



March Team Ministry

March Team St John, St Mary, St Peter, St Wendreda

Welcome

6th Sunday after Trinity - 24th July 2022

Please keep in touch with one another, and I am always glad to hear from you on 01354 572117 or at andrew.marchchurch@gmail.com

There has been a rise in CV-19 cases locally. *We are trying to move towards normality whilst keeping people safe. Mask wearing is optional. Respect people's space. Washing hands is a good idea. Wine offered (for those wishing it). Dipping is not recommended.*

~ Services with Social Distancing ~

St Peter's Sundays 8am & 11am; Wednesdays 10am

St Mary's Sundays 9.15am ~ St John's Sundays 9.30am; Tuesdays 10am

St Wendreda's Sundays 11am

Friday 29th July - 150th Anniversary Communion Service at St John's - 7pm

Prayer, Collect, for this week

Loving Father, with the prayer your Son taught us always on our lips, we ask, we seek, we knock at your door. In our every need, grant us the first and best of all your gifts, the Spirit who makes us your children. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, and for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Lord of gifts, share with us a hunger for the bread of your kingdom; give to us a yearning impatience with injustice; free us from clinging to debts gone bad; teach us to pray with honesty in words filled with earth and lit by desire; through Jesus Christ, our Jubilee. Amen.

Epistle Colossians 2 v6-19

Brothers and sisters, as you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority. In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.

Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths. These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Do not let anyone disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, dwelling on visions, puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking, and not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God.

Gospel of Luke 11 v1-13

Jesus was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.' He said to them, 'When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial.'

And he said to them, 'Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, "Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him." And he answers from within, "Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything." I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

'So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for a fish, will give a snake instead of a fish? Or if the child asks for an egg, will give a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'

Meditation

'Father' much could be said, but let's leave that for another time.

'hallowed be your name'. God is present everywhere. But he is not recognized everywhere. He often remains anonymous- without a name – without praise and thanksgiving. Let's make a comparison – our self is always present in our lives. It is quite impossible for us to escape it. But it is not always conscious. We become aware of it only in some situations which tear us away from our usual routine; only then do we become aware that we are irreplaceably ourselves, this one person between birth and death, who has to make decisions no one else can make – and encounter joys and sorrows no one else can have. Similarly God is always present in our life. But only in some situations does he emerge from his anonymity, does he disclose himself, so that we ourselves become the answer to his call, with body and nerves, ideas and actions – and at the same time terrified that we owed him this response. Where God emerges from his anonymous, nameless present, we experience one thing above all: that we must change profoundly, that we must 'hallow' ourselves in order to correspond to him and hallow his name, so that he is not driven out, not forgotten, not despised.

That's not all. We go on to pray, **'Your kingdom come'**. That means that to correspond to God not only must we change ourselves, but the whole world must become different, so that it emerges from its anonymous present and can be lived in. That was one of the great discoveries in the Bible and in Judaism: the world which corresponds to God, in which his name is acknowledged and hallowed, cannot be the same as the world that now exists, which seems to be so final – and which is nevertheless only a transition in the great process of reality. This new world, which will fully reflect God's presence, is not something incomprehensibly remote. It already begins in hiddenness here and now. It already began in Jesus. And also in those great figures like Sts Francis and Columba, Gandhi, Wilberforce, Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu, for in them something is present of that Kingdom of God not only in heaven but on earth.

But now we live in a problematical world that is different from that world in which God's will prevails. In this world we must pray **'Give us each day our daily bread'** – or as we should probably understand the phrase, 'Give us each day tomorrow's bread', so that we are free from the tormenting cares about life. For precisely that is the great temptation to which we are exposed in this world. Bread is scarce. Material goods are limited. We are born into a hard struggle over the distribution of resources, a struggle at the heart of which is a deep distrust that there may not be enough for everyone. If we trusted that there was enough for everyone, it would not be so hard for us to give something away. But as we fight over the scarce goods of life – between classes, between nations, between generations, between developed and developing countries. No one escapes the oppressive context, we all live at

the expense of other people. Indeed, we now discover to our horror that as a human species we live at the expense of other living species, and may be at the expense of the whole sustainable eco-system. In this inexorable struggle over distribution, we have a right to life, to the bread we need to live. We also have a right to tomorrow's bread. But what we are doing now is more: we are consuming the bread for the day after tomorrow. We are plundering the planet so that those who live after us will not find much left, and we are letting the hungry beside us go away empty.

So it is necessary to pray **'forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive those who sin against us.'** We are all guilty in this struggle over the distribution of food and opportunities, for even when we are personally innocent, we are caught up and entangled in a system of unfair distribution. We darkly suspect that there is a connection between the famines on this earth and our luxury. We also suspect that our ordered (and perhaps indeed successful) lives are connected with the failed and ruined lives in our society: where there are winners there are also losers. The rules of the game are often unfair. But those who take part in the game confirm them – even involuntarily.

Precisely this insight is a great temptation to cynicism. And so we pray **'lead us not into temptation'**. The tempter approached Jesus in the wilderness loaded with biblical quotations. It is the same with us: incontrovertible truths become our temptation. It is an incontrovertible truth that life is a struggle over distribution, that we have great difficulty escaping this struggle, that all civilization limits it only up to a point, that it would be too much for the conscience if we felt personally responsible for all that goes on. And then along comes the tempter and whispers all these truths in our ears, and suggests a cynicism which says, 'If you personally have your share in this struggle over distribution (your share of food, education, possessions, and status) – why bother about the fate of others?' and he goes on to whisper, 'It's really time you rid yourself of naive dreams and faced reality.' We are most tempted by truths, sometimes even by truths supported by science. But the temptation is that we forget the most basic things.

We forget that we owe life to the power of God. Before God and through God we all have the same right to life. We forget that we are constantly called to repentance, so that his name is hallowed through our actions and thoughts.

We forget that we are all caught up in that process that is aimed at changing of the world, so that everyone can experience God's goodness.

'And lead us not into temptation'. Today, that means 'Lead us not into temptation to deny the reality of God.' For in that case everything could remain basically as it was. In that case we could persist in our laziness, and the world in its remoteness from God.

God bless, Andrew

Prayers

We pray for strength to follow Jesus.

Saviour, we hear your call, help us to follow.

Jesus said; "Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant." Renew your Church in love and faithfulness; and help us to serve you with joy.

Jesus said; "Unless you change and become like little children you can never enter the kingdom of heaven."

Let not the needy be forgotten; nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

Jesus said; "Blessed are the humble; they will receive what God has promised."

Make us instruments of your peace; and let your glory be over all the earth.

Jesus said; "Be merciful as the Father is merciful; love your enemies and do good to them." Make your ways known upon earth, Lord God; your saving power among all peoples.

Jesus said; "Love one another as I have loved you; there is no greater love than this, to lay down your life for your friends." Guide the leaders of this and every nation; that justice may prevail throughout the world.

Jesus said; "Go to people everywhere and make them my disciples and I will be with you to the end of time." Saviour, we hear your call, help us to follow.

God of mercy, you know us and love us and hear our prayer: keep us in the eternal fellowship of Jesus Christ, our Saviour.