



Thursday 2nd July Holy Communion

Welcome

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

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

Prayers of Confession

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: The first commandment is this: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbour as yourself". There is no other commandment greater than these. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and 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**

Lord have mercy
Lord have mercy
Christ have mercy
Christ have mercy
Lord have mercy
Lord have mercy

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and keep us in life eternal; 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 sin of the world: have mercy on 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.

Collect

Almighty God, you have broken the tyranny of sin and have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts whereby we call you Father: give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service, that we and all creation may be brought to the glorious liberty of the children of God; 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**

Old Testament Reading: Amos 7:10-end

Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent a message to Jeroboam king of Israel: "Amos is raising a conspiracy against you in the very heart of Israel. The land cannot bear all his words. For this is what Amos is saying: "Jeroboam will die by the sword, and Israel will surely go into exile, away from their native land." Then Amaziah said to Amos, "Get out, you seer! Go back to the land of Judah. Earn your bread there and do your prophesying there. Don't prophesy anymore at Bethel, because this is the king's sanctuary and the temple of the kingdom."

Amos answered Amaziah, "I was neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. But the LORD took me from tending the flock and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.' Now then, hear the word of the LORD. You say, "Do not prophesy against Israel, and stop preaching against the descendants of Isaac.'

“Therefore this is what the LORD says: “Your wife will become a prostitute in the city, and your sons and daughters will fall by the sword. Your land will be measured and divided up, and you yourself will die in a pagan country. And Israel will surely go into exile, away from their native land.”

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 9:1-8

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

Glory to you, O Lord

Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over and came to his own town. Some men brought to him a paralyzed man, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the man, “Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.” At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, “This fellow is blaspheming!” Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, “Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the paralyzed man, “Get up, take your mat and go home.” Then the man got up and went home. When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to man.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ

Sermon: Rosemary Feuell

Jesus took a boat home to Capernaum, Matthew says: He’s like us in every point – for we had to do this in remoter places before trains, planes and Eurostar. He was hassled, followed, as we might be until we escape public notice by taking our transport. He had just restored two possessed folk, sending troubling spirits into grazing pigs – and everyone turned out to see Him, some nagging Him to leave. He did. The episode raises many questions, as our more puzzling actions may: “Who does that ‘bod’ think she is??”



Now new queries arise as Jesus again attracts notice, turning human destinies around. And why, in particular? The previous one was in the countryside, a private good deed maybe, this one in town where He was based and exposed to view. Greater commotion could very likely arise. Why didn’t Jesus look over His shoulder? Instead He looked ahead at a particular paralysed man transported on a stretcher by friends or advocates. What did He see? Not just the sick man, but first the conviction of the friends that He, Jesus, could help. Why were they so determined?

Now illness in the culture of Jesus' day was not viewed as today, where efficient medical fixes are applied, the person cared for and secluded till well and back at work, or harmlessly retired, privately. No.. this man was publicly exposed whatever happened to him, for he would be considered punished by God with this affliction. Of the man born blind, in John, disciples ask, "who sinned, this man or his parents?" (John 9: 2) Whose fault? Maybe even earlier generations, inherited divine disfavour. Normal society for him? Unlikely.

Psalm 32 (2-5, 7B) tells us:

"Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity... While I kept silence, my body wasted away... For day and night your hand was heavy upon me, my strength was dried up as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you .. and you forgave the guilt of my sin... surround me with glad cries of deliverance."

The man can't be rehabilitated or re-enter community life unless something changes, with evidence of restoration; to be restored, though, he must be forgiven, and only God could intervene. Not a hopeful place; his friends were ready, though.

Jesus apparently sees through the friends' faith to needs in the paralysed man's heart: pronouncing that forgiveness essential to undo the affliction caused by the sin oppressing the man. Nobody begged Jesus to go away, but there were ripples of contention: the suspicious scribes muttering about blasphemy, since only God is able to forgive sins. The Psalms provided many reminders that sin is something God alone removes: "Bless the Lord... who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases" (Psalm 103). These guardians of Israel would have seen straight away that Jesus was wielding that very same authority; they shared their misgivings, if not too loudly. Jesus, fully aware of their objections, reprimanded them, for calling His good intentions evil and, at face value, unjustly taking God's powers. He asks why they do this, then answers His own questions and, more uncomfortably, theirs.

It's surely easier to say someone is forgiven; anyone can claim this, pretending; **much harder** to say definitively someone sick is by this forgiveness made capable of standing and walking. He beats their objections, but also wins the conflict, telling the paralytic to do exactly this: and **the patient** just stands up, takes his bed and **walks** home, as predicted, no faking of either stage. How did that work? How did Jesus predict? How was He right on all counts? It **was** easier to proclaim forgiveness, release the man., **truly** release him, and status-wise too; yet even the improbable physical restoration occurred very easily. The latter demonstrated the reality of both: healing the erring heart, healing a body bound by that heart's misery, all at once. Both deeds show powerful generosity these scribes had to see came only from the Creator and Lord of all, with a perspective above general principles.

Oh dear – where were **they** left? The protagonist has disappeared; people were staring, overcome, filled with "**awe**" – a feeling associated with sensations of encountering higher powers, a supernatural touch, or glimpses of what might be the very face and finger of God, turned in blessing on this street corner, this dusty lakeside town, this once pathetic man.

Who is this, they and the bystanders may ask? Yet Jesus has already answered them: the One with authority on earth to forgive sins. Who indeed is **That?** Jesus was often asked about His authority to do things – sometimes He refuses to explain (Matthew 21: 27) – but here He has already revealed it, wanting everyone to realise : "That you may **know that** the Son of Man (His chosen self-effacing title) has authority on earth to forgive sins". It's an authority that can solely be read as divine, or else bogus and somewhat lunatic. All the detractors would experience huge

embarrassment; all without clues to the event's meaning would feel, as one translation of Luke says, "**astounded**", or unseated.

The crowds praised God for such authority in human beings – but initially miss **the meaning**. The miracle is not for the patient's sole sake, we see; it demonstrates **Who Jesus is**, what kind of person, for His actions and overall command portray those of the Messiah the prophets foretold:

"He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped; then the lame shall leap like a deer". Isaiah 35: 4B-6A

From his prison soon after (Matthew 11,) even John the Baptist questioned Who Jesus was, whether he'd got it right: "Are You the One Who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" Jesus answers him with just these words from Isaiah.

So where are we? Worrying about the story, its arguments, conflict caused – or, like these crowds here in Capernaum, touched by the convincing outcomes, the man's liberty, and its message?

Jesus is **not** a great prophet, **nor** moral teacher, then, **no** miracle-worker, like some contemporary rival, showing how powerful or ahead of His time He was – **by no means**. On all counts Jesus emerges here as the One bringing the genuine touch of God to those willing to open themselves to God and to take one kind of step or another to receive Him and move forward into a pathway forever changed, with a heart responding to His welcoming, His voice that brought the worlds into being. Here too the hands that extend to shape where much has gone wrong... the feet that don't merely walk the earth with authority, but called forth **the earth itself**... and hasten to rescue where we are held back.

We can't just ask: **How did this happen?** We don't know the mechanics; there are no parallels to the Gospel accounts, and here no evidence Jesus just interrupted nature's momentum to please or shift someone. We **can ask: Who IS this** and start opening to the answers in the passage, asking what difference He can make, not just to my paralysis – but to the whole context that has been carrying me towards Him. Surely we won't be asking Him to leave, taking the questions with Him... but beseeching Him to stay and in our need, fears and possibilities to transform us?

Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary**

and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

Prayers

The Peace

The peace of the Lord always be with you
And also with you.
Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you
and also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

You are worthy of our thanks and praise, Lord God of truth, for by the breath of your mouth you have spoken your word, and all things have come into being. You fashioned us in your image and placed us in the garden of your delight. Though we chose the path of rebellion you would not abandon your own. Again and again you drew us into your covenant of grace. You gave your people the law and taught us by your prophets to look for your reign of justice, mercy and peace. As we watch for the signs of your kingdom on earth, we echo the song of the angels in heaven, evermore praising you and saying:
Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Lord God, you are the most holy one, enthroned in splendour and light, yet in the coming of your Son Jesus Christ you reveal the power of your love made perfect in our human weakness.

Amen. Lord, we believe.

Embracing our humanity, Jesus showed us the way of salvation; loving us to the end, he gave himself to death for us; dying for his own, he set us free from the bonds of sin, that we might rise and reign with him in glory.

Amen. Lord, we believe.

On the night he gave up himself for us all he took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

Amen. Lord, we believe.

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them, saying: Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Amen. Lord, we believe.

Therefore we proclaim the death that he suffered on the cross, we celebrate his resurrection, his bursting from the tomb, we rejoice that he reigns at your right hand on high and we long for his coming in glory.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

As we recall the one, perfect sacrifice of our redemption, Father, by your Holy Spirit let these gifts of your creation be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; form us into the likeness of Christ and make us a perfect offering in your sight.

Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

Look with favour on your people and in your mercy hear the cry of our hearts. Bless the earth, heal the sick, let the oppressed go free and fill your Church with power from on high.

Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

Gather your people from the ends of the earth to feast with all your saints at the table in your kingdom, where the new creation is brought to perfection in Jesus Christ our Lord; by whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever. **Amen**

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 for ever.
Amen.**

The Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread.

Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.

Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.

Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us peace.

Draw near with faith. Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which he gave for you and his blood which he shed for you. Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

We do not presume to come to this your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen

Prayer after Communion

O God, whose beauty is beyond our imagining and whose power we cannot comprehend: show us your glory as far as we can grasp it, and shield us from knowing more than we can bear until we may look upon you without fear; through Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen**

Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Through him we offer you our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.

Blessing

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

In the name of Christ. Amen

If you have any prayer or pastoral needs, please don't hesitate to contact
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