



## TRINITY 12 - SUNDAY 22 AUGUST 2021

Here below we have an outline of our service for you to follow at home if you can't be with us. Choose a quiet reflective space and to make it more meaningful have a cross, bible and candle to make your sacred space.



### INTRODUCTION

Good morning everyone hope you are well, I hope that you are all feeling easier with the new Covid changes. We are meeting as a PCC this week to check we are doing everything correctly and discuss any changes. Most people seem to be satisfied and feel safe and it was nice to see a few more coming back to church last week. Meanwhile we will keep the worship at home going for as long as it is needed.

Our reflection today is by Rev Carol Hayden and our intercessions by Mike Haslam; many thanks to them. Jan Bennett (Church Warden & ALM at St. Maxentius.

### PRAYER OF PREPARATION

O Lord, open our lips **and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**  
Give us the joy of your saving help **and sustain us with your life-giving Spirit.**

### PRAYER OF PENITENCE



**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and repent. Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin. Renew a right spirit within us and restore us to the joy of your salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

May the Father forgive us by the death of his Son and strengthen us to live in the power of the Spirit all our days. **Amen.**

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



**THE COLLECT:** Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray and to give more than either we desire or deserve: pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask but through the merits and mediation of 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: Joshua 24:1-2a, 14-18**

Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said to all the people, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors—Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor—lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods.

'Now therefore revere the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. Now if you are unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.'

Then the people answered, 'Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; and the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God.' This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

**THE NEW TESTAMENT READING: Ephesians 6:10-20**

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

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

## **THE GOSPEL: John 6:56-69**

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

Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever.' He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

When many of his disciples heard it, they said, 'This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?' But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, 'Does this offend you? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But among you there are some who do not believe.' For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. And he said, 'For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.'

Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So Jesus asked the twelve, 'Do you also wish to go away?' Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.'

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

### **REFLECTION** by Reverend Carol Hayden

John's Gospel uses the saying 'eat my flesh and drink my blood' several times. This week, we hear Jesus repeat again what he has already said - he has been sent from heaven as the true nourishment, not like the manna which was sent from heaven to Moses and the Jews, which kept them alive for the day, but did not give them eternal life; if we 'eat this bread' and 'feed' on Jesus, then eternal life will be ours. The expressions are repeated – so what did Jesus mean?

What happens to food and drink when we 'ingest' them? Our bodies produce substances which break down the food so that what we need from it can be absorbed by the body; so that the nutrition we need can be extracted and effectively become part of our bodies, producing energy, forming new cells/renewing and repairing our bodies. There is then no distinction between the nutrition and us because it has become part of us.

Food and drink are our means of staying alive. Without them, our bodies deteriorate, and death follows. But whilst ordinary food will keep the flesh going for a while, Jesus goes on to say that the flesh is useless. It is the spirit that gives life and Jesus' words are spirit and life. If we take in his spiritual nutrition - the spiritual food and drink that Jesus provides, then he becomes part of us and we of him - we

are inextricably part of each other – indwelling in each other – it's a spiritual union that has we recognise as The Eucharist, Holy Communion.

Now many of Jesus' teachings became in his own time, and still become now, *stumbling blocks* to the people who hear them. Ideas of eating Jesus' flesh and drinking his blood will have seemed totally abhorrent and offensive to the Jews

The teaching was and is difficult for the human mind to understand and accept, so when some of his followers said, 'This teaching is difficult, who can accept it?', I think we might have some sympathy with them if we think for a moment about how they might have felt in the context of their own times,

Jesus was saying things that went beyond the bounds of human comprehension and some of his disciples were stumbling; He knew that they lacked faith. Jesus is talking in earthly terms to attempt to explain what is spiritual and beyond human grasp and this is where faith is necessary.

There may be certain things that really make us think 'what's all this about then?' I think there's a huge danger attached to thinking that when we believe in God and in his son, Jesus Christ, everything will suddenly become marvellous and ok; because it won't. In fact, in some ways, it may make things harder because what we believe can and will be contradicted by what the world believes.

For many of the Jews in the crowd, these hard words of Christ's challenged their most sacred beliefs and traditions. Fear of losing these traditions, their sacred habits and their comfortable faith became a stumbling block for them that they did not have the faith to overcome. Maybe we too can be a bit like that – maybe what we'd really like would be a faith that is all explained in tidy terms and concepts. Maybe we'd prefer the Holy One of God to be someone who comes to tell us that transformation can happen without the unsettling pain of change, or that change can happen without conflict or without hard-to-handle feelings and sacrifices.

But we are challenged to look beyond the immediate words of eating the flesh of Christ and drinking his blood to their deeper, true meaning. I think we all struggle to some degree to see beyond the immediate, physical world that we encounter. Think for a moment – are there people – strangers, certain 'types' of people, family members or members of the church family who bother you, who offend you? Maybe their language or behaviour or appearance gets to you. Do we avoid some people whose lives, words or even their needs are too hard – people we'd rather not have to deal with? Jesus was considered in this way by many – offensive; his words and his actions offended even some of his disciples, so they left him.

When our minds fail to comprehend what God is doing in our lives or the lives of others, the only options we have are to live in faith or to disbelieve and turn our backs on Jesus. As Peter says, where else can I go, what else can I do, but believe when you are the Holy One of God?

The Jews simply couldn't grasp the spiritual meaning of what Jesus said because they did not have faith enough to accept the mystery of Jesus flesh and blood.

Perhaps it's only when we have faith that we can understand ...we can understand that there is a mystery that we cannot fully understand. There's a saying that goes *the older I get, the more I realize how little I know.* Maybe true understanding is knowing how little we understand, and faith is believing anyway.



**THE CREED: 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**



*Here we pray for the church, for the world, those in need and those who have died, you can follow your own prayers or these below on today's theme.*

Everlasting God we come before you in this time of prayer to give you thanks for all you have done for us. Help us to be aware of your presence and hear your voice and make us always ready to obey and do your will. We pray for the church throughout the world and especially for our churches in the Turton Moorland ministry. Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Faithful God we pray for our Parish Church Councils. Help and guide us in our decision making especially where difficult financial problems are concerned. We thank you for all those who serve you so diligently; for our Wardens; for all who serve on various committees; for everyone who contributes to the running of services and fund raising events and for all who attend for worship and fellowship. Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Creator God the Psalmist asks you to "cut off the memory of those who do evil". Help us to focus more on the victims than on the perpetrators and to constantly pray for peace in all of those parts of the world torn apart by war and terrorism. We pray especially for the people of Afghanistan facing an uncertain future. Give to world leaders and governments the wisdom and desire to make the right decisions and to work together for the good of all. Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Gracious God we thank you for our family, friends and neighbours and for those around us with whom we work and share our daily lives. Give us a true awareness that we all share your world with others and help us to make our homes welcoming places that reflect our Christian beliefs. Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Mighty God be close to all who are frightened because they are ill. Reassure them that because of the knowledge that you have given to modern medicine that so many diseases can now be cured. We name before you now all those who are in need at this time. Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Merciful God we remember and thank you for the lives and example of those who have died in the faith of Christ and for the privilege of sharing our lives with them. Be with those who mourn and open their minds that they may find hope and the will to carry on despite the heaviness of heart they are now experiencing. Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Holy God thank you for helping us to pray; deepen our loving so that as daily we pray through this coming week we may do it with love and sincerity in sure and certain knowledge of your abiding presence.

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

### **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 today 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**

May Christ's Holy, Healing, enabling Spirit be with us and guide us on our way at every change and turn; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with us all for ever and ever. **Amen.**

