

## **Parish Worship for Trinity III**



This service is based on the four ACTS of worship :-

**A** for **A**doration, **C** for **C**onfession, **T** for **T**hanksgiving and **S** for **S**upplication.

Although we may be separated physically we are all united together in spirit. Whatever time of day you are reading this service, there may be someone else reading it with you.

**We pray**

**Father God, as we prepare ourselves to come to you in worship, we talk to you. As we read through this service we pray that you will talk to us, and when we have worshipped you we will talk by telephone, email or via the internet with our friends.**

**Come near to us so that we may talk to you in these few moments of quiet on this day when we think about the disciples setting out to tell others the Good News of your Son, Jesus Christ.**

**We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.**

**We sing or say**

**Rock of ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in thee;  
let the water and the blood, from thy riven side which flowed,  
be of sin the double cure; cleanse me from its guilt and power.**

**Nothing in my hands I bring, simply to thy cross I cling;  
naked, come to thee for dress; helpless, look to thee for grace;  
tainted, to the fountain fly; wash me, Saviour, or I die.**

**While I draw this fleeting breath, when mine eyes shall close in death,  
when I soar through tracts unknown, see thee on thy judgement throne;  
Rock of ages, cleft for me let me, let me hide myself in thee.**

**We pray**

**Father God, we want to worship you.**

**We want to praise you as the Creator of our world and of everyone and everything in it.**

**We want to tell you we are sorry for all that is wrong in our lives.**

**We want to thank you for everything that you give us and do for us.**

**We want to read and learn from your word.**

**We want to declare our belief and trust in you.**

**We want to bring before you our concerns for ourselves, for our community and for our world and to ask for your help, particularly in this time of crisis.**

**We offer this, our act of worship to you. Amen.**

## **Adoration**

**We sing or say a song of praise.**

**Jubilate, ev'rybody, serve the Lord in all your ways, and  
come before his presence singing; enter now his courts with praise.  
For the Lord our God is gracious, and his mercy everlasting.  
Jubilate, jubilate, jubilate Deo!**

## Confession

We tell God we are sorry for everything that is wrong in our lives and ask him to forgive us.

**Father God, we have come into your presence to tell you that we are sorry for all the wrong things we have done, for all the wrong things we have said, and for all the wrong things we have thought.**

**In this strangest of strange times when many of us are forced to spend more time isolated with our loved ones,**

**we are sorry if our relationships may sometimes become strained.**

**We are sorry that we may have hurt or upset other people, but mostly we are sorry that we may have hurt or upset you. Jesus Christ, Our Lord, died as punishment for all of our wrongdoings and we ask for your forgiveness in his name.**

**Amen.**

We ask God to hear our prayers and in his great mercy grant us forgiveness in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

We sing or say

**Lord, thy word abideth, and our footsteps guideth;  
who its truth believeth light and joy receiveth.**

**When our foes are near us, then thy Word doth cheer us,  
word of consolation, message of salvation.**

**When the storms are o'er us, and dark clouds before us,  
then its light directeth, and our way protecteth.**

**Who can tell the pleasure, who recount the treasure,  
by thy word imparted to the simple-hearted?**

**Word of mercy, giving succour to the living;  
word of life, supplying comfort to the dying!**

**O that we, discerning, its most holy learning,  
Lord, may love and fear thee, evermore be near thee!**

## Thanksgiving

We thank God for the many blessings we receive from him.

**Father God,**

**we thank you for all the many gifts you give us.**

**We thank you for the beautiful planet on which we live.**

**We thank you for the food and drink that keep us alive.**

**We thank you for the clothes that keep us warm.**

**We thank you for the love of family and friends.**

**We thank you at this time for all who are making our lives easier in this period of uncertainty.**

**For these and all the other blessings, too numerous for us to mention, that we receive from you, we give you our most sincere and grateful thanks. Amen.**

## God's Word

### Acts 12:5-11 (GNB)

So Peter was kept in jail, but the people of the church were praying earnestly to God for him. The night before Herod was going to bring him out to the people, Peter was sleeping between two guards. He was tied with two chains, and there were guards on duty at the prison gate. Suddenly an angel of the Lord stood there, and a light shone in the cell. The angel shook Peter by the shoulder, woke him up, and said, "Hurry! Get up!" At once the chains fell off Peter's hands. Then the angel said, "Fasten your belt and put on your sandals." Peter did so, and the angel said, "Put your cloak round you and come with me." Peter followed him out of the prison, not knowing, however, if what the angel was doing was real; he thought he was seeing a vision. They passed by the first guard post and then the second, and came at last to the iron gate leading into the city. The gate opened for them by itself, and they went out. They walked down a street, and suddenly the angel left Peter. Then Peter realised what had happened to him, and said, "Now I know that it is really true! The Lord sent his angel to rescue me from Herod's power and from everything the Jewish people expected to happen."

### Matthew 16:13-19 (GNB)

Jesus went to the territory near the town of Caesarea Philippi, where he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" "Some say John the Baptist," they answered. "Others say Elijah, while others say Jeremiah or some other prophet." "What about you?" he asked them. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." "Good for you, Simon son of John!" answered Jesus. "For this truth did not come to you from any human being, but it was given to you directly by my Father in heaven. And so I tell you, Peter: you are a rock, and on this rock foundation I will build my church, and not even death will ever be able to overcome it. I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of heaven; what you prohibit on earth will be prohibited in heaven, and what you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven."

## HOMILY

There is a story that when King Alfred the Great was on the run from the Viking invaders, he took refuge in the house of a peasant woman, without telling her who he was. She asked him to watch some cakes – small loaves of bread – she was baking while she went out.

So worried was Alfred by the fact that his realm was being invaded, he neglected the cakes and letting them burn earned himself a rebuke from the woman who's bread had been cremated.

Now, imagine if this story was being reported by the king's chief spin-doctor. How would it read then? It would probably end with something like, "She said the cakes were really well done – just the way she likes them!"

We hear a lot from spin-doctors and PR machines these days, but is what we are hearing the truth? Certainly, much of what we see on social media that purports to be news is not true.

So what is the truth? Is it what the spin-doctors and the PR people say is the truth? Many people probably accept it as such. So is the truth what the majority of people believe? Or is it something else?

First century Judea was waiting, yearning for the promised Messiah to come. But there were many religious groups who, because of their different interpretations of the scriptures were expecting different things of him, and each group thinking that their version of the Messiah was the truth. The Pharisees hoped for someone who would confirm and strengthen their religious beliefs. The Sadducees were looking for

someone to take action in the fields of politics and the economy. The Essenes were like the Pharisees in their strict adherence to the law and the rituals, but they did not believe in the resurrecting of the body, as the Pharisees did. Then there the Zealots, a kind of Judean Liberation Front, who merely wanted a warrior leader to kick out the Romans.

Christ was fully aware of what these different groups wanted and he also knew that what he was doing would satisfy none of them. The truth about him was something very different.

So he asks his disciples, "What is the word on the streets? Who do the people out there think I am?" They answer, "Some say John, the Baptist. Some say Elijah. Others say Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." We have to say that none of those answers are anywhere close to the truth.

So Christ asks a slightly different question. "What do *you* think? Who do *you* reckon I am?" We can imagine the scene. Most of the disciples deep in thought. "What should I say?" "Tricky one – don't want to upset him!" "Who do I really think he is?" "Who does he want me to say I really think he is?"

That must have been going through most of their minds. In fact, all of their minds. All that is – except one. While the other disciples were thinking hard before they spoke, Peter, typically, did it the other way round. Straight off, he says, "You're the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Christ's reply is to the effect of "Spot on! You've got it in one! Well done!" Peter, in his straight from the shoulder, not always considered way, has hit the nail on the head. He understood. Quite simply, this *is* the truth.

But Christ goes on to say more. He continues, saying that Peter did not gain this understanding from another person. In fact, the only way he could have received this understanding is directly from God, the Father, himself.

Christ then proceeds to single Peter out from the other disciples for some pretty amazing honours. He tells him firstly, that he is the rock on which the Christian church will be founded, and secondly, that he will be given the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven!

So, the foundation of one of the largest religious organisations the world has ever seen, and the key holder to heaven itself, is to be an ignorant ex-fisherman? Not only was Peter not an educated man, he had also exhibited traits of character that some theologians believe would probably land him on a psychiatrist's couch today.

He is believed to have been a large man, tall and broad, with a shock of red hair and a bushy beard of the same colour. He was hot-headed, to say the least. Actions and words were always more important to Peter than thoughts. "I won't run away," he told Jesus, on the night of his arrest, "I won't run away even if I have to die with you!" But, as we know, before the morning came he had denied three times that he even knew Jesus. But Jesus forgave him later when, as recorded on John 21.15, he asked Peter three times whether he loved him.

Was Peter an unstable character, or merely eccentric? He certainly appeared to have the slightly alternative reactions that characterise eccentricity. But this seems to give him the ability to have an insight that is nothing short of inspirational. While others are still thinking about it, he speaks his mind, and what was in his mind was the truth. Of all the disciples, Peter was the only one who really and truly understood what Christ was all about.

In these changing times, as we look to returning to our churches for worship, adapting them for our services, rethinking our ways of worshipping and re-evaluating our witness, we should be like Peter and rise to the challenge of Christ's commission.

As we open our hearts and minds to Jesus we too become more aware and understanding of his plans for us, and also to allow ourselves to become the building blocks which Jesus uses to build his church here on earth. May we acknowledge Christ as our saviour and empowered by the his spirit, have the ability to speak out as Peter did, bravely and without fear.

We affirm our belief by saying the Creed.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.  
Amen.

We sing or say

**O Love that wilt not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee;  
I give thee back the life I owe, that in thine ocean depths its flow  
may richer, fuller be.**

**O light that follow'st all my way, I yield my flickering torch to thee;  
my heart restores its borrowed ray, that in thy sunshine's blaze its day  
may brighter, fairer be.**

**O Joy that seekest me through pain, I cannot close my heart to thee;  
I trace the rainbow through the rain, and feel the promise is not vain,  
that morn shall tearless be.**

**O Cross that liftest up my head, I dare not ask to fly from thee;  
I lay in dust life's glory dead, and from the ground there blossoms red  
life that shall endless be.**

## **Supplication**

We bring our prayers to God. Take a few moments to tell God what is on your heart at this time.

Encouraged by our fellowship with all the saints, let us make our prayers to the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Father, your Son called men and women to leave the past behind them and to follow him as his disciples in the way of the cross. Look with mercy upon those whom he calls today, marks with the cross and makes his disciples within the Church.

Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Your Son told his disciples not to be afraid and at Easter breathed on them his gift of peace. Look with mercy upon the world into which he sent them out, and give it that peace for which it longs.

Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Your Son formed around him a company who were no longer servants but friends, and he called all those who obeyed him his brother and sister and mother. Look with mercy upon our families and our friends and upon the communities in which we share.

Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Your Son sent out disciples to preach and heal the sick. Look with mercy on all those who yearn to hear the good news of salvation, and renew among your people the gifts of healing.

Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Your Son promised to those who followed him that they would sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel and would share the banquet of the kingdom. According to your promise, look with mercy on those who have walked with Christ in this life and now have passed through death.

Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

Almighty God, you have built your Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ himself as the chief cornerstone: so join us together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made a holy temple acceptable to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

[We sing or say](#)

**Thy hand, O God, has guided thy flock, from age to age;  
the wondrous tale is written, full clear, on ev'ry page;  
our forebears owned thy goodness, and we their deeds record;  
and both of this bear witness: one Church, one faith, one Lord.**

**Through many a day of darkness, through many a scene of strife,  
the faithful few fought bravely, to guard the nation's life.  
Their Gospel of redemption, sin pardoned, man restored,  
was all in this enfolded: one Church, one faith, one Lord**

**Thy mercy will not fail us, nor leave thy work undone;  
with thy right hand to help us, the victory shall be won;  
and then, by men and angels, thy name shall be adored,  
and this shall be their anthem: one Church, one faith, one Lord.**

[We share a blessing together.](#)

May the peace of God enfold us, the love of God uphold us, and the wisdom of God control us. **Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord! **Thanks be to God!**

Every Parish Worship service in normal times includes an activity for people of all ages to take away and do at home. To find out what this week's is, see the attachment headed "Activity". Enjoy!