

# Holy Communion for the 5th Sunday of 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 – Come, people of the risen King

*sung by Katie Ritson*

- 1      Come, people of the risen King,  
Who delight to bring Him praise;  
Come, all and tune your hearts to sing  
To the Morning Star of grace.  
From the shifting shadows of the earth  
We will lift our eyes to Him,  
Where steady arms of mercy reach  
To gather children in.  
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice!  
One heart, one voice, O Church of Christ, rejoice!*
  
- 2      Come, those whose joy is morning sun,  
And those weeping through the night;  
Come, those who tell of battles won,  
And those struggling in the fight.  
For His perfect love will never change,  
And His mercies never cease,  
But follow us through all our days  
With the certain hope of peace.  
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice!  
One heart, one voice, O Church of Christ, rejoice!*
  
- 3      Come, young and old from every land –  
Men and women of the faith.;  
Come, those with full or empty hands –  
Find the riches of His grace.  
Over all the world, His people sing –  
Shore to shore we hear them call  
The Truth that cries through every age  
'Our God is all in all'  
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice!  
One heart, one voice, O Church of Christ, rejoice!*

*Keith Getty, Kristyn Getty and Stuart Townend  
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## 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: Most merciful God, who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ delivered and saved the world: grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross we may triumph in the power of his victory; 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 – Ezekiel 37.1–14**

The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all round them; there were very many lying in the valley,

and they were very dry. He said to me, 'Mortal, can these bones live?' I answered, 'O Lord GOD, you know.' Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD.'

So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, 'Prophecy to the breath, prophecy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then he said to me, 'Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely." Therefore prophecy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD.'

Priest: This is the word of the Lord

**All: Thanks be to God.**

### **New Testament Reading – Romans 8.6–11**

To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason, the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law - indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Priest: This is the word of the Lord

**All: Thanks be to God.**

### **Gospel Reading – John 11.1-45**

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

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

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' But when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead. For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus,

come out!’ The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘Unbind him, and let him go.’

Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

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 whose word is the word of life.

As Thomas and the other disciples followed their Lord in faith, give to your people the trust in him that takes away all fear. As Mary and Martha saw with their human eyes his power of resurrection, let your Church witness to his risen presence among us.

Have mercy on a world where many do not follow the way of life but choose the dark way that leads to the death of hope. May those in places know that their power is limited and that all authority comes only from the Lord of life, the conqueror of death.

Bless our families, friends and neighbours when they are in distress and doubt. Keep us faithful to one another and to our Lord. Help us to trust in his word and to obey his commands even when the way forward is not clear to us.

Look with pity on those who mourn, especially those who feel no hope of resurrection. Strengthen all who walk in fear but are loyal to their calling. Deal tenderly with those who are at the point of death, and ease their passing.

God, in who the dead are alive and shall never die again, receive the souls of the faithful departed. As their bodies lie in the grave, grant them eternal life in Christ, whose word they trusted in their time on earth.

We pray in the name of Christ, the Resurrection and the Life.

Intercessor: 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)*

The peace of the Lord be always with you

**All: 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: Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us that what we do for the least of our brothers and sisters we do also for you: give us the will to be the servant of others as you were the servant of all, and gave up your life and died for us, but are alive and reign, now and for ever. 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 – Jesu, lover of my soul**

*sung by St Martin's Voices*

- 1       Jesu, lover of my soul,  
      let me to thy bosom fly,  
      while the gath'ring waters roll,  
      while the tempest still is high:  
      Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,  
      till the storm of life is past;  
      safe into the haven guide,  
      O receive my soul at last.
  
- 2       Other refuge have I none,  
      hangs my helpless soul on thee;  
      leave, ah, leave me not alone,  
      still support and comfort me.  
      All my trust on thee is stayed,  
      all my help from thee I bring;  
      cover my defenceless head  
      with the shadow of thy wing.

3 Plenteous grace with thee is found,  
grace to cover all my sin;  
let the healing streams abound,  
make and keep me pure within.  
Thou of life the fountain art,  
freely let me take of thee,  
spring thou up within my heart,  
rise to all eternity.

*Charles Wesley (1707-1788)*

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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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