case of an athlete, no one is crowned without competing according to the rules. It is the farmer who does the work who ought to have the first share of the crops. Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in all things.

Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, a descendant of David—that is my gospel, for which I suffer hardship, even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But the word of God is not chained. Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory. The saying is sure: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself. *2 Timothy 2:3–13*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

All **Glory to you O Lord.**

Jesus said to his disciples: 'If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, "Servants are not greater than their master." If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.' *John 15:18-21*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All **Praise to you O Christ.**

Sermon

The story of St George and the dragon is one of the best-loved of all saints' tales. It exists in many versions. It's not literally true and is best read as an allegory about a man of God fighting a spiritual battle against the powers of evil. That's why George is a man of God—a saint—and he fights a dragon because dragons always represent evil.

God lies at the heart of our Christian Gospel and we are to follow Him as disciples. Part of our discipleship involves fighting an alternative power, the power of evil. St Paul often portrays this aspect of discipleship as a battle fought between two armies (fought in the same way that battles were conducted at the time when the Gospels was written) with soldiers grouped into two opposing armies. We're the soldiers and fight against evil under Christ our captain. That's why, for example, in [Ephesians 6](#) Paul describes the 'armour' we as Christians should wear. They're both defensive (shield, belt, shoes) and offensive (sword). We now describe the battle.

We **first** repeat the important truth that God is infinitely more powerful than any evil power (although it can often seem otherwise). We tap into that power through the Cross. And God wants all Christians to proclaim the love of God that inspired the Cross. That proclamation will be visible, so all Churches worth the name will love and pray and worship. We can't help it because we want to thank God and give Him glory. That's part of being a servant that Jesus was talking about.

Unfortunately the powers of evil do not want us to mention God (let alone pray and worship). So, **second**, they will do everything to stop our worship, prayer and love. It's what they exist for. They want us to stop proclaiming Christ. They're *already*

doing everything to stop us. They will promote divisions. They will tempt us to make our worship dull and unadventurous. They will tempt us not to return to church once the Covid outbreak is over. They'll tempt us to stop loving. That's what the powers of evil always do.

But the powers of evil always overstate their case. So, **third**, whenever we sense we are being tempted to stop loving or become spiritually dull, we can discern how we are being tempted away from God. At the first hint of realisation we are to turn back to God as a conscious act of repentance. God wants us back and will gently tell us each time He finds our passion for Him is cooling. He will choose a way that is somehow 'customised' and specific to each unique disciple. Remember how many of Jesus' parables describe the way God so lovingly takes us back each time we repent.

Today is St George's Day. It reminds us to serve God. It reminds us to fight evil with worship and love. And it reminds that God loves us and won't ever let us go.

Prayers of intercession

United in the company of all the faithful
and looking for the coming of the kingdom,
let us offer our prayers to God, the source of all life and holiness.

Merciful Lord, strengthen all Christian people by your Holy Spirit
that we may live as a royal priesthood
and a holy nation to the praise of Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Lord, in your mercy.

All Hear our prayer.

Bless our bishop and all ministers of your Church
that, by faithful proclamation of your word,
we may be built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets
into a holy temple in the Lord.
Lord, in your mercy.

All Hear our prayer.

Empower us by the gift of your Holy and life-giving Spirit
that we may be transformed into the likeness of Christ
from glory to glory. We thank you for the example of your servant George.
Lord, in your mercy.

All Hear our prayer.

Give to the world and its peoples the peace that comes from above,
that they may find Christ's way of freedom and life.

Lord, in your mercy.

All Hear our prayer.

Hold in your embrace all who witness to your love
in the service of the poor and needy;
all who minister to the sick and dying;
and all who bring light to those in darkness.

Lord, in your mercy.

All Hear our prayer.

Touch and heal all those whose lives are scarred by sin
or disfigured by pain,
that, raised from death to life in Christ,
their sorrow may be turned to eternal joy.

Lord, in your mercy.

All Hear our prayer.

Remember in your mercy all those gone before us
who have been well-pleasing to you from eternity;
preserve in your faith your servants on earth,
guide us to your kingdom,
and grant us your peace at all times.

Lord, in your mercy.

All Hear our prayer.

We give you thanks
for the whole company of your saints in glory, included St George,
with whom in fellowship we join our prayers and praises;
by your grace may we, like them, be made perfect in your love.

All Hear our prayer.

Merciful Father,

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

The peace

May the God of peace sanctify you:
may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness
that you may be blameless before him
at the coming of our Lord Jesus with his saints.

The peace of the Lord be always with you:

All And also with you.

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

Jesus said, 'I have made your name known to those you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours.' *John 17:6-9*

May God, who kindled the fire of his love in the hearts of the saints,
pour upon you the riches of his grace.

All Amen

May he give you joy in their fellowship
and a share in their praises.

All Amen

May he strengthen you to follow them in the way of holiness
and to come to the full radiance of glory.

All Amen

And the blessing of God the Almighty:

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen

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
that we should always sing of your glory,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.
For you are the hope of the nations,
the builder of the city that is to come.
Your love made visible in Jesus Christ
brings home the lost,
restores the sinner
and gives dignity to the despised.
In his face your light shines out,
flooding lives with goodness and truth,
gathering into one in your kingdom
a divided and broken humanity.
Therefore with all who can give voice in your creation
we glorify your name,
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 St George, St Barnabas 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, who gave us this holy meal
in which we have celebrated the glory of the cross

and the victory of your martyr George:
by our communion with Christ
in his saving death and resurrection,
give us with all your saints the courage to conquer evil
and so to share the fruit of the tree of life;
through Jesus Christ 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.**