

Seventh Sunday of Easter, 1 June

Opening Collect BCP

O God, the king of glory,
who hast exalted thine only son Jesus Christ
with great triumph unto thine kingdom in heaven:
We beseech thee
Leave us not comfortless:
But send to us thy Holy Ghost
to comfort us, and exult us to the same place
whither our Saviour Christis gone before:
who liveth and reigneth
with thee and the Holy Ghost
one God, now and for ever.

BAS

God of boundless grace, king of glory
you call us to drink freely from the well of life
and to share in your holiness.
May the glory of your love,
made known in the victory of your Son,
transform our lives and through us,
transform the world he lived and died to save.
We ask this through the same Jesus Christ,
your Son our Lord
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Acts 16:16-34: *Last week we heard of Paul's trip into Europe where he preached to a Jewish community that met near a river. Gentile worshippers of God were also present, including a woman named Lydia who becomes (apparently) the first Gentile convert to faith in Jesus. Now we hear of 2 miracles, the first of a slave girl who had a "spirit of divination" who brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune telling before Paul ordered the spirit out of her which angered her owners. As a result, Paul and Silas are stripped and beaten by the authorities and thrown in jail where the second miracle occurred – a midnight earthquake that opened the doors to freedom for the disciples. Paul shares the good news with their jailer who becomes a believer.*

One day, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.
And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.
And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,
And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,
And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.
And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.
And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the gaelor to keep them safely:
Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.
And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.
And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.
And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.
But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,
And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?
And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.
And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.
And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.
And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21: *John is given a vision of what will occur at the end of the current age. In our reading today John comes to the end of the revelation that was given him. Jesus the Lamb speaks and reassures his followers,*

they who washed their robes in his blood and made them white, that he will return soon and reward us for our faithfulness. We hear of an Eden-like state that will exist between the faithful and God. In this city we can eat of the fruit of the trees, unlike in Eden. The water of life flows from God whose salvation is for all people!

I, John, heard a voice from heaven saying, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

John 17:20-26: *Jesus continues to prepare his disciples for his “departure” (death, resurrection, ascension). In this passage Jesus prays for his disciples (that they may be one and protected from evil) and then he prays for us! Jesus prays for our unity, mutual love and that we see his glory in heaven.*

Jesus looked up to heaven and prayed, Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

And the glory which you have given me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

Today's Gospel puts us in the upper room on the night when Jesus was betrayed into death on the cross. There Jesus did three things for His disciples. He presided at the Passover meal of His Body and Blood, and showed them the meaning of baptismal love and humility by washing their feet. He preached a sermon. And He prayed. It's what He does for us every Lord's Day. He presides, preaches and prays.

Jesus prayed. That should not surprise us. Jesus' visible ministry on earth was marked by prayer. He prayed alone and with his disciples. He prayed before healing. He prayed in the morning when he arose and in the evening before he lay down. He instructed his disciples to pray. But this prayer in our Gospel reading is different from all other prayers. This prayer properly deserves to be called the "Lord's Prayer" for only the Lord can pray it. Only Jesus, the sinless Servant-Son of God can pray such a prayer. This the prayer of the One who is both Priest and Sacrifice at the same time - Christ the Victim, Christ the Priest. The sacrificial Lamb who is the Good Shepherd prays for the sheep. Jesus prays first for himself. Jesus knew that his glory would mean the sacrifice of his own life. He knew that his glory would be his own suffering and crucifixion. He knew that before he would be exalted, he would be humbled; before he would be glorified He would be crucified; before he would be enthroned at the right hand of God, He would be enthroned on the wood of a cross. Jesus' glory is our salvation. His glory is to show us the Father's love, to reveal to us his Father's heart and His will to save so that our hearts might be turned to Him in faith and live. Jesus accomplished that. "God so loved the world that He sent His only Son, that whoever believes in him would not perish but have eternal life." "This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." Jesus did what he was sent to do. And he did it perfectly.

These were ordinary men that Jesus was praying for. Just like us. They were no more educated than you and I are. They were no more pious, holy, or courageous than any of us. They were no more gifted with insight. They possessed no greater faith than any here today could have. Yet Jesus sent them into the world to preach his Gospel, to give out the gifts of his death and resurrection, to make disciples of all nations. He sent them clothed with the Name of God and armed with his Word. He sent them as sheep among wolves, into a world that hated them and wanted them dead, protected only by this prayer that Jesus prayed. Jesus knew the dangers. his disciples were in the world but not of the world, just as he was in the world but not of it. They were strangers, resident aliens in the world without permanent citizenship, whose home is in heaven. They were consecrated, set apart for holy use by Jesus' Word.

So it is with all who have been baptized into the Name of God and believe His Word. You are in the world, but you are no longer of the world. Christ is in you and you are in Christ. You are God's agents in the world, his priests, subversively scattered and hidden. You sense the pressure.

Alleluia! Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Concluding Prayers

Let us pray for Charles, our king, and all this in authority in this country and around the world, that peace might reign in the world, and that all humanity may live in freedom with justice and dignity.

Let us pray for our bishop, Todd, and for the unity of the church in Christ Jesus, that we may be one in Christ as Christ is one with God.

Let us pray for the apostolic mission of the church, that we may bring all humanity to the knowledge and love of God in Christ.

Let us pray for all who need the love and power of Christ, especially.
For all the saints in glory and all those whom we have known and loved, who though dead are alive in Christ.

Righteous One,
your beloved Son prayed
that his disciples in every generation
be one as you and he are one
Fulfil the prayer of Jesus
and crown our celebration of the Easter season
with your Spirit's gifts of unity and love.
We ask through your Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

For our Parish of All Saints' Sarnia.

O GOD the Holy Ghost, Sanctifier of the faithful:
Sanctify this parish by thine abiding presence
especially at this time when we cannot gather together again.
Enlighten the minds of thy people more and more
with the light of the everlasting Gospel.
Bring erring souls to the knowledge of God our Saviour;
and those who are walking in the way of life,
keep steadfast unto the end.
Give patience to the sick and afflicted,
and renew them in body and soul.
Guard from forgetfulness of thee those who are strong and prosperous.

Increase in us thy manifold gifts of grace,
and make us all to be fruitful in good works;
O blessed Spirit, whom with the Father and the Son together
we worship and glorify, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Lord's Prayer

Our Father,
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

May the God of peace,
who raised from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ,
that great shepherd of the sheep,
make you perfect in every good work that you do God's will
and give glory to our risen Lord Christ.
And may the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be amongst you and remain with you,
now and for ever.