

Monday 16 September 2024

St Ninian



St Ninian's Chapel, Whithorn, Dumfries and Galloway

We know little for certain about the life and ministry of St Ninian. He was probably born in about the year 360 AD. He was the son of a Cumbrian chieftain who had himself converted to Christianity. He probably visited Rome when young and while there received his training in the faith.

Ninian was consecrated bishop in the year 394 and returned to Britain, where he formed a community of monks at Candida Casa in 397 (in today's Wigtown in Dumfries and Galloway). Candida Casa is the first recorded Christian Church in Scotland; its name means 'White [or 'Shining'] House'—which may refer to a whitewashed building. From there, his missionary journeys went as far as Perth and Stirling. He worked among his own people, the Britons of the border regions and also among the Picts.

Ninian died (maybe on this day) in Whithorn about the year 432 AD.

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 are included at the end.

The hymn can be accessed via a YouTube link. 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 [Low in the grave he lay](#)

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

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.

Christ calls us to share the heavenly banquet of his love with all the saints in earth and heaven. Therefore, knowing our unworthiness and sin, 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

All Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

The Collect for the St Ninian

Almighty and everlasting God,
who called your servant Ninian to preach the gospel
to the people of northern Britain:
raise up in this and every land
heralds and evangelists of your kingdom,
that your Church may make known the immeasurable riches
of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,
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 book of the Prophet Jeremiah

The word of the Lord came to me saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.' Then I said, 'Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.' But the Lord said to me, 'Do not say, "I am only a boy"; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.' Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, 'Now I have put my words in your mouth.'

Jeremiah 1:4-9

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, 'At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you' but, see, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!

2 Corinthians 5:17—6:2

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Colours of day

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

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.'

Matthew 9:35–38

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

It's not so long since Covid-19 which felt at the time like a pandemic of Biblical proportions. The virus changed everything we did: it changed a great many lives; we needed to think about every encounter with every person we met in case we passed on the virus to others.

But what if we wanted to pass something on? It's an interesting question for Jesus tells all Christians to share their faith. To use an old-fashioned phrase, 'Christianity is taught or caught'. How, then, do can we adapt the language of Covid?

Firstly, we need to get close to a person if we wish to pass on the virus. We talk about 'proximity'. Similarly, we need to get close to a friend or relative if we want to share our faith. All the only effective ways of sharing Christianity involve love. And all genuine love requires close proximity.

Anyone could catch the Covid disease. We recall experts talking about the so-called 'R number' as a way of looking at the Covid virus: the R number represents the number of people we infect. Each of us is a single person: a value of R of 1 means that each infected person infects exactly one other person. A value of R greater than 1 means that each infected person infects more than one other person—ideal conditions for a pandemic. And a value of R that's less than 1 means that (on the average) we infect fewer people, making it easier to control and thence eradicate the disease.

But it's also worth considering a different concept from virology. It's the way a vaccine works. If a nurse gives a patient a truly tiny dose of a lethal virus, the person's immune system fights the infection but without being overwhelmed. As a result, the person's immune system can then cope any future contact with the virus.

One of the reasons why Christianity does not spread is because the lives of some folk involves so tiny 'dose' of Christianity that it acts like a vaccine rather than a virus. Those living a half-hearted Christianity immunise others against a genuine faith rather than spreading it. When a person has lived with a tiny does of Christianity then encounters a genuine form of Christian faith they seem not to notice it.

Today we remember St Ninian—one of the first Britons to share the faith. Ways of analysing the way Christianity is 'caught' are remarkably similar to ways of looking at the spread of a virus. It explains why we can use the language of viruses spreading.

This way of looking prompts many questions: if we live with Christianity, is its strength strong enough to affect those around us or is it so small it acts like a vaccine, stopping our faith from spreading? We clearly want it to spread if we

want the Kingdom to grow. The questions become, would people in our presence decide to follow the Lord Jesus or be put off? What's our 'spiritual R number'?

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

Thank you for loving us. Help us to love you. And help us to demonstrate our love by sharing it: teach us how to love; be our love.

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer

Loving Lord, as we pray for your Church, we thank you for the example of lives devoted to you—the saints we remember today. We ask you to raise up more people willing to consecrate their lives entirely to your service. And we further commit our lives to serve your Kingdom.

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer

Loving Lord, we pray for your world. We ask that you will help the leaders of the nations to work toward goodness, fairness and justice. We pray for our world and its ecology. Please empower those seeking to reverse the effects of climate change.

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer

Loving Lord, we pray for those in need: those care about and worry about. We ask that you will help each, touching every life at their point of greatest need.

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer

Loving Lord, we pray for those who have died and passed from this life to the next. We ask your comfort on their families and friends, and all those who mourn.

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer

Merciful Father,

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

The peace

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 I am the bread of life

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

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary,
fill you with his grace to trust his promises and obey his will;
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 [Will you come and follow me](#) (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 St Ninian 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

Holy Father,
who gathered us here around the table of your Son
to share this meal with the whole household of God:
in that new world where you reveal
the fullness of your peace,
gather people of every race and language
to share with your servant Ninian and all your saints
in the eternal banquet 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.