**Morning Praise @ Home 26th March 2023**

**Opening prayer**

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**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** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image

to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Bible Readings Romans 8: 6 – 11 John 11: 1 – 45

**Reflection**

*‘…those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them’ (v.10)*

The writings of John are an object lesson in the expressive use of darkness. Caravaggio’s masterpiece *Raising of Lazarus* echoes this well. Darkness occupies the whole upper half of his canvas. We see Jesus, in the presence of Martha and Mary, calling the dead man back. Caravaggio shows the exact moment of transition from death to life. Lazarus’ outflung arms – reminiscent of the cross – suggest death, while new life is indicated by the light from Christ that warms the stone-cold corpse of his friend, and by the palm of Lazarus’ right hand, which opens upwards, flower-like, reciprocally to receive Christ’s illumination.

In many ways, this is best understood as a *call* scene. What we see is a call by God to an individual to leave darkness behind and enter the light. In the painting, darkness and the light visibly separate out and intensify. How appropriate that Lazarus’ story is told in John’s Gospel, a Gospel so deeply pervaded by the great conflict of light and dark, the Gospel that starts off by declaring that Christ is Light. John depicts Jesus’ incarnation as a sort of provocation, which prompts the children of light and the children of darkness to reveal themselves with their ‘No’ or ‘Yes’ to him. We may think of our own responses to Christ in this framework. How can we open our hands to receive his light?

**Affirmation of faith**

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

**We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

**Prayers of intercession**

Father God, in whose love we live and move, we pray for a world crying out to feel loved, wanted, cherished and unique.

We pray for a world torn apart by conflict and war, a world that lives uneasily in a climate of fear with no clear vision for future days.

We pray for a world that thinks less of others than of self, a world where division between nations, race, religion, neighbour and family leads to distrust.

We pray for a world that is short on happiness, too busy to enjoy this world you have created,   
too preoccupied with living to appreciate life.

We pray for a world where spiritual longing is satisfied by fashionable notions and temporary solutions with no thought for tomorrow.

We pray for a world that needs to know your love, your hope, your peace, your joy and Salvation. A world that needs to know it is special, unique and is uniquely loved by a Heavenly Father.

We pray for the needs of our church that your will be done in this place.

We pray for those in hospital, nursing homes and hospices. We thank you for the love and fellowship of friends and family.

In our waking and arising be the first thought that enters our head  
In our eating and drinking be the first thought that enters our head  
In our walking and journeying be the first thought that enters our head  
In our working and serving be the first thought that enters our head  
In our sowing and harvesting be the first thought that enters our head  
In our rejoicing and sorrowing be the first thought that enters our head  
In our resting and sleeping be the first thought that enters our head

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

**The Lord’s Prayer** As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

***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 today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be, that you may live and work to his praise and glory, and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen**