



St Maxentius Church - Worship at Home



## FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

**SUNDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY 2021**

Once again, we are not able to worship in church, but here below we have an outline of our service. Choose a quiet reflective space and to make it more meaningful have a cross, bible and candle to make your sacred space.



### **INTRODUCTION**

Today is our first Sunday in Lent and I hope you all received your Ash Wednesday card and information on Lent prayers and courses. We will start our Lent study group this Thursday at 7.30 for those of you who want to join us, please remember you will have to book by phoning or messaging Jo Haslam so that she can put you on the Zoom group. (01204 592748 or 07872993104).

Today's reflection has been done by Robin and I thank him for his input for us. To lighten my load the intercessions are being shared on a rota among our usual intercession writers from church, so today's prayers have been done by Mike Haslam.

We await the government guidelines tomorrow and we have an emergency PCC meeting on Tuesday to see if we are able to open or plan when and how we can reopen.

Finally a big thank you from Arthur and Alison Greaves for all your prayers for their Daughter in law undergoing cancer treatment, your prayers and theirs have been answered and they have just received very positive news. The power of prayer is wonderful.

Jan B

### **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.**

## PRAYER OF PENITENCE



**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.**

## KYRIE ELEISON

Lord have mercy. **Lord have mercy.**

Christ have mercy. **Christ have mercy.**

Lord have mercy. **Christ have mercy.**

## THE COLLECT

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are, yet without sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit; and, as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save; 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. Amen



## THE OLD TESTAMENT READING - GENESIS 9, 8-17

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 'As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.' God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to

destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.’ God said to Noah, ‘This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.’



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

### **THE NEW TESTAMENT READING - PETER 3, 18-22**

For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight people, were saved through water. And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

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

### **THE GOSPEL - MARK 1, 9-15**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark – **Glory to you O Lord.**

In those days, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.’

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness for forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.’



## **REFLECTION**

The dictionary definition of temptation is 'to incite or entice someone to do something that is either wrong or forbidden'. Many things that are 'forbidden' are so because they are 'wrong' — theft or murder, for instance. But not everything that is 'forbidden' is 'wrong' in itself. I have a list of 'temptations' — that is, things that are 'forbidden' to me — that include sausages, bacon, cheese, biscuits, ice-cream, chocolate. They are 'forbidden' (to me) because of their cholesterol related implications! They may taste great — but the consequences may become deadly!

So I have some sympathy for Adam and Eve — and that apple! (Although the story in Genesis actually just calls it simply 'fruit'!) Fruit is good for us. How could it possibly be 'wrong'? Why was it 'forbidden'? It's not always easy to tell the difference between what is right and what is wrong. And I perhaps have some sympathy too for the devil in his temptation of Jesus. The devil's suggestions were all, in a sense, 'good' temptations: stones into bread, defeating death, drawing the whole world together under one leader! They are great aims, and Jesus does fulfil them (and more) in the end!

But it was perhaps the devil's 'method' that was wrong. He was offering short-term, short-cut, short-sighted solutions. Many of our own temptations will be short-term short-cuts. Short term pleasure, short term gain, quick fixes, instant gratification. We don't always see the bigger picture, the long-term consequences, the collateral damage to ourselves and others.

God, on the other hand, sees everything in the long-term. He sees the implications and consequences of each and every word and action. He always sees the bigger picture. Maybe that is the root of our biggest temptation — being seduced by the short-term, and failing to trust God in the long-term.

So Adam and Eve failed to trust God, failed to trust that he had their best interests at heart, in the long term. So too the Devil tried to make Jesus betray the Father's trust, and take short cuts to achieve desirable ends. And for us, maybe we need to learn that we can trust God, even if, in the short term, doing so may at times seem crazy, illogical and foolhardy.

Rev Robin Usher

## **THE CREED**



Do you believe and trust in God the Father?

**I believe in God, the Father almighty creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ?

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by 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, he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit?

**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.**

## **INTERCESSIONS**

Everlasting God, your son Jesus Christ was tried and tempted by the devil. May we never be ashamed of temptation but saved from the weakness of giving in. Help us choose the way of faithfulness rather than popularity, service rather than fame and sacrifice rather than power.

**Lord in your mercy, Hear our Prayer**

Gracious God, we pray for the whole family of your church here in Bradshaw and the Turton Moorland. May all your people be built up in faith and demonstrate in their lives the gospel of Christ especially as we are unable to meet together at this time. Help us to play our part in the life of the church; through our prayers and by our gifts and service during this season of Lent and beyond. Give courage to those who find it hard to follow you. Give us a fresh vision that leads to action and strengthen us to serve you in the places where we live.

**Lord in your mercy, Hear our Prayer**

Creator God, we pray for those in positions of authority and leadership; that they do not misuse their powers but respect and care for all their peoples and for the natural resources of their countries. We pray for all those suffering oppression remembering especially the people of Burma and Russia. During our Lenten fasting may we be constantly aware of those in our world who are always hungry and thirsty and of all those who have so little when we have so much.

**Lord in your mercy, Hear our Prayer**

Father God, we ask you to protect our loved ones, our friends and our neighbours. We pray that this Lenten season may bring grace to our friends and relatives who no

longer practice their faith, and that they may return in the certain knowledge of your loving acceptance of them.

**Lord in your mercy, Hear our Prayer**

Loving God, we pray for those who are ill and in pain, longing to live full lives, for those who are sad and hurt longing for comfort, for those in hospital awaiting treatment, for those convalescing, seeing an end to their suffering and for those whose only relief will come through death. May we always offer gentle support to those in trouble sensitive encouragement to those in need, and strength and support to those in weakness.

**Lord in your mercy, Hear our Prayer**

Merciful God, we pray for those saddened by the death of someone close to them. Give them your comfort as they mourn for their loved ones and turn their darkness into light. We commend to your everlasting love and care those who have died praying that will rest eternal in the light of Christ and we remember those whose anniversaries fall at this time: Gordon Edmund Pollitt, Frank Rothwell, Bertha Bennett and Ronald Veevers.

**Lord in your mercy, Hear our Prayer**

Gracious God, help us to see this time of Lent as an opportunity to develop our discipleship and discipline and, as your Son Jesus showed us how to reject temptation, fill us with grace to be faithful to his example in this Lenten season and the years ahead.

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

**THE LORD'S PRAYER**



**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the Kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever.**

**Amen.**

**THE BLESSING**

God give us grace to grow in holiness, to deny ourselves, to take up your cross and follow you. May the blessing of God almighty the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among us and remain with us always. Amen.



*Blessed in Christ*