

Wednesday 19 January 2022

St Wulfstan of Worcester



The crypt of Worcester Cathedral

Wulfstan's tomb was located here before its removal during the Reformation

Wulfstan was probably born in 1009. He spent the first twenty-five years after ordination in the monastery at Worcester. He was elected Bishop of Worcester (against his will) in 1062. He soon proved to be an able administrator and pastor. He carefully and gently nurtured both church and state through the transition from Saxon to Norman rule. He died at Worcester on this day in the year 1095.

Sermon © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

Liturgy and prayers of intercession © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

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- 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 All creatures of our God and King ([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.

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, to be our advocate in heaven, and to bring us to eternal life.

Therefore, 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 St Wulfstan

Lord God,
who raised up Wulfstan to be a bishop among your people
and a leader of your Church:
help us, after his example,
to live simply,
to work diligently
and to make your kingdom known;
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 First Book of Samuel

The Lord said to Samuel, 'How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.'

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, 'Surely the Lord's anointed is now before the Lord.' But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.'

Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, 'Neither has the Lord chosen this one.' Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, 'Neither has the Lord chosen this one.' Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, 'The Lord has not chosen any of these.'

Samuel said to Jesse, 'Are all your sons here?' And he said, 'There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep.' And Samuel said to Jesse, 'Send and

bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here.' He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The Lord said, 'Rise and anoint him; for this is the one.'

Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. Samuel then set out and went to Ramah. *1 Samuel 16:1, 6-13*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. I do not even judge myself. I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgment before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive commendation from God. *1 Corinthians 4:1-5*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 A new commandment

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

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples, 'Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

'Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has put in charge of his household, to give the other servants their allowance of food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find at work when he arrives.'

Matthew 24:42-46

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

Much of the world is in crisis including parts of the Church. We rehearse the arguments often. In response, we're told to do things differently and better, although most of us find it difficult to adapt and change straightaway. We need to acquire the skill of seeing things the way that God does ... and only then responding.

St Wulfstan spent much of long life responding to change. He built up a large monastery then, as bishop, helped a large diocese through many crises. He was also a senior royal courtier during his time as Bishop of Worcester, under first King Harold II then William the Conqueror. These years were difficult with the Government, Church, and the entire social structure undergoing dramatic change. But Wulfstan fulfilled Jesus' desire, 'Blessèd is that servant whom his master will find at work when he arrives.' And it wasn't work for the sake of activity because he demonstrated wisdom and yet remained a holy man throughout all those years.

Jesus' teaching in today's Gospel implies that he wants us to be like Wulfstan: we must be active in the world while retaining lives that are pure.

Living in two worlds is never easy but is especially important during times of change like today. In times of crisis, Jesus tells us (and all disciples before and after) that he wants us to be, '*in* the world but not *of* the world' (John 17:14-15). Only when living in two worlds can we ensure that God lies at the heart of all the change and disruption, because God lives in the hearts of those overseeing those changes.

We are called to live *in* the world. It's the only way to get to know people and their needs. We discern the pressures they experience. And only through living in the world can we understand the structures that seem to build inequality into people's lives while protecting the strong and powerful. Jesus therefore wants us to live in the world to be a positive help during times when it changes around us. Jesus wants us to help make the world a better place, a process which he often called 'building the Kingdom' (and which many today prefer to call 'the social Gospel').

Jesus also calls us to avoid being *of* the world. By this phrase, he meant people blindly accepting the structures and changes adopted by the world and allowing harm to others. For example, he warns us against keeping only the commandments we want to keep and ignoring the rest.

Being in the world but not of the world is always difficult, but it's especially difficult during times of great change. The conceptual landscape changes, which can make interpreting some of the commandments even more difficult. What

does it mean *in practice* to love the Lord our God when the Church is so different from the Church we grew up with, and know and love?

Perhaps today's first reading is about making choices in the world while not living as part of that world. In context, God has told the prophet Samuel to anoint a new king who will take the role currently held by Saul. Interestingly, although Samuel is a prophet, he seems unable to follow what God is saying and keeps choosing David's brothers rather than David himself. We can assume that God is talking continually—so Samuel is just like us! It's only when God becomes more specific ('Do not look at the outward appearance') that Samuel gets it right.

All of us live in a world that's changing at bewildering speed: the changes in the Church are superimposed on other changes such as those caused by Covid, Brexit, the Internet revolution, climate change and soaring energy bills, and of course politics. We struggle with living in the world because it's genuinely difficult. No wonder we find it difficult to live in ways that are 'not of the world'. But the answer is neither accommodating the world whether good or bad, nor running away from the world. We must live the godly lives Jesus requires because 'For the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.'

Into our confusion, God tells us (through the prophet Samuel) not to look at the outward appearance but beyond the surface appearances. It's a difficult habit to acquire. St Wulfstan did so and helped a generation of Christian during exceptional times. It's now our turn.

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

Jesus our exalted Lord has been given all authority.

Let us seek his intercession

that our prayers may be perfected by his prayer.

Jesus Christ, great high priest, living for ever to intercede for us:

pray for your Church, your broken body in the world ...

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Jesus Christ, king of righteousness,

enthroned at the right hand of the majesty on high:

pray for the world, and make it subject to your gentle rule...

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Jesus Christ, Son of Man, drawing humanity into the life of God:

pray for your brothers and sisters in need, distress or sorrow ...

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Jesus Christ, pioneer of our salvation,

bringing us to your glory through your death and resurrection:

receive into your presence those who have died

trusting in your promises ...

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Jesus Christ, Lord of all things,

ascended far above from the heavens and filling the universe:

pray for us who receive the gifts you give us

for work in your service...

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Jesus Christ, first fruits of the new creation,
keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit
and in the bond of peace,
until you bring the whole created order to worship at your feet;
for you are alive and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

Merciful Father,

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

The peace

Peace to you from God our heavenly Father.
Peace from his Son Jesus Christ who is our peace.
Peace from the Holy Spirit, the Life-giver

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 Amazing love

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

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

The peace of God which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 And can it be

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

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 Wulfstan 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, shepherd of your people,
whose servant Wulfstan revealed the loving service of Christ
in his ministry as a pastor of your people:
by this eucharist in which we share
awaken within us the love of Christ
and keep us faithful to our Christian calling;
through him who laid down his life for us,
but is alive and reigns with you, 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.