

Evening Prayer for the 5th Sunday of Lent
3rd April 2022, from The Book of Common Prayer

Heavenly Scent....



Hymn – The Servant King

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VHYFFQJNa_I

From heaven you came, helpless babe,
Entered our world, your glory veiled;
Not to be served but to serve,
And give your life that we might live.

*This is our God, the Servant King,
He calls us now to follow him,
To bring our lives as a daily offering
Of worship to the Servant King.*

There in the garden of tears,
My heavy load he chose to bear;
His heart with sorrow was torn,
'Yet not my will but yours,' he said.

This is our God, the Servant King,

Come, see his hands and his feet,
The scars that speak of sacrifice,
Hands that flung stars into space
To cruel nails surrendered.

This is our God, the Servant King,

So let us learn how to serve,
And in our lives enthrone him;
Each other's needs to prefer,
For it is Christ we're serving.

This is our God, the Servant King,

Graham Kendrick
(b1950)

Opening prayers

God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God and God in him.

1 John 4.16

Beloved, we are come together in the presence of almighty God and of the whole company of heaven to offer unto him through our Lord Jesus Christ our worship and praise and thanksgiving; to make confession of our sins; to pray, as well for others as for ourselves, that we may know more truly the greatness of God's love and shew forth in our lives the fruits of his grace; and to ask on behalf of all men such things as their well-being doth require.

Wherefore let us kneel in silence, and remember God's presence with us now.

**Almighty and most merciful Father,
we have erred, and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep.
We have followed too much the devices and desires
of our own hearts.**

We have offended against thy holy laws.

**We have left undone those things which we ought to have done;
and we have done those things which we ought not to have done;
and there is no health in us.**

But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders.

Spare thou them, O God, which confess their faults.

**Restore thou them that are penitent;
according to thy promises declared unto mankind
in Christ Jesu our Lord.**

**And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake,
that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life,
to the glory of thy holy name. Amen.**

Grant, we beseech thee, merciful Lord,
to thy faithful people pardon and peace,
that they may be cleansed from all their sins,
and serve thee with a quiet mind;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Our Father, which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done,
in earth as it is in heaven.**

Give us this day our daily bread.

**And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive them that trespass against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.**

Amen.

O Lord, open thou our lips
and our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

O God, make speed to save us.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost;
**as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

Praise ye the Lord.
The Lord's name be praised.

Magnificat

My soul doth magnify the Lord :
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he hath regarded :
the lowliness of his handmaiden.

For behold, from henceforth :
all generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath magnified me :
and holy is his Name.

And his mercy is on them that fear him :
throughout all generations.

He hath shewed strength with his arm :
he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat :
and hath exalted the humble and meek.

He hath filled the hungry with good things :
and the rich he hath sent empty away.

He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel :
as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be :
world without end. Amen.

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 43.16-21

Thus says the Lord,
 who makes a way in the sea,
 a path in the mighty waters,
who brings out chariot and horse,
 army and warrior;
they lie down, they cannot rise,
 they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:
Do not remember the former things,
 or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing;
 now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness
 and rivers in the desert.
The wild animals will honour me,
 the jackals and the ostriches;
for I give water in the wilderness,
 rivers in the desert,
to give drink to my chosen people,
 the people whom I formed for myself
so that they might declare my praise.

Psalm 126

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
then were we like those who dream.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter
and our tongue with songs of joy.

Then said they among the nations,
'The Lord has done great things for them.'

The Lord has indeed done great things for us,
and therefore we rejoiced.

Restore again our fortunes, O Lord,
as the river beds of the desert.

Those who sow in tears
shall reap with songs of joy.

Those who go out weeping, bearing the seed,
will come back with shouts of joy, bearing their sheaves with them.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be
world without end. Amen.

Epistle

Philippians 3.4b-14

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

Nunc Dimittis

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace :
according to thy word.

For mine eyes have seen :
thy salvation;

Which thou hast prepared :
before the face of all people;

To be a light to lighten the Gentiles :
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son :
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be
world without end. Amen.

Gospel Reading

John 12.1-8

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, 'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?' (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.'

The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth:
and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried.
He descended into hell;
the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Ghost;
the holy catholic Church;
the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins;
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

The Lord be with you.
And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.
Lord, have mercy upon us.
Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

**Our Father, which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done,
in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil. Amen.**

○ Lord, shew thy mercy upon us.
And grant us thy salvation.

○ Lord, save the Queen.
And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

Endue thy ministers with righteousness.
And make thy chosen people joyful.

○ Lord, save thy people.
And bless thine inheritance.

Give peace in our time, O Lord.
**Because there is none other that fighteth for us,
but only thou, O God.**

○ God, make clean our hearts within us.
And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

The Collect of the Day

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of thy Son Jesus Christ
hast delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord,
who liveth and reigneth with thee,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

The Collect for Peace

O God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord,
in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life,
whose service is perfect freedom;
defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies;
that we, surely trusting in thy defence,
may not fear the power of any adversaries;
through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Collect for Aid against all Perils

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord;
and by thy great mercy
defend us from all perils and dangers of this night;
for the love of thy only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Hymn – Blest are the pure in heart

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xw7u0oDHqcU>

Blest are the pure in heart,
for they shall see our God;
the secret of the Lord is theirs,
their soul is Christ's abode.

The Lord who left the heavens
our life and peace to bring,
to dwell in lowliness with men,
their pattern and their king.

Still to the lowly soul
he doth himself impart
and for his dwelling and his throne
chooseth the pure in heart.

Lord, we thy presence seek;
may ours this blessing be:
give us a pure and lowly heart,
a temple meet for thee.

John Keeble
(1792-1866)

Sermon

Do you find that when you go into a building or a room, the first thing you notice is the smell of it? Our noses tell us a lot about a room.

What would you expect the smell to be like in these places? Try imagining it:

- A damp cellar
- A bakery
- A sawmill
- A flower shop
- A public toilet
- A smart hotel
- A National Trust house
- A sports changing room
- A coffee shop

Let's try some different smells ourselves now, and see what we'd most like to have in a room.... Here in church we have a mix of different aromas. I wonder what you chose at home?

So let's now try and imagine what Lazarus' house in Bethany smelt like?

This was long before running water. Any water needed for cooking or washing had to be carried from the Gihon Spring – perhaps a half mile walk. Bethany was a hill-top village so there were no streams, and the nearest river was the Jordan about 40 miles away.

So the people would never have baths or showers. They would have washed with a towel using a basin of water. Washing clothes would have been a problem – probably not done very often. Given that it was very hot all through the summer the smell of sweaty people and clothes would probably have been very obvious.

I'm not sure if they had toothbrushes – it's quite likely they didn't, so their teeth might have been quite dirty, possibly with bad breath.

There were no toilets in the house – they would have been somewhere outside – a hole in the ground with a wooden shed over it, probably shared with others down the street.

But there would have been animal dung outside in the streets – sheep and some cows, donkeys, chickens too I guess. Easily walked on and carried into the house.

What other smells might there have been?

Baking, I guess – fresh pitta bread.

The smell of smoke from a cooking fire.

There would have been the smell of food cooking in pots and of roasting meat. At meal times the house might have smelt pretty good.

However these smells might be mingling in with far less pleasant ones from the rubbish heap outside, where all the rotten food would have been thrown.

On balance, I think the strongest and most overwhelming smell would have been the smell of the people themselves. Perhaps most like the changing rooms in my earlier list. Pretty unpleasant!

So this is the background smell to today's story. What happened next?

Jesus would have been hot and tired, and had arrived in the evening for a meal at the house of three of his closest friends – Mary, Martha and Lazarus.

We hear quite a lot about these siblings – Mary and Martha, who settled into different roles in the household – Mary listening to Jesus whenever she got the chance, and Martha feeling hard done by as she did all the cooking and housework. Lazarus is famous for being brought back to life by Jesus.

Sensing perhaps that Jesus was coming to a crisis in his ministry, they had invited him for a special meal – a dinner party, which turned out to be the last one they would have together.

Martha served the meal and Mary then did an extraordinary thing.

She had bought a store of a large quantity of really valuable and strong perfume called Nard - heavy, musky, with an earthy smell. A bit like incense or lavender. She planned to use it for Jesus' burial.

But she was suddenly inspired to spread a really generous amount on Jesus' feet – the smelliest part of him!

And the wonderful smell of nard drove out all the other smells from people and animals in the house, filling it with a warm, reassuring scent. A heavenly scent – rather like the smell of incense which you might have come across lingering in some churches.

She was madly extravagant, but Jesus was delighted that she had been so generous to him. She had showed in a beautiful way that he was very special to her, and worth the finest ointment in the world.

The very best she could offer.

Judas was bothered that it was a waste of their money, and Jesus overrode his objections with his gracious gratitude.

I am reminded of my mother's reaction when someone gave her a generous present "Oh, you are so wicked, you shouldn't have!" It was meant as a compliment, but it could easily have been taken as a rebuke, making the giver feel a bit guilty.

Mary's spontaneous gesture was spot on – giving Jesus an unforgettable moment. He would remember her deep caring for him, and I'm sure it would have helped him to face the last few days of his life.

Being generous, in particular giving a gift that we can barely afford, is a wonderful expression of love. The more often we make generous gifts, the closer we come to God. Just like Mary!

Amen.

Hymn – For the healing of the nations

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDyHS_9S_6Y

For the healing of the nations,
Lord, we pray with one accord,
for a just and equal sharing
of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love in action
help us rise and pledge our word.

Lead us forward into freedom,
from despair your world release,
that, redeemed from war and hatred,
all may come and go in peace.
Show us how through care and goodness
fear will die and hope increase.

All that kills abundant living,
let it from the earth be banned:
pride of status, race or schooling,
dogmas that obscure your plan.
In our common quest for justice
may we hallow brief life's span.

You, creator God, have written
your great name of human kind;
for our growing in your likeness
bring the life of Christ to mind;
that by our response and service
earth its destiny may find.

Fred Kaan
(b1929)
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Prayers

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father.

Almighty and ever-living God, who by thy holy apostle hast taught us to make prayers and supplications, and to give thanks, for all men: we humbly beseech thee most mercifully to receive these our prayers, which we offer unto thy divine majesty; beseeching thee to inspire continually the universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity and concord; and grant that all they that do confess thy holy name may agree in the truth of thy holy word, and live in unity and godly love.

We beseech thee also to lead all nations in the way of righteousness and peace; and so to direct all kings and rulers, that under them thy people may be godly and quietly governed. And grant unto thy servant Elizabeth our Queen, and to all that are put in authority under her that they may truly and indifferently administer justice, to the maintenance of thy true religion, and virtue.

Give grace, O heavenly Father, to all bishops, priests and deacons, especially to thy servant Robert our bishop, that they may both by their life and doctrine set forth thy true and lively word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy sacraments.

Guide and prosper, we pray thee, those who are labouring for the spread of thy gospel among the nations, and enlighten with thy Spirit all places of education and learning; that the whole world may be filled with the knowledge of thy truth.

And to all thy people give thy heavenly grace; and specially to this congregation here present, that, with meek heart and due reverence, they may hear and receive thy holy word, truly serving thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life.

And we most humbly beseech thee of thy goodness, O Lord, to comfort and succour all them who in this transitory life are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity.

And we commend to thy gracious keeping, O Lord, all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear, beseeching thee, according to thy promises, to grant them refreshment, light and peace.

And here we give thee most high praise and hearty thanks for all thy saints, who have been the chosen vessels of thy grace, and lights of the world in their several generations; and we pray that, rejoicing in their fellowship and following their good examples, we may be partakers with them of thy heavenly kingdom.

Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only mediator and advocate.

Amen.

A prayer for all those affected by Coronavirus

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of thy mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from thy love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn – To God be the glory

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-15v9iworAU>

To God be the glory, great things he hath done:
so loved he the world that he gave us his son,
who yielded his life in atonement for sin,
and opened the life gate that all may go in.

*Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
and give him the glory, great things he hath done.*

O, perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,
to every believer the promise of God.
The vilest offender who truly believes,
that moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear his voice ...

Great things he hath taught us, great things he hath done,
and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son,
but purer, and higher, and greater will be
our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear his voice...

Francis Jane van Alstyne
(1820 - 1915)

Ending

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

God, who has prepared for us a city with eternal foundations,
give you grace to share the inheritance of the saints in glory;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always.
Amen.

