



Last Sunday before Advent

A Short Reflective Service of Prayer for those at home

‘Be careful to do what the Lord commands
so it may go well with you’

Deuteronomy 5

O God, you search our hearts,
You know our every thought, word and deed;
our sins are not hidden from your sight,
our days pass away quickly under your judgment.
If our hearts have been led astray,
discipline us, teach us your ways, O Lord,
turn us away from mortal sin
and lead into the fullness of life. AMEN

A Reading from the New Testament

Revelation 3 v 15 - end

‘I know your deeds; you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spit you out of my mouth. For you say, “I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing.” You do not realize that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. Therefore I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich; and white robes to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen; and salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. I reprove and discipline those whom I love. Be earnest, therefore, and repent. Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me. To the one who conquers I will give a place with me on my throne, he who has an ear, let them hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.’

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 25 v 31 - 32

‘When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.’

Light your own Candle
(please ensure this is done safely)

Pause for a moment of quiet

Thought for the Day

If there was one subject at school I not only hated but was useless at, it was chemistry! However, the one experiment I remember was one we have no doubt all done at some stage in our education, the 'Litmus' test.

With little strips of litmus paper, one could evaluate the liquids held in the test tubes to see whether they leaned towards an acid (red) or an alkaline solution (blue). All straightforward stuff, even I couldn't mess this up, however, there were also the solutions that gave no clear result, neither extreme acid nor alkaline, they sat in the middle, a so called 'neutral.'

Although happy to have turned my back on chemistry, I cannot help but think how the 'litmus' test resembles our reading from the Book of Revelation.

The reading tells us God sees us as we are, not a good thing for some of us when the day of judgment or separation comes. What will god be looking for?

What will distinguish us from each other?

What will save us -

Doctrinal soundness?

Faith that can move a mountain?

Regular Church Attendance?

How much we put in the collection plate?

I rather hope none of the above! What the reading implies in the book of Revelation is that we must become a people who welcome God into our lives, our hearts, our thinking and importantly our actions towards each other and God.

If we are passionate disciples of Jesus, we have no need to worry and although it grieves me to say this, those who do not believe there is a God and reject Jesus wouldn't care what the Spirit has to say anyway! This reading is primarily aimed at those in life who sit in the middle, those who are neither hot or cold towards God.

One thing for sure about the litmus test was that it revealed the exact nature of the solution being tested, substances may look alike but they can be completely different. Human-beings, regardless of whether they come to church or not may look alike too but how they act reveals a great deal about their Christian character.

What goes on deeply within us concerns God, how we respond to the needs of the world or each other matters, indifference is not a Kingdom quality.

Christian discipleship truly begins when we invite Jesus into our lives. Only when we look at the world through his eyes will we begin to understand just how blind we may have become both to the needs of the world and to our own faults.

Our relationship with Jesus matters, ultimately we cannot evade or tone down the reality that one day God will be our judge but what matters more than anything is that Jesus is our Saviour. When Jesus shares our lives we will share his eternity.

THINK GOD, KNOW JESUS, LISTEN TO HIS SPIRIT
AND ALL WILL GO WELL WITH YOU.

Pause for a moment of quiet

Merciful God,
in a world where hopes are so often dashed
and dreams so often broken,
help us to place our trust in your Son.
Strengthen our faith to believe in our future
both through your coming and through your resurrection.

Where we have erred, forgive us our indifference,
our foolish ways, our blindness and our pride;
make us worthy of your name.

Guide us day by day and speak to our hearts through the night
of the good we may endeavor to do in your name.

Be near us to us through the whole of life,
Until the days dawn when we will share your eternity.
World without end, AMEN

A Call to Prayer

Let us pray for the world, the Church and each other

Prayers for the World

Who will we pray for today? Let us name them.

(Silently name those we pray for)

O Lord, hear our prayer.

Have mercy on your people O God
In this new and changed world that stands before us.

Bring healing and wholeness to people and nations,
and have pity on those suffering in their isolation.

Strengthen all who are fearful of disease and death,
bring them to a new hope in Christ.

Hear the cry of those in pain, those who lament,
grant them your peace and surround them with your presence.

Give rest to the departed
and bring them, with your saints, to glory everlasting.

We commend the world to you for which Christ died,
lead us in the pathways of truth and grant us your protection O God,
Now and forever more,
AMEN.

The 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



Closing Prayer

Let us now continue our journey through life
as those who are called to be Christ's witnesses
to the ends of the earth.

Let us carry life in abundance to the places
which would deny the risen life of God.

And may God who is Alpha and Omega,
who lives forever and who is eternally with us,
empower us in his name to be a blessing the world. AMEN