

# **Holy Communion for the 3rd Sunday in Lent**



## ***The Stour Valley Benefice***

*The Parishes of Cavendish, Clare, Hundon, Poslingford,  
Stoke-by-Clare & Wixoe*

## **- A short introduction to the Season -**

The characteristic feel of Lent is one of self-examination, penitence, self-denial, study, almsgiving, in preparation for Easter. It lasts for forty days and forty nights reminding us of Jesus' time spent in the wilderness, being tested by Satan.

It was also the traditional time when candidates for baptism were instructed, and those penitents prepared themselves, through fasting and penance, to be readmitted to communion. The whole Christian community were also invited to join them.

Ashes are an ancient sign of penitence; and so, it has become traditional to begin Lent on 'Ash Wednesday' by being marked in ash with the sign of the cross.

This season of penitence is demonstrated in our use of the simplest vestments, and many churches are kept bare of flowers and other decorations. The predominant colour of this season is Purple or Violet.

# Growing in God

## **Spiritual Communion**

The term 'Spiritual Communion' has been used historically to describe the means of grace by which a person, prevented for some serious reason from sharing in a celebration of the Eucharist, nonetheless shares in the communion of Jesus Christ.

In joining with Revd Mark today as he celebrates the Eucharist from his own home, you too are able to join with him in communion. The Book of Common Prayer instructs us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', although we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves.

The Church of which we are members is not defined by the walls of a building but by the Body of Christ of which we are members. In making our communion spiritually, we are joining with Christians everywhere to be nourished by the one who tells us, 'I am the Bread of Life'.

## Welcome and Introduction

### Hymn – O for a closer walk with God

*sung by St Martin's Voices*

- 1 O for a closer walk with God,  
a calm and heavenly frame,  
a light to shine upon the road  
that leads me to the Lamb.
- 2 Return, O holy Dove! return,  
sweet messenger of rest!  
I hate the sins that made Thee mourn,  
and drove Thee from my breast.
- 3 The dearest idol I have known,  
whate'er that idol be,  
help me to tear it from Thy throne,  
and worship only Thee.
- 4 So shall my walk be close with God,  
calm and serene my frame;  
so purer light shall mark the road  
that leads me to the Lamb.

*William Cowper (1731-1800)*

## The Gathering

Priest: In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.

**All: Amen.**

## The Greeting

Priest: The Lord be with you.

**All: and also with you.**

## Prayer of Preparation

**All:** **Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from who 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.**

## Prayers of Penitence

Priest: Our Lord Jesus Christ said: The first commandment is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is 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.'

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.**

Priest: Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil.  
Let us confess our sins remembering before God the times we have fallen from temptation into sin.

## Kyrie Confessions

Priest: Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness and cleans me from my sin: Lord, have mercy.

**All:** **Lord, have mercy.**

Priest: Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me: Christ, have mercy.

**All:** **Christ, have mercy.**

Priest: Cast me not away from your presence and take not your holy spirit from me: Lord, have mercy.

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

## **Absolution**

Priest: 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.**

(Note: During Lent the Gloria is not said)

## **The Collect**

Priest: Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; 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.**

## **The Liturgy of the Word**

### **Old Testament Reading – Exodus 17.1–7**

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarrelled with Moses, and said, 'Give us water to drink.' Moses said to them, 'Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?' But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, 'Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?' So Moses cried out to the LORD, 'What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.' The LORD said to Moses, 'Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.' Moses did so, in the sight

of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarrelled and tested the LORD, saying, 'Is the LORD among us or not?'

Priest: This is the word of the Lord

**All: Thanks be to God.**

### **New Testament Reading – Romans 5.1–11**

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person - though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. But more than that, we even boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Priest: This is the word of the Lord

**All: Thanks be to God.**

### **Gospel Reading – John 4:5-42**

Reader: Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

**All: Glory to you, O Lord.**

So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, 'Give me a drink'. (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, 'How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?' (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me a drink", you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?' Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' The woman said to him, 'Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.'

Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come back.' The woman answered him, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You are right in saying, "I have no husband"; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!' The woman said to him, 'Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.' Jesus said to her, 'I am he, the one who is speaking to you.'

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you want?' or, 'Why are you speaking with her?' Then the woman left her water-jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, 'Come and see a man who told me

everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?' They left the city and were on their way to him.

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, 'Rabbi, eat something.' But he said to them, 'I have food to eat that you do not know about.' So the disciples said to one another, 'Surely no one has brought him something to eat?' Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, "Four months more, then comes the harvest"? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, "One sows and another reaps." I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.'

Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I have ever done.' So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there for two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, 'It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.'

Reader: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

## **The Creed**

**All: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## **Prayers of Intercession**

Let us pray to God who knows the secrets of all hearts.

May the Lord who give the living water to all who come to him in faith, give grace to the Church, so to drink of that water that she may bring life to many. May he lift our eyes to see where the time is ripe for harvest and seek to be worthy labourers for the coming of the Kingdom.

Give the word of truth to the world, where there is strife between nations and races, where faiths can be hostile and gender divisive. May honesty overcome all shame and deceit, so that wrongs that have been hidden may be brought to light and healed.

May our Lord be with us in our homes and in all the homes of this community, to teach us by his word, to sustain us with the food of loving obedience and lead us to worship in spirit and in truth. Make us honest in our dealings with one another and repentant for our sins.

Have mercy on all whose lives are distressed by broken relationships, by misunderstandings that have turned to bitterness, by the suppressed anxiety that eats away the heart. May those who have found only partial truth be led into the right way, to know and to perform the will of God.

May those who have passed from this world, and now drink of the living water that flows from the throne of God, rejoice in the eternal worship which beyond all place and time. May we by grace come to the same rejoicing.

We pray in the name of Christ, the Messiah of all who worship in spirit and truth.

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

## **The Liturgy of the Sacrament**

### **The Peace**

Priest: Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with god through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us access to his grace. *(Romans:5:1,2)*

**All: The peace of the Lord be always with you  
and also with you.**

### **Preparation of the Altar**

Priest: God of our journey, as we walk with you on your path of obedience, sustain us on our way and lead us to your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

## The Eucharistic Prayer

Priest: The Lord be with you

**All: and also with you.**

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

**All: We lift them to the Lord.**

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All: it is right to give thanks and praise.**

Priest: It is indeed right and good, to give you thanks and praise, almighty God and everlasting Father, through Jesus Christ your Son.

For in these forty days you lead us into the desert of repentance that through a pilgrimage of prayer and discipline we may grow in grace and learn to be your people once again.

Through fasting, prayer and acts of service you bring us back to your generous heart.

Through study of your holy word you open our eyes to your presence in the world and free our hands to welcome others into the radiant splendour of your love.

As we prepare to celebrate the Easter feast with joyful hearts and minds we bless you for your mercy and join with saints and angels for ever praising you and singing:

**All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.**

Priest: Accept our praises, heavenly Father, through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, and as we follow his example

and obey his command, grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit these gifts of bread and wine may be to us his body and his blood; who, in the same night that he was betrayed, took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them, saying: 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.

Therefore, heavenly Father, we remember his offering of himself made once for all upon the cross; we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; we look for the coming of your kingdom, and with this bread and this cup we make the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**All: Christ has died:  
Christ is risen:  
Christ will come again.**

Priest: Accept through him, our great high priest, this our sacrifice of thanks and praise, and as we eat and drink these holy gifts in the presence of your divine majesty, renew us by your Spirit, inspire us with your love and unite us in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, with all who stand before you in earth and heaven, we worship you, Father almighty, in songs of everlasting praise:

**All: Blessing and honour and glory and power  
be yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

## **The Lord's Prayer**

Priest: Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**All: 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.**

## **Breaking of the Bread**

Priest: 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.**

## **The Agnus Dei**

**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.**

## **Giving of Communion**

Priest: 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.**

### **Prayer after Communion**

Priest: Merciful Lord, grant your people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil, and with pure hearts and minds to follow you, the only God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. 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.**

### **The Dismissal**

Priest: Christ give you grace to grow in holiness, to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always.

**All: Amen.**

Priest: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**All: In the name of Christ. Amen.**

## **Hymn – From ashes to the living font**

*sung by St Martin's Voices*

- 1 From ashes to the living font  
your Church must journey, Lord,  
baptised in grace, in grace renewed  
by your most holy word.
- 2 Through fasting, prayer, and charity  
your voice speaks deep within,  
returning us to ways of truth  
and turning us from sin.
- 3 From desert to the mountaintop  
in Christ our way we see,  
so, tempered by temptation's might  
we might transfigured be.
- 4 For thirsting hearts let waters flow  
our fainting souls revive;  
and at the well your waters give  
our everlasting life.
- 5 From ashes to the living font  
your church must journey still:  
through cross and tomb to Easter joy,  
in Spirit-fire fulfilled.

*Alan J Hommerding*

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Although not all of us are able to meet in church for services, it is important to remember that the work of the Church continues, as do many of the ongoing costs in maintaining our historic buildings as well as supporting the ministry in this benefice and the wider church.

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