

Friday 5 August 2022

St Oswald



Portrait of Oswald,
from the *Epitome of Chronicles*
by Matthew Paris,
early 13th century

Oswald was born around the year 605, the son of King Ælffrith of Northumbria. He was forced to leave home after his father's death and move to Iona where, influenced by the monks of St Columba, he was baptised. Returning to Northumbria in 634, Oswald defeated the British king, setting up a cross as his standard and gathering his men around it to pray the night before the battle. A man of humility and generosity, Oswald worked closely with his friend St Aidan, travelling with him on his missionary journeys and acting as his interpreter.

Oswald died in battle on this day in 642 while defending his kingdom from the Mercians.

Sermon © Revd Denise Owen.

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

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 click on the links.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,
<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 When I survey the wondrous Cross ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))
When I survey the wondrous Cross (version with a different tune)

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 saints were faithful unto death
 and now dwell in the heavenly kingdom for ever.
 As we celebrate their joy,
 let us bring to the Lord our sins and weaknesses,
 and ask for his mercy

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 Oswald

Lord God almighty,
who so kindled the faith of King Oswald with your Spirit
that he set up the sign of the cross in his kingdom
and turned his people to the light of Christ:
grant that we, being fired by the same Spirit,
may always bear our cross before the world
and be found faithful servants of the gospel;
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 Wisdom of Solomon

The righteous live forever, and their reward is with the Lord; the Most High takes care of them. Therefore they will receive a glorious crown and a beautiful diadem from the hand of the Lord, because with his right hand he will cover them, and with his arm he will shield them. The Lord will take his zeal as his whole armour, and will arm all creation to repel his enemies; he will put on righteousness as a breastplate, and wear impartial justice as a helmet; he will take holiness as an invincible shield, and sharpen stern wrath for a sword, and creation will join with him to fight against his frenzied foes. *Wisdom 5:15-20*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the First Letter of St Peter

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker.

Yet if any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace, but glorify God because you bear this name. For the time has come for judgement to begin with the household of God; if it begins with us, what will be the end for those who do not obey the gospel of God? And 'If it is hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinners?' Therefore, let those suffering in accordance with God's will entrust themselves to a faithful Creator, while continuing to do good. *1 Peter 4:12-19*

This is the Word of the Lord

All **Thanks be to God.**

HYMN 2 Lift high the Cross

(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' disciples said, 'Yes, now you are speaking plainly, not in any figure of speech! Now we know that you know all things, and do not need to have anyone question you; by this we believe that you came from God.' Jesus answered them, 'Do you now believe? The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each one to his home, and you will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!'

John 16:29-33

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All **Praise to you O Christ.**

Sermon

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

What does the cross mean to you? Does your heart lift when you see the cross on the spire of a church on the horizon? Do you wear a cross on your lapel or as a piece of jewellery? And if you do have you ever considered why? There may be any number of reasons why the sight of a cross seen in public is significant. For example, does it call to mind the death and resurrection of Christ, and if it does is that an encouragement for your faith? You'll see from the short biography of St Oswald at the beginning of this service, and from the Collect, that Oswald set up a cross for all to see on the eve of an important battle. Clearly, St Oswald felt that the cross had a special power to inspire and provoke his warriors, but to inspire and provoke *what?* It may seem to us that setting up a cross on a battlefield before the battle contradicts our understanding of the peace that God wills for the world. It seems slightly incongruous. Oswald was looking for victory and, in battle, that inevitably only comes through killing and death. And yet, the Collect commends him for it. Of course, many military commanders have used the cross in this way, and perhaps it is unhelpful for us as modern-day Christians to project our own sensibilities back on these times.

So, let's accept that Oswald meant to inspire those who saw the cross to acts of courage and self-sacrifice. This may be how we understand images of the cross today. The cross may call to mind for us the sacrifice of Christ who died to save humankind. In this way, it is a sign of the ultimate self-sacrificial act. I certainly am encouraged and inspired when I see those crosses on church steeples in the distance. It's a reminder to me of the Christian heritage of this country, and also an encouragement in that it is a sign that God is still present and active in our communities. For most people, I hope a visible cross at least calls to mind the Christian faith.

As I suggested above, the visible sign of the cross comes in many forms, and I hope for those of us who believe in the power of the cross, it is more than a simple visual image. It can be if we use it appropriately, an opening for a discussion of the faith. We don't, I assume, wear a cross somewhere on our clothing or body as a kind of talismanic protection, but rather as a sign and symbol of what we believe. It may also be a sign and symbol of how we want to live, i.e., in accordance with the teachings of Christ. It is, I hope, a sign and symbol for those around us too. Thus, it may have an inward aspect, inspiring us to acts of loving service etc, and also an outward aspect, helping others to understand who we are and what motivates us.

However, if we do wear or have crosses around us and they are visible, we may also become hostages to fortune! If we wear a cross that others can see, this does

rather suggest we should live up to our Christian values and ideals. There's the challenge for me. As much as I believe the cross can serve to inspire and provoke, it can also serve to rebuke and challenge. Knowing the demands of the Christian life and faith these ideals are difficult to live up to on a daily basis. Remember that Jesus told us to take up our cross daily. This is quite a challenge for us. Perhaps that cross that we wear or acknowledge is also an opportunity for us to admit to ourselves and to explain to others the centrally of confession and forgiveness in the faith.

This brings me back to Oswald and his battle. We're told by St Paul in his letters that we too are in a kind of battle, a battle with the powers that may tempt us away from the faith and Christian lives, and how many sources of temptation do we find around us? It is for me at least, that small inner voice that says to my soul, 'Does it really matter if you don't pray today?' or whatever the temptation might be that I'm battling against on a daily basis. It is different for everyone, but there are temptations out there from without and from within and against which we battle.

So, where is the cross in this? The answer to that is obvious, of course. The cross is a sign of victory over sin and death. It is a sign of hope and everlasting covenant, that Jesus died for us, rose again and now lives for us and with us. The cross is a sign Christ has conquered the world.

I wonder what seeing a cross brings into your mind? I hope it is for you an inspiration and encouragement, perhaps not to physical battle as it was for Oswald, but to that ongoing need to battle against the worldliness of the world, against the desire for material gain, against injustice and cruelty, against vanity, against anything and everything that prevents the coming of the Kingdom. Finally, if you wear a cross, wear it with pride. It is the hope of the world.

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 for strength to follow Jesus.

Saviour, we hear your call.

All Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant.'
Saviour, we hear your call.

All Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Unless you change
and become humble like little children,
you can never enter the kingdom of heaven.'

Saviour, we hear your call.

All Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Happy are the humble;
they will receive what God has promised.'

Saviour, we hear your call.

All Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Be merciful as your Father is merciful;
love your enemies and do good to them.'

Saviour, we hear your call.

All Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Love one another, as I love you;
there is no greater love than this,
to lay down your life for your friends.'

Saviour, we hear your call.

All Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Go to people everywhere
and make them my disciples,
and I will be with you always, to the end of time.'
Saviour, we hear your call.

All **Help us to follow.**

Merciful Father,

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

The peace

Once we were far off,
but now in union with Christ Jesus we have been brought near through the
shedding of Christ's blood,
for he is our peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All **And also with you.**

HYMN 3 Amazing love (what love is this) [\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

God give you grace to follow his saints
in faith and love and steadfastness
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 All I once held dear [\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

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

And now we give thanks, most gracious God,
surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses
and glorified in the assembly of your saints.

The glorious company of apostles praise you.

The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.

The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.

We, your holy Church, acclaim you.

In communion with angels and archangels,
and with all who served you on earth and worship you now in heaven,
we raise our voice to 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 Oswald 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 Oswald:
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.