



Sunday 21 March 2021

- 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 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 [The old rugged cross](#)

(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.

The sacrifice of God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart God will not despise. Let us come to the Lord, who is full of compassion, and 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

The Gloria is usually omitted during Lent.

The Collect for Passion Sunday

Gracious Father,
you gave up your Son
out of love for the world:
lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion,
that we may know eternal peace
through the shedding of our Saviour's blood,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the Book of the prophet Jeremiah

The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more. *Jeremiah 31:31-34*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

Every high priest chosen from among mortals is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness; and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not presume to take this honour, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you'; as he says also in another place, 'You are a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek.' In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek. *Hebrews 5:1-10*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Do not be afraid, I have redeemed you ([click here to hear it the hymn](#))

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

All **Glory to you O Lord.**

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour.

'Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.' Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.' The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, 'An angel has spoken to him.' Jesus answered, 'This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.' He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die. The crowd answered him, 'We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?' Jesus said to them, 'The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light.' After Jesus had said this, he departed and hid from them.

John 12:20-33

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All **Praise to you O Christ.**

Sermon

Today is Passion Sunday. It's traditionally the day in Lent when we deliberately start empathising with Jesus and His Passion. It's risky: a genuine empathising will mean changing our lives to reflect His Passion in *every* way! But how do we do so?

The early Church preferred to call the two unequal halves of the Bible its *covenants* rather than 'testaments', because the covenants it describes help describe its

structure. 'Covenant' is a difficult word than testament. It means an agreement or promise, often set within a legal framework. It's usually accompanied by some form of condition which acts a bit like a legal guarantee.

Scripture cites many covenants between God and humankind:

1. The first covenant is that between God and Noah in Genesis 9:9. To paraphrase, God says, 'I will never destroy the whole of creation ... the sign of that covenant is written in the fabric of that creation, as a rainbow.'
2. The second and better-known covenant is that between God and Abraham in Genesis 17:2. To paraphrase, 'I will increase your descendants.' That covenant was expressed in terms of human flesh, so the sign of that covenant was written in the flesh of Abraham's descendants—in terms of circumcision.
3. God entered a covenant with Moses on Mount Sinai in Exodus 24. This is the most famous covenant and was expressed in terms of priesthood, commandments and blood—Law and the Ten Commandments. Scripture says Ex 31:12–17 says the sign of this covenant is the Sabbath.
4. A further covenant appears in today's first reading, which comes from the Prophet Jeremiah. There, God says, 'No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "Know the Lord" for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest' (Jeremiah 31:34). God framed that covenant in terms of knowledge and its sign is framed in terms of knowing ourselves to be forgiven.
5. The New Covenant is that between Jesus and humankind in John 13:35,35. At the Last Supper, Jesus gave the New Commandment, 'Love one another as I have loved you; by this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.' This covenant is framed in terms of love. When we remember that God is love (1 John 4:16) we see how God writes this covenant in His own essence.

These five covenants address the developmental stages that sinful humankind grows through as it enters in its relationship with God. They start with a (then) new image of God as merciful and involved. This first covenant helps us move from a vision of a vengeful God to a being who is on our side and wants to care for all of us.

The second covenant sponsors the idea of God knowing of what we are made. He has 'insider information' to help us grow in discipleship. Scripture illustrates the idea with circumcision, which is a physical metaphor implying irrevocable and permanent cleanliness. For a better (Christian) symbol, consider the idea of an organ transplant: it replaces something essential but currently diseased and dying.

The third covenant recognises that we have free will and tells us how to direct it. The Law given to Moses direct our lives God-ward in minute and pedantic detail.

The fourth covenant lets humankind to identify more closely with Jesus. In time, we acquire a sort of empathy that does not require externally applied rules or commands: we learn to see and read a situation as God Himself sees and reads it.

The final and ultimate step involves love. We finally start a relationship with God. The idea implies profound mutuality. We're no longer friends but close family.

This idea of covenants helping humankind to grow in knowledge about God helps us talk about becoming more like Jesus. We learn to live Jesus' Passion in order to grow ever closer to Jesus. As we identify with Jesus, so we start to live our own Passion. Like the four covenants above, our lives become a cycle of correcting untruths about God in order to grow toward a greater sense of intimacy with God.

We can read today's Gospel through this lens. It starts with a group of Greek people who want to become disciples of Jesus. That's why they talk first to Philip because his name is Greek, and they expect he'll be more sympathetic to their cause. The point is, they know about Jesus and want to get closer. They don't yet know that their task, if successful, will mean sharing His Passion. In the same way, today's passage from the Letter to the Hebrews talks of Jesus as a High Priest. In effect, Jesus (as priest) is acting as a midwife during our re-birth into this new life.

Read this way, it's obvious why we so often fail to grow into Christlikeness. We fail to live up to the first covenant insofar as we live and proclaim a vengeful God; we live as though God is only on our side. We fail to live up to the second covenant insofar as we live and proclaim a God who does not require absolute moral cleanliness. We fail to live up to the third covenant insofar as we live and proclaim a God who only acts through priest-laden ritual and is never pleased except when we follow complex rules. We fail to live up to the fourth covenant insofar as we live and proclaim a God we cannot understand. And we fail to live up to the fifth commandment insofar as we live and proclaim a God who does not require us to love.

Today is Passion Sunday. It invites us to share the Passion of Christ as the way of living a more genuine discipleship. Today's Scripture readings invite us to grow into a relationship with the true God. *And, to that end, he invites us to make each covenant a loving, positive bond between God and us.* That way we bind ourselves to Him and can start to live His Passion in our own lives, today.

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

Let us pray to the Father through his Son
who suffered on the cross for the world's redemption.
Fill with your Spirit Christ's broken body, the Church ...
Give to Christian people everywhere a deep longing
to take up the cross and to understand its mysterious glory.
By the Saviour's cross and passion,

All Lord, save us and help us.

Bless those who lead the Church's worship at this solemn time ...
In the preaching of the word and the celebration of the sacraments
draw your people close to you.

By the Saviour's cross and passion,

All Lord, save us and help us.

Strengthen those [among us] who are preparing for baptism,
together with their teachers, sponsors and families ...

Teach them what it means to die and rise with Christ
and prepare them to receive the breath of his Spirit.

By the Saviour's cross and passion,

All Lord, save us and help us.

Look in your mercy upon the world you loved so much
that you sent your Son to suffer and to die ...

Strengthen those who work to share
the reconciliation won at such a cost upon the cross.

By the Saviour's cross and passion,

All Lord, save us and help us.

Bring healing by the wounds of Christ
to all who are weighed down by pain and injustice ...
Help the lonely and the betrayed, the suffering and the dying,
to find strength in the companionship of Jesus,
and in his passion to know their salvation.

By the Saviour's cross and passion,

All Lord, save us and help us.

Welcome into paradise all who have left this world in your friendship ...

According to your promises,
bring them with all your saints
to share in all the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection.

By the Saviour's cross and passion,

All Lord, save us and help us.

Merciful Father,

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

The peace

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us access to his grace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 O the bitter shame and sorrow ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness,
to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him;
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 [Firmly I believe and truly](#) (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.

Father, you made the world and love your creation.
You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour.
His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death.
And so we gladly thank you,
with saints and angels 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 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

Lord Jesus Christ,
you have taught us
that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters
we do also for you:
give us the will to be the servant of others
as you were the servant of all,
and gave up your life and died for us,
but are alive and reign, now and for ever.

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.