

Sunday 24 July 2022

The Sixth Sunday after Trinity



Sermon and prayers of intercession © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

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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 Father hear the prayer we offer [\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)
Father hear the prayer we offer [\(different version\)](#)

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 the Sixth Sunday after Trinity

Merciful God,
you have prepared for those who love you
such good things as pass our understanding:
pour into our hearts such love toward you
that we, loving you in all things and above all things,
may obtain your promises,
which exceed all that we can desire;
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 Moses called Genesis

The Lord said, ‘How great is the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah and how very grave their sin! I must go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me; and if not, I will know.’ So the men turned from there, and went toward Sodom, while Abraham remained standing before the Lord.

Then Abraham came near and said, ‘Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will you then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?’ And the Lord said, ‘If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will forgive the whole place for their sake.’ Abraham answered, ‘Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. Suppose five of

the fifty righteous are lacking? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?' And he said, 'I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.' Again he spoke to him, 'Suppose forty are found there.' He answered, 'For the sake of forty I will not do it.' Then he said, 'Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak. Suppose thirty are found there.' He answered, 'I will not do it, if I find thirty there.' He said, 'Let me take it upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there.' He answered, 'For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it.' Then he said, 'Oh do not let the Lord be angry if I speak just once more. Suppose ten are found there.' He answered, 'For the sake of ten I will not destroy it.' And the Lord went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place. *Genesis 18:20–33*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Colossians

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority. In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it. *Colossians 2:6–15*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Take my life and let it be
Take my life and let it be
Take my life and let it be
Take my life and let it be

(click on this link to hear the hymn)
(different version)
(vigorous modern version)
(rock version)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

All Glory to you O Lord.

He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.’ He said to them, ‘When you pray, say:

“Father, hallowed be your name.
 Your kingdom come.
 Give us each day our daily bread.
 And forgive us our sins,
 for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.
 And do not bring us to the time of trial.”

And he said to them, ‘Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, “Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.” And he answers from within, “Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.” I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

‘So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!’ *Luke 11:1-13*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

I love it when a Bible passage suddenly seems to lurch sideways without warning. I love it because that ‘lurch’ means I will have misunderstood something, and getting to the bottom of it gets me closer to the truth.

At first sight, today’s readings are about persistence in prayer—nagging God. Abraham is persistent and nags God, pleading for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. At first sight, it looks like the prayer didn’t work for the cities were

obliterated, presumably in some kind of volcanic event. Similarly, in the Gospel, Jesus tells us to be persistent in prayer, for food and for hospitality, which contrasts with Sodom for that city's besetting sins were idolatry and lack of hospitality.

It's the end of the reading in Luke that seems so odd. Jesus tells us to be persistent in prayer. To paraphrase the example in his parable, straight after Jesus tells us to pray for our *daily* bread, a man says repeatedly, 'Give me food! Give me food! Give me food!' Jesus then summarises by saying that God is a better parent than we can deserve or imagine ... *because God gives His Holy Spirit*. We sense that something is definitely changing focus here

Actually, today's readings are about prayer and the way they are embedded in a relationship with God. At heart, prayer is an encounter with the living God and is the medium by which that relationship proceeds. That's why the template prayer we now call the Lord's Prayer starts '*Our Father*'.

Let's therefore think a little about relationships. A relationship must always *relate* to something or someone and never exists in isolation. To explore that point, imagine my life being represented by a simple circle. Yours is too. When you and I first meet, those two circles are separate and distinct. As we get to know each other, the two circles approach then touch as our lives touch. They start to overlap as we get to like each other and enter into friendship, with the extent of the overlap representing the extent of that friendship. The overlap can be bigger or smaller, depending on the way the relationship grows. But it's in the area of overlap where the relating occurs: while some of my life is only mine and some of yours does not involve me, all the action occurs where the circles occupy the same area of space.

When we think about faith, and creating a relationship with God, the overlap occurs between us and God. More accurately, it involves our soul and the Holy Spirit of God. Looked at this way, the reason Jesus mentions the Holy Spirit in the context of prayer is because God has appointed the Holy Spirit as His agent on earth, and the Spirit works in those parts of our lives in which we allow him to operate. Without the Holy Spirit we cannot know God—that's what the second reading from Colossians is trying to say. Romans 8:26–27 says much the same.

Sometimes a relationship gets stuck: it's true of earthly relationships and also true of our relationship with God. The latter gets stuck because we refuse to allow the Spirit. We stop the overlap between us and God from growing. That's why Jesus reminds us to ask for the Holy Spirit to restart the relationship, get it going again.

When resolving conflict, we look at what is stopping the overlap, what stops the relationship from forming. In the same way, when teaching a person to pray, it's important to look at the two sides of the relations, at God and at us, and work out how to maximise the overlap, generate a real relationship of depth and value.

The **first** key to any living relationship depends on our sincerity in wanting it to work. Sometimes we don't really want a relationship. Prayer starts with we do, genuinely desire a relationship with God. Some people do not want that relationship because they know if will cause their lives to change. If God is a God of truth then coming face to face with him is confronting reality, perhaps for the first time. As the poet T.S. Eliot once said, 'Humankind cannot cope with much reality' and, in reality, souls know that getting close to God will cost not less than everything. This truth may explain why there are so few great saints.

Having said we want the relationship at the heart of prayer, we next look at either end of that relationship—at God and at us.

The **second** key to prayer is God Himself, so we need to be realistic knowledge of Him. There is nothing wrong with a three-year old who thinks that God sits on a cloud and has a long white beard. There is everything wrong when an adult believes that same infantile image. I once discussed God with a student who said he was an atheist. He did not believe in God but knew that I did. I said to him, 'Tell me about this God.' At the end, I told him, 'I don't believe in your God either' because it was so childish. When we truly want God, we need to seek the *true* God ... which requires truth. That's why Jesus tells us to seek the Holy Spirit and love God with our minds. We need to do so because prayer can become nothing short of idolatry if we are unwilling for our image of God to grow. Of course, we cannot know God completely this side of the veil, but He will love us into that deeper awareness of His enormous love provided we are willing for our image of God to grow.

The **third** way in which we grow in prayer therefore requires that we learn who we are, which can be the hardest part. A bat travels using a form of sonar, bouncing waves of sound from solid objects and listening for their echo. Similarly, a healthy personality helps understand itself by looking at how people respond to its actions and words. Conversely, an unhealthy personality is not willing to analyse and hence engage with people's reactions—perhaps it fears to find out. That refusal to acknowledge who we are is as fatal to a relationship with God as it is with a friend or spouse. The truth of who we really are can only come about through a ruthless determination to find out the truth: 'Who am I?' That's why people of prayer are honest and humble. That's also why the Bible speaks against the sin of pride.

As we tie all these strands together, we discern that God wants to enter into a relationship with us. To that end, he wants to maximise the overlap between us and Him, and to that end will fill us with His own Spirit to the maximum that we allow. We suddenly realise why Jesus taught about holiness and forgiveness, so that indwelling can proceed.

We are made to live in a close, intimate, loving relationship with God. We can't do that unless we are honest in wanting a relationship. We must seek a true vision of God, and we must seek to be truthful about self. And then the long but satisfying growth into prayer can begin.

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

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. We ask you to give us the *courage* to forgive others; the *grace* to forgive ourselves; and the *strength* to heal the effects of our past actions.

In the following moment of silence, we pray especially for ...

Lord, hear us,

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Your Kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven. We ask you to inspire us to make the world a better place. We ask for strength, wisdom and determination.

In the following moment of silence, we pray especially for ...

Lord, hear us,

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Give us today our daily bread. We ask you to deal with our greed or apathy or laziness. We ask you to heal those of our attitudes that harm us. We pray for the environment and those of our habits which damage it.

In the following moment of silence, we pray especially for ...

Lord, hear us,

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Do not bring us to the time of trial but rescue us from the evil one. We ask you to help us grow in the paths of discipleship, particularly those aspects we find difficult. In the following moment of silence, we pray especially for ...

Lord, hear us,

All Lord, graciously hear us.

We pray for those who yearn for the Kingdom to come but continue to suffer because it has not yet appeared. We ask you to help those who suffer in any way, those we know about, care about and worry about, and those who cannot worship with us today for reasons beyond their control.

In the following moment of silence, we pray especially for ...

Lord, hear us,

All Lord, graciously hear us.

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 What a friend we have in Jesus

(click on this link to hear the hymn)

What a friend we have in Jesus

(different version)

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

All **Amen.**

HYMN 4 Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise God from whom all blessings flow

(click to hear the hymn)
(modern rock version)

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

God of our pilgrimage,
you have led us to the living water:
refresh and sustain us
as we go forward on our journey,
in the name of 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.**