

Thursday 31 March 2022

John Donne



John Donne was born in about the year 1571 and brought up a Roman Catholic. As a child he was sceptical about all religion. He went up to Oxford when he was fourteen, studied further at Cambridge, and perhaps on the Continent. He discovered his Christian faith in the Church of England.

He was eventually ordained and later became Dean of St Paul's Cathedral. Much of his cynicism dissolved and he became a strong advocate for the discerning of Christian vocation, and in particular affirming his own vocation as a priest, loving and loved by the crucified Christ.

The people of London flocked to his sermons. He died on this day in the year 1631. His love-poetry and religious poems took on a renewed life in the twentieth century; and his place both as a patristic scholar and as a moral theologian are confirmed by his prolific writings and the publication of his sermons.

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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 Glory be to God the Father (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.

In sorrow for our sins and with faith in his mercy,
let us turn to the Lord,
for with him there is mercy and plenteous redemption.

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 John Donne

Almighty God,
who enlightened your Church
by the teaching of your servant John Donne:
enrich it evermore with your heavenly grace
and raise up faithful witnesses
who, by their life and teaching,
may proclaim the truth of your salvation;
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 Second Book of Moses called Exodus

The Lord said to Moses, 'Go down [the mountain] at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf, and have worshipped it and sacrificed to it, and said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!"

The Lord said to Moses, 'I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; and of you I will make a great nation.'

But Moses implored the Lord his God, and said, 'O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, "It was with

evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth”? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, “I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it for ever.” ’ And the Lord changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

Exodus 32:7-14

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

My friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see The Day approaching. *Hebrews 10:19-25*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Let the Son of God enfold you [\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus said, ‘If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true. There is another who testifies on my behalf, and I know that his testimony to me is true. You sent messengers to John, and he testified to the truth. Not that I accept such human testimony, but I say these things so that you may be saved. He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. But I have a testimony greater than John’s. The works that the Father has given me to complete,

the very works that I am doing, testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me. And the Father who sent me has himself testified on my behalf. You have never heard his voice or seen his form, and you do not have his word abiding in you, because you do not believe him whom he has sent.

‘You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf. Yet you refuse to come to me to have life. I do not accept glory from human beings. But I know that you do not have the love of God in you. I have come in my Father’s name, and you do not accept me; if another comes in his own name, you will accept him. How can you believe when you accept glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the one who alone is God? Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; your accuser is Moses, on whom you have set your hope. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But if you do not believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?’ *John 5:31–end*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

These three passages explore the nature of prophecy and the pitfalls of using a go-between if we don’t want to talk with God directly, in a first-hand way. In the first passage, Moses is the go-between for the Israelites. He has just ascended Mount Sinai to receive the Law but the Israelites panic when their go-between disappears from sight after entering the clouds encircling the top of the mountain. They sin and worship the Golden Calf: they may be trying to communicate with God for themselves, though we know this is not the right way.

In the second passage, the writer to the Hebrews reiterates the procedure for priests as they enter the sanctuary in the Temple. The writer describes the way priests ‘draw near’—it’s a technical term implying ritual washing and prayer. He’s warning against relying on a priest as go-between. The writer prefers that we imitate some aspects of priesthood and, in context, warns against passivity, merely attending services. Being in the presence of a priest and other worshippers is not the same as encountering God for ourselves. That’s why he recommends his hearers should ‘consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another.’ He wants the people to grow into a faith that is their own.

In the third passage, Jesus is talking about the way that even Scripture itself can be used as a go-between. When Jesus talks about ‘Scripture’, he would have been

referring principally to the Law—the five books of Moses comprising Genesis through to Deuteronomy; as a Jewish rabbi in the first century, he would probably have regarded the books of prophecy as of secondary importance and the books of history as of third-class importance.

People of faith need to know what God is telling them. As it says on a great many packets or tins, ‘For best results, follow manufacturer’s instructions.’ We must do what God wants and completely avoid what God prohibits. That’s what the Law is intended to provide.

All too often, the Law does not describe everything. What do we do when faced with modern technology such as medical science or the Internet? How should we behave in an age of internationalism and almost limitless choice? In such cases, we still need to go back to basics and discern the will of God; but we can’t rely on a go-between. These passages advise us not to rely solely on a charismatic leader or a written code (the first passage), tradition (the second passage), or Scripture (today’s Gospel). We need more. Relying on go-betweens leads to a stunted faith and thence leaving the faith. John Donne discovered the hard way that it didn’t work.

Today’s Bible passages warn us against the dangers of ‘do it yourself’ spirituality. Ironically, that amalgam of leaders and Law, tradition, and Scripture tells us what that ‘something else’ needs to entail. *We need a first-hand faith that involves our own encounter with God.* We then test the fruit of that encounter with Law, etc.

God wants all people of faith to grow into a living, loving relationship with Him. Unfortunately, a great many potential pitfalls exist, which means that growth into holiness is not easy. Worthwhile goals never are. We need help. Therefore, while it’s maybe comforting to rely on a spiritual go-between, we should always aim to move from relying on a go-between into a first-hand relationship with God. We then test our own insights against objective criteria, for example commentary or soul friend. Our eternal salvation requires nothing less.

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 pray to Jesus who is present with us to eternity.

Jesus, Lord of life,

All In your mercy, hear us.

Jesus, light of the world,

bring the light and peace of your gospel to the nations ...

Jesus, Lord of life,

All In your mercy, hear us.

Jesus, bread of life,

give food to the hungry ...

and nourish us all with your word.

Jesus, Lord of life,

All In your mercy, hear us.

Jesus, our way, our truth, our life,

be with us and all who follow you in the way ...

Deepen our appreciation of your truth

and fill us with your life.

Jesus, Lord of life,

All In your mercy, hear us.

Jesus, Good Shepherd who gave your life for the sheep,

recover the straggler,

bind up the injured,

strengthen the sick

and lead the healthy and strong to new pastures.

Jesus, Lord of life,

All In your mercy, hear us.

Jesus, the resurrection and the life,
we give you thanks for all who have lived and believed in you ...
Raise us with them to eternal life.

Jesus, Lord of life,

All In your mercy, hear us.

Merciful Father,

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

The peace

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly;
teach and admonish one another in all wisdom,
and may the peace of the Lord be always with you
The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 Blessèd assurance

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

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

God grant you grace to be good servants of Christ Jesus,
nourished on the words of the faith
and on the sound teaching that you have followed;
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 Faithful

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

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 truly right and good,
our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

For he has named his Church
the salt of the earth and light of the world;
a city set on a hill which cannot be hidden.
Within this faithful company
your servant John Donne became a learned teacher
through the gifts of the Holy Spirit of Christ,
that all might welcome his teaching as your gift,
a beacon on the path of holiness
that leads to eternal life.

As now we celebrate his memory
we join with angels and archangels
and all who have served you on earth
and worship you now in heaven
to raise our voices and 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 John Donne 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 truth,
whose Wisdom set her table
and invited us to eat the bread and drink the wine of the kingdom:
help us to lay aside all foolishness
and to live and walk in the way of insight,
that we may come with John Donne to the eternal feast of heaven;
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.**