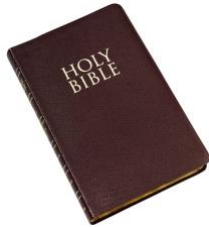




CHRISTMAS 1 - SUNDAY 27TH DECEMBER

Today you'll need a nativity set if you have one or a Christmas card with the nativity scene, your Bible and cross. Use this service to focus your hearts and minds on God as we continue to celebrate the Incarnation.



INTRODUCTION

This is my very last contribution to [Worship@Home](#). Members of the clergy Team will join Jan in writing it in future.

I'm writing this on my 70th birthday and it now seems entirely right that I retire practically on the day!

I will say more in January's magazine but I leave with grateful thanks to all the people of St Maxentius and the wider Team for making these last 6 years a real pleasure. I always hoped I'd enjoy parish ministry after decades in the education world and so it has proved.

I think we have a congregation, led by the PCC that is open to mission in new ways. We've certainly welcomed our children and families, and when things start up again I think that's going to be a real area for growth.

We were thinking in imaginative ways about extending our building to create new space for different activities and that too is ready to pick up again.

[Worship@Home](#) and our Team recorded services are new developments, which I hope, will continue. Reaching people no longer able to come to services is wonderful and it would be good to make real contact with some of them in the future.

So I give you my blessing for the last time and hope to hear how things are going in the months to come.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen

Revd Jan

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom 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

CONFESSION

The sun of righteousness has dawned with healing in his wings.
Let us come to the light of Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

**Almighty God our heavenly Father
we have sinned against you and
against our neighbour
in thought word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.**



**We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.**

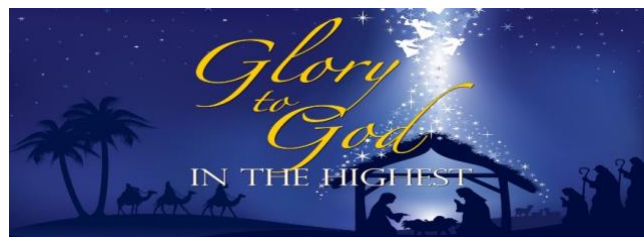
Absolution

May God who loved the world so much that he sent his Son to be our Saviour forgive us our sins and make us holy to serve him in the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

GLORIA

**Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God heavenly King almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ only Son of the Father,
Lord God Lamb of God
you take away the sins of the world; have mercy upon us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

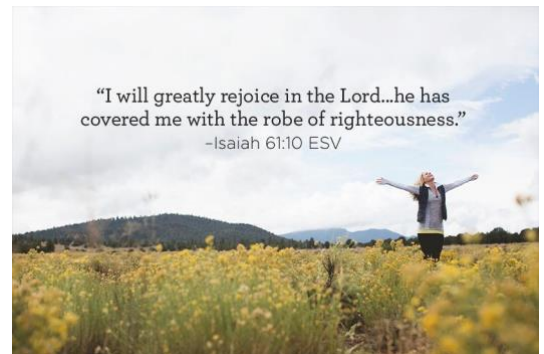


THE COLLECT

God in Trinity, eternal unity of perfect love: gather the nations to be one family, and draw us into your holy life through the birth of Emmanuel, our Lord Jesus Christ.

OLD TESTAMENT READING, ISAIAH 61 1-10, 63 1-3

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as
a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a
bride adorns herself with her jewels.



For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her vindication shines out like the dawn, and her salvation like a burning torch.

The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will give.

You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

This is the word of the Lord – **Thanks be to God**

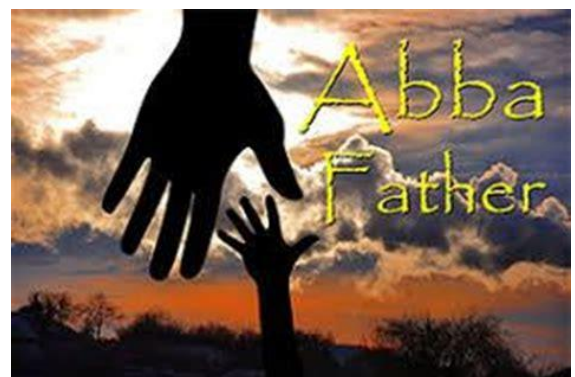


THE NEW TESTAMENT READING

GALATIANS 4, 1-7

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children.

And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'



So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

THE GOSPEL READING Luke 2, 15-21

Alleluia, alleluia. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory. Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

Glory to you O Lord

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.'

So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger.

When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them.

But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

This is the Gospel of the Lord – **Praise to you O Christ**



REFLECTION

It's been a very different Christmas for all of us both at home and in our church, today is Rev Jan's last service for us and we appreciate all the hard work she has put in. We certainly did not get only a part time Vicar and Jan has gone above and beyond all her duties and we thank her for her guidance and devotion throughout her time with us.

So it's change all round. In the readings the Old Testament tells of the great event to come and the excitement of the news of God's good grace and kingdom. This is told again in the letter to the Galatians and after a tough time, followers would be like heirs to God's kingdom and that there was much to look forward to. Does this sound familiar after a tough time and the news of vaccination?

The Gospel tells the story of the shepherds and what happened after the angels had left, we know they were scared and shocked at the presence of the angels and took courage to listen and go and find this special child that would bring them salvation. They saw him with their own eyes and were amazed, as were Mary and Joseph, but in a way Mary was not shocked she stored the memories away in her heart, this was everything that the angel had told her and she doesn't appear shocked or unduly surprised by it all. What a brave young lady she was.

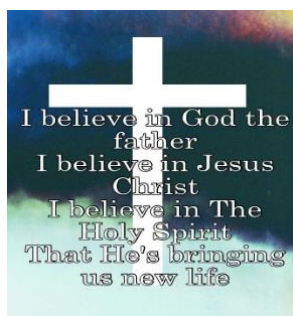
So some of these experiences were seen and some of these were believed out of faith. All give pleasure, excitement and hope, which is what we have to do in our daily lives and in our church, we have to have the vision to see by faith. This theme is carried on through our intercession prayers.

Jan's retirement will be challenging for us, but we will be guided and helped by the team and we pray for someone else to take Jan's place and lead us as well as she has done. We have learned a lot from her on our spiritual journeys, me especially and I never thought I'd be in the position I am as an ALM and leading worship. We all have our own thoughts and worries but have faith, think of Isaiah he was so positive about changes that were to come. We have a great team here at St. Maxentius and we all work together really well so we will be alright.

So I hope you enjoyed your very different Christmas, we send our love and best wishes to Rev Jan in her retirement and embrace what the future will bring. Best wishes for a happier and prosperous New Year. God bless

Jan B

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH



_ 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; 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.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION



During

the intercessions, we pray for the church, our country, our government, people in difficulty and those who have died. You can use your own prayers or if you prefer here are some on today's theme.

Lord God, we thank you for the gift of sight that lets us see you at work in your world. We pray that our vision may not be impaired but that we see you more clearly day by day.

We give you thanks for the church throughout the world and the telling of the Good News. We pray for evangelists and preachers, for pastors and ministers, for our clergy and ministry teams here and for all who have the care of your people. Teach us to ponder on their words and treasure them in our hearts.

Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

We remember all who work to provide us with food and shelter. We pray for shepherds and farmers for all food producers, also those who work for food charities to provide for those who are struggling at this time, we ask you to bless especially those working for urban outreach, our local charity.

Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

We thank you for our homes and our loved ones. We remember those who taught us the faith. We pray for teachers and all who have been an example to us. Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

We remember today all whose sight is impaired. We pray for all who have lost vision or hope in the world, all who feel lonely, all who have lost a sense of wonder. We pray especially for those who are ill at home or in hospital.

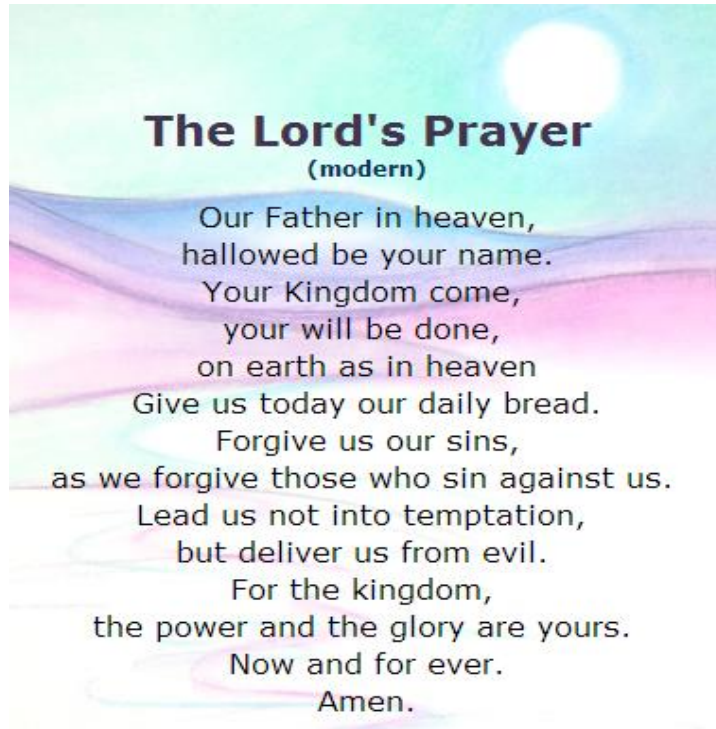
Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

We ask that we may have a vision of your presence and of your eternal Kingdom. We pray for our loved ones who have passed from our sight.

Lord in your mercy – **Hear our prayer**

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

THE LORD'S PRAYER



THE BLESSING

And now we give you thanks because by the power of the Holy Spirit he took our nature upon him and was born of the Virgin Mary his mother, that being himself without sin he might make us clean from all sin.

Now may the Lord of peace himself give us peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with us all and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

