

Morning Praise @ Home 16th January 2022



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 **Psalm 36: 5 – 10** **Luke 2: 41 – end**

Reflection from Alan

As parents, grandparents more likely, or other relatives of children, we are, and rightfully should be, concerned for their well being. We are to protect and teach them, nurture and nourish their lives, ensure their health and safety. We all need someone to guide and guard our growing up. Growing up is hard work. So is looking after children and I speak as a grandparent with a 17 year living with us!

Growing up means establishing our identity and working out our place in this world. It involves creating relationships, setting priorities, making decisions. We must choose values and beliefs that structure our lives. Along the way we make mistakes, get lost, backtrack, and sometimes just need to start over again. Ultimately, growing up means moving out and finding a new home. All sounds familiar I am sure.

So it is no surprise that Mary would be in a panic when she discovers that Jesus is not with the group of travellers. With great anxiety she and Joseph search for him. Three days later Jesus has been found. Mary's first words are, "Child, why have you treated us like this?"

What I really hear is, "Where have you been young man? Your father and I did not survive angel visits, birth in a manger, and living like refugees in Egypt only to have you get lost in Jerusalem."

But Jesus isn't the one who is lost. He knows who he is and where he belongs. Mary and Joseph are the ones who are lost, strange as that may sound.

Today's gospel is a story about growing up but it is not Jesus' growing up. It is about Mary and Joseph growing up. It is about you and me growing up. Growing up is not about how old we are. It is really about moving into deeper and more authentic relationships with God, our world, each other, and ourselves.

Jesus is the one who grows us up. He is the one who will grow up Mary and Joseph. Children have a way of doing that to their parents. They challenge us to look at our world, our lives, and ourselves in new, different, and sometimes painful ways.

That is exactly what Jesus' question to Mary does. She had put herself and Joseph at the center of Jesus' world. His question was about to undo that.

"Why were you searching for me?" he asks. "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" Jesus is telling Mary she should have known where he was. It is as if he is saying, "Remember, the angel told you I would be the Son of God. Remember the three men from the East, their gifts, and adoration. Remember Joseph's dreams that guided us to Egypt and back. Where else could I be but here?" Jesus has put the Father at the center of his world and asks Mary and us to do the same.

Authentic growth almost always involves letting go. Jesus has moved from Mary and Joseph's home to the Father's home. This is not a rejection of his earthly parents but an re-prioritizing of relationships.

It is what he would ask of Simon and Andrew, James and John. "Follow me" would be the invitation for them to leave their homes, their nets, their fathers and move to a different place, live a different life, see with different eyes. It is today what he asks of you and me.

Leaving home does not necessarily mean leaving our physical or geographical home, though sometimes it might. It does mean examining and re-prioritizing the values, beliefs, and relationships that establish our identity and give our life meaning and significance.

It means letting go. It means that we let go of fear about the future and discover that God is here in the present and that all shall be well. We stop ruminating on past guilt, regrets, and sins and accept the mercy and forgiveness of God and each other. We see our life not in opposition to others but as intimately related to and dependent upon others.

What might you have to leave behind in order to grow up and move to a better place? Those can be hard questions, painful questions. Ultimately, however, they are questions founded on love.

"Child, why have you treated us like this?"

"Because I love you. I love you enough to grow you up, to find you when you are lost, and to bring you with me into the Father's home." Take comfort from these words. Amen

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 led by Philip

With a few days of bright sunshine but frosty nights in the past week, it has been good to have the chance to look out of the window & see the bright beautiful countryside, or to have the chance to go for a walk outside without fear of losing a welly in the clinging mud!

Father we thank you for this beautiful but fragile world. We ask you to help us nurture your creation and everything in it. Inspire us to take positive steps to look at our impact on our local and global environment. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

We pray for those who continue to be affected by the Covid pandemic. We pray for those suffering illness, or from issues around self-isolation.

We pray for our exhausted health care workers, for carers in residential homes. We pray for all the schools affected by teacher absences, we pray for pupils whose education has been so disrupted since the start of the pandemic.

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

We pray for those particularly hurt by the news of events at Downing Street during the pandemic. We pray for our politicians as they try to balance the need to protect the NHS and the need for economic activity and to reduce the strain of self-isolation.

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

We hear worrying news of famine in Afghanistan and of people living in fear of retribution from The Taliban. We ask that the international community will not punish the people of Afghanistan by withholding aid because of the Taliban government.

We also bring to you Lord the 20 million people estimated to be affected by three consecutive failed rainy seasons in Somalia, Ethiopia and Northern Kenya in East Africa. The drought conditions in some locations are the worst since 1984-84.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Father we bring to you all we know who are suffering sickness or distress.

We pray for The Carter family as they attend the joint funeral of an aunt and uncle.

We also pray for Philip Hillman's (my) family following the loss of Philip's father Brian.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

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