

Prayers and Readings for Private Use

Sunday 06 September 2020 – Thirteenth Sunday in the “Trinity” Season

By using this sheet at home, you are joining other local Christians in the worship of God and sharing in our common prayer at a time of national need. You may like to light a candle as you pray.

Loving God, you gather us together.
In you we find peace.
Help us to accept the invitation to come to you;
make us willing to respond to your call,
and ready to receive you now.

Approaching God

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleans 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.

God the Father forgives us in Christ and heals us
by the Holy Spirit.

Let us therefore put away all anger and
bitterness, all slander and malice,
and confess our sins to God our redeemer.
Father, you come to meet us when we return to
you:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Jesus, you died on the cross for our sins:

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Spirit, you give us life and peace:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

May the God of love and power forgive us
and free us from our sins, heal and strengthen
us by his Spirit, and raise us to new life in
Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God,
who called your Church to bear witness
that you were in Christ reconciling the world
to yourself:
help us to proclaim the good news of your
love,

that all who hear it may be drawn to you;
through him who was lifted up on the cross,
and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy
Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

Listening for God: Matthew 18: 15-20

Reproving Another Who Sins

Jesus spoke to his disciples. ‘If another member
of the church sins against you, go and point out
the fault when the two of you are alone. If the
member listens to you, you have regained that
one. But if you are not listened to, take one or
two others along with you, so that every word
may be confirmed by the evidence of two or
three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen
to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender
refuses to listen even to the church, let such a
one be to you as a Gentile and a tax-collector.
Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will
be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on
earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell
you, if two of you agree on earth about anything
you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in
heaven. For where two or three are gathered in
my name, I am there among them.’

Thought for the Day

Today’s passage - Jesus’ conversation with his
disciples, comes between his Parable of the Lost
Sheep (the Father’s will is that not one person
should be lost), and his statement about the
need for forgiveness (to forgive not seven times,
but seventy seven) ...

He is speaking of the seeking of those who are
lost, and of love and forgiveness in community.
And of course, none of this is easy as we travel
along the emotional roller coasters of life!
Jesus is also acknowledging that everyone
makes mistakes! ... but recommending that
when problems arise, which they will, they need
to be addressed directly - person to person.

We are living in a world dominated by social media, by online communities, by instant access to (and sharing of) details of relationship battles and breakdowns, and human interactions. For many, perhaps the younger generation particularly, the concept of addressing problems face to face within a situation of hurt and unfair treatment can feel more daunting, and harder to address than ever. But we all need, at different points in our lives, to be able to both point out the mistakes to others, and apologise for those we make ourselves.

Forgiveness, reconciliation, and moving on is hard in these situations. Particularly perhaps when those who we want to protect are involved.

Forgiveness whilst ensuring the protection of those who are vulnerable is a challenge both as individuals and as a society or community. But Jesus outlines how a community based in faith, on God's love, can bring healing - in decisions and conversations that bring hope and life into a difficult situation or into the world.

And in those wonderful and powerful words in the final verse: 'for where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them', he makes it clear that God will be present in that gathering, and his love will become a reality. Whether in that context of tension - where forgiveness and reconciliation are needed ... or in our current context - where we continue to meet, and to worship, in different and sometimes small and dispersed gatherings - uniting in prayer, reading and sharing in the good news of the Gospel ... these are such words of strength and reassurance - as Jesus assures us that he is present. Jesus is Emmanuel - 'God with us' ... in our lives, our homes, our interactions and gatherings.

When we approach God in community, even a community of two or three, he is already there with us.

Response

'Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them'. Let us pray today for a greater awareness and understanding of these words, for eyes to see and ears to hear Jesus among us.

Prayers

We pray for the God of the lost to lead them home.

We pray for the God of peace to move hearts and minds to tolerance and acceptance.

God of compassion, whose Son Jesus Christ, shared the life of a home in Nazareth, and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself:

strengthen us in our daily living
that in joy and in sorrow
we may know the power of your presence
to bind together and to heal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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.

May God the Holy Trinity make us strong in faith and love, defend us on every side, and guide us in truth and peace.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

May we go in peace, to love and serve the Lord. **Amen.**