**Morning Prayer – 28th February The Second Sunday of Lent**

**Preparation**

O Lord, open our lips

**and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Hear our voice, O Lord, according to your faithful love,

**according to your judgement give us life.**

Blessed are you, God of compassion and mercy,

to you be praise and glory for ever.

In the darkness of our sin,

your light breaks forth like the dawn

and your healing springs up for deliverance.

As we rejoice in the gift of your saving help,

sustain us with your bountiful Spirit

And open our lips to sing your praise.

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**Blessed be God for ever.**

Have mercy on me, O God, in your great goodness

according to the abundance of your compassion

blot out my offences.

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness

and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my faults

and my sin is ever before me.

Against you only have I sinned

and done what is evil in your sight.

So that you are justified in your sentence

and righteous in your judgement.

Cast me not away from your presence

and take not your holy spirit from me.

Give me again the joy of your salvation

and sustain me with your gracious spirit;

Then shall I teach your ways to the wicked

and sinners shall return to you.

Deliver me from my guilt, O God,

the God of my salvation,

and my tongue shall sing of your righteousness.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son**

**and to the Holy Spirit;**

**as it was in the beginning is now**

**and shall be for ever. Amen.**

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;

let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,

so may the light of your presence, O God,

set our hearts on fire with love for you;

now and for ever.

**Amen**

**The Word of God**

***Psalm 22.23-28***

23 Praise the Lord, you that fear him; \* O seed of Jacob, glorify him; stand in awe of him, O seed of Israel. 24 For he has not despised nor abhorred the suffering of the poor; neither has he hidden his face from them; \* but when they cried to him he heard them. 25 From you comes my praise in the great congregation; \* I will perform my vows in the presence of those that fear you. 26 The poor shall eat and be satisfied; \* those who seek the Lord shall praise him; their hearts shall live for ever. 27 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, \* and all the families of the nations shall bow before him. 28 For the kingdom is the Lord’s \* and he rules over the nations.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son**

**and to the Holy Spirit;**

**as it was in the beginning is now**

**and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Scripture

***Genesis 17.1-7,15-16***

1 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, ‘I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. 2 And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.’ 3 Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, 4 ‘As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. 5 No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. 6 I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. 7 I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.’ 15 God said to Abraham, ‘As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. 16 I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.’

Canticle

**Full of compassion and mercy and love**

**is God, the Most High, the Almighty.**

Lord almighty and God of our ancestors,

you who made heaven and earth in all their glory:

all things tremble with awe at your presence,

before your great and mighty power.

Immeasurable and unsearchable is your promised mercy,

for you are God, Most High.

You are full of compassion, long suffering and very merciful,

and you relent at human suffering.

O God, according to your great goodness,

you have promised forgiveness for repentance

to those who have sinned against you.

The sins I have committed against you

are more in number than the sands of the sea.

I am not worthy to look up to the height of heaven,

because of the multitude of my iniquities.

And now I bend the knee of my heart before you,

imploring your kindness upon me.

I have sinned, O God, I have sinned,

and I acknowledge my transgressions.

Unworthy as I am, you will save me,

according to your great mercy.

For all the host of heaven sings your praise,

and your glory is for ever and ever.

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son**

**and to the Holy Spirit;**

**As it was in the beginning is now**

**and shall be for ever.**

**Amen.**

**Full of compassion and mercy and love**

**is god, the Most High, the Almighty.**

Scripture

***Romans 4.13-25***

13 The promise that Abraham would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. 14 If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. 15 For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. 16 For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, 17 as it is written, ‘I have made you the father of many nations’) Abraham believed in the presence of the God who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. 18 Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become ‘the father of many nations,’ according to what was said, ‘So numerous shall your descendants be.’ 19 He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. 20 No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, 21 being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. 22 Therefore his faith ‘was reckoned to him as righteousness.’ 23 Now the words, ‘it was reckoned to him,’ were written not for his sake alone, 24 but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in God who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul;

**O my God, in you I trust.**

You are the God of my salvation,

**To you, O Lord, I life up my soul.**

In you I hope all the day long.

**O my God, in you I trust.**

Remember, Lord, your compassion and love,

For they are from everlasting.

**To you, O Lord, I life up my soul;**

**O my God, in you I trust.**

Gospel Canticle

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to *Mark (8.31-38}*

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

31 Jesus began to teach his disciples that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33 But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, ‘Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.’ 34 He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, ‘If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 35 For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. 36 For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? 37 Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? 38 Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

*All* **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Mark 8:31-end**

**28/2/2021 covid 19**

Our gospel passage today, I believe, needs to be understood in the context of the verses preceeding, where Jesus has asked his disciples ‘Who do people say that I am’ and we have Peter’s answer ‘You are the Christ’

To really understand Peter’s answer to that question we need to understand a little bit of the historical background. Peter and many of the Jewish people were expecting a messiah to come. They had clear expectations as to what the messiah would be like and especially as to what he would do. The messiah would be a king like figure, he would cleanse or rebuild the temple, he would defeat Israel’s enemies and he would bring God’s justice into the world. The messiah then would be God’s agent or messenger, he would sort out the muddle that Israel was in and he would establish Israel’s rightful place as God’s chosen people and put the gentiles in their place. It is this expectation that is behind Peter’s declaration, not a realisation that Jesus is the Son of God or in any way divine but an acceptance that Jesus is the one they have been waiting for, the one who will put things right for Israel. It’s important for us to grasp that because of what happens later in this passage.

Jesus now has to show them that he is indeed the Messiah, but that his way of being God’s appointed King/messenger is a new way, that the kingdom he will bring in is God’s kingdom not an earthly one, in fact that their expectations have to be turned upside down and so he begins to teach them about the suffering and the rejection that the Son of man must endure, suffering that will eventually lead to his death. And that is just all too much for Peter, he cannot equate what Jesus is saying with the picture he has in his head of what the messiah will be like, and so he takes him aside and begins to rebuke him. Now, you will hear me from time to time express considerable sympathy with Peter, because I think he does get a hard time of it, and I can just imagine him thinking to himself, here hang on a minute, I’ve just said that you are the messiah and now here you are trying to prove me wrong because we all know that what you are talking about can’t possibly happen to the messiah. And Jesus’ words to Peter do seem quite harsh, ‘get behind me Satan’ he says, but perhaps his words need to be harsh, to move peter out of one mindset and into another, to see things not as the world sees them but as God sees them, sometimes we all need a bit of a jolt to shake us up and help us see things God’s way. Jesus knew that just by following him the disciples were putting themselves in danger, following a new teacher was a risky business, especially if their message was unpopular, and they had the very real and recent example of what had happened to John the Baptist in front of them. But now Jesus has to spell it out to them, it’s not just a possibility that might happen, the Son of Man has to walk straight into it, and will face death and they have to understand and be prepared for it. He hasn’t come to be a feted king that everyone will rally behind and that he can lead into victory over Israel’s hated enemy, he has come to bring God’s kingdom in and the only way that he can do that is through his death on the cross, and he warns them that if they want to follow him, to be his disciples then they too have to be prepared to take up their cross and follow him.

And Jesus’ message for us is the same, most of us hope that taking up our cross won’t lead to the literal crucifixion that Jesus suffered, but following Christ will undoubtedly bring times of difficulty and suffering. Jesus doesn’t promise us an easy life but we are promised God’s presence with us at all times, even in a pandemic, even in the most difficult times when we probably feel like we are at the bottom of a huge pit, God is there with us in the midst of it.

For us to follow Jesus means being prepared to take a risk, to respond to his call upon our lives and being prepared to take up our cross and follow him, into the risky situations of our world stepping out in faith, being prepared to speak out against that which is wrong, drawing closer to God, working with Christ to bring in the Kingdom of God. Amen.

**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,**

**for they shall be satisfied.**

Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel,

who has come to his people and set them free.

He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour,

born of the house of his servant David.

Through his holy prophets God promised of old

to save us from our enemies,

from the hands of all that hate us.

To show mercy to our ancestors,

and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham:

to set us free from the hands of our enemies,

Free to worship him without fear,

holy and righteous in his sight

all the days of our life.

And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,

for your will go before the Lord to prepare his way,

To give his people knowledge of salvation

by the forgiveness of all their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God

the dawn from on hight shall break upon us,

To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,

and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son**

**and to the Holy Spirit;**

**as it was in the beginning is now**

**and shall be for ever.**

**Amen.**

**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,**

**for they shall be satisfied.**

**Prayers**

These responses may be used

Lord, in your mercy

**hear our prayer**

Blessed are you, Lord our God,

for you created the world out of chaos

and when chaos seeks to overwhelm us

you offer us your presence and your peace.

You are ever with us in the storms of life

and we know you as our Saviour.

Blessed are you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Lord, your ship the Church is often buffeted

by storms or oppression and violence.

At all times may we affirm your abiding presence

and your lasting peace.

We remember all who are struggling with their faith,

all who do not know you or love you.

May your Church bring to them

the knowledge of your love

and of your Almighty Power.

Silence

Holy and strong One,

**grant us your peace.**

We give thanks for all who seek

to bring your peace to the world.

We pray for the work of the United Nations

and peacekeeping forces.

We remember all who are caught up

in the violence of war or tyranny.

We ask your blessing

upon those who are being overwhelmed by life,

upon all who feel they cannot survive on their own.

Silence

Holy and strong One,

**grant us your peace.**

We pray for our homes and our loved ones.

May we here reveal your peace in our dealings

and in our relationships.

We ask your blessing on homes

that are sinking into deep debt

or where families are unable to cope with each other.

Silence

Holy and strong One,

**grant us your peace.**

We give thanks for our peace of mind

and we pray for all who are disturbed or distressed.

We remember those who have had a traumatic experience

and those who have suffered from betrayal or violence.

We pray for all who are not at peace

with themselves or with others.

Silence

Holy and strong One,

**grant us your peace.**

We rejoice that nothing can separate us

from the love of God in Christ Jesus,

that through him life is eternal.

We pray for friends and loved ones

who have passed beyond the storms of life:

may they rejoice in the joy of your presence

and in your everlasting peace.

Silence.

Merciful Father,

**accept these prayers**

**for the sake of your Son,**

**our Saviour Jesus Christ.**

**Amen.**

The Collect for the Day

Almighty God, you show to those who are in error the light of your truth, that they may return to the way of righteousness: grant to all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ’s religion, that they may reject those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

The Lord’s Prayer is said

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.**

**The Conclusion**

May God our Redeemer show us compassion and love.

**Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**