

Evening Prayer for Trinity 8

7th August 2022, from The Book of Common Prayer

Living well.....



Hymn – Through the night of doubt and sorrow

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcZB28QfpVg>

Through the night of doubt and sorrow
onward goes the pilgrim band,
singing songs of expectation,
marching to the promised land.

Clear before us through the darkness
gleams and burns the guiding light:
so we march in hope united
stepping fearless through the night.

One the light of God's own presence,
o'er his ransomed people shed,
chasing far the gloom and terror,
brightening all the path we tread.

One the object of our journey,
one the faith which never tires,
one the earnest looking forward,
one the hope our God inspires.

One the strain that lips of thousands
lift as from the heart of one;
one the conflict, one the peril,
one the march in God begun.

One the gladness of rejoicing
on the far eternal shore,
where the one almighty Father
reigns in love for evermore.

Onward, therefore, fellow pilgrims,
onward with the cross our aid;
bear its shame, and fight its battle,
till we rest beneath its shade.

Bernhardt Ingemann
1789-1862

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

Genesis 15.1-6

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, 'Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.' But Abram said, 'O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?' And Abram said, 'You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.' But the word of the Lord came to him, 'This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.' He brought him outside and said, 'Look towards heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Psalms 31.12-22

I am forgotten like one that is dead, out of mind;
I have become like a broken vessel.

For I have heard the whispering of the crowd; fear is on every side;
they scheme together against me, and plot to take my life.

But my trust is in you, O Lord.
I have said, 'You are my God.

'My times are in your hand;
deliver me from the hand of my enemies, and from those who persecute
me.

'Make your face to shine upon your servant,
and save me for your mercy's sake.'

Lord, let me not be confounded for I have called upon you;
but let the wicked be put to shame; let them be silent in the grave.

Let the lying lips be put to silence
that speak against the righteous with arrogance, disdain and contempt.

How abundant is your goodness, O Lord, which you have laid up for those who fear you;
which you have prepared in the sight of all for those who put their trust in you.

You hide them in the shelter of your presence from those who slander them;
you keep them safe in your refuge from the strife of tongues.

Blessed be the Lord!
For he has shown me his steadfast love when I was as a city besieged.

I had said in my alarm, 'I have been cut off from the sight of your eyes.'
Nevertheless, you heard the voice of my prayer when I cried out to you.

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

Hebrews 11.1-3,8-16

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed, by faith our ancestors received approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old—and Sarah herself was barren—because he considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, 'as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.'

All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.

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

Luke 12.32-40

'Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

'Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

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.**

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

O Lord, save the Queen.

And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

Endue thy ministers with righteousness.

And make thy chosen people joyful.

O 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.**

O God, make clean our hearts within us.

And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

The Collect of the Day

O almighty Lord and everlasting God,
vouchsafe, we beseech thee, to direct, sanctify and govern both our hearts
and bodies

in the ways of thy laws and in the works of thy commandments,
that through thy most mighty protection,
both here and ever,

we may be preserved in body and soul;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
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 – Colours of day

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n4Y2kRILyTw>

Colours of day dawn into the mind,
The sun has come up, the night is behind.
Go down in the city, into the street,
And let's give the message to the people we meet.

So light up the fire and let the flame burn,

Open the door, let Jesus return.

Take seeds of His Spirit, let the fruit grow,

Tell the people of Jesus, let His love show.

Go through the park, on into the town;
The sun still shines on, it never goes down.
The light of the world is risen again;
The people of darkness are needing a friend.

So light up the fire and let the flame burn,

Open your eyes, look into the sky,
The darkness has come, the Son came to die.
The evening draws on, the sun disappears,
But Jesus is living, His Spirit is near.

So light up the fire and let the flame burn

Sue McLellan (b1951),
John Paculabo (b1946),
Keith Rycroft (1949)
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Sermon

One of the things I love about the stories that Jesus tells is that he so often comes with a surprising twist that takes us to a different place!

So, in today's story he's teaching his "little flock" (his treasured disciples whom he is nurturing) how best to live. They probably thought they knew what Jesus was going to say. They expected to be told that life was going to be tough – and that's certainly how Jesus started.

“You must sell your possessions and give the money to the poor.”

“But what shall I live on?” they would have thought. Well, clearly not their possessions, you can’t eat them!

“You’re not selling what you live on,” Jesus might have said. “You should carry on working, or receiving donations, and just buy your food as you always have done from your income.”

And he possibly explained that the possessions to be sold are the ones that hold back generosity. Not the ones that you delight in sharing with others, or that make your home a real home, but the ostentatious stuff that is just about status rather than practical comfort.

Certainly not to sell all the favourite cuddly toys and teddy bears of childhood – since they are the foundation that help children to learn to care for others, how to look after them.

Certainly sell off of all those old clothes in the cupboard that are never worn and are getting moth-eaten – we’ve had a few clothes-moths fluttering around upstairs this year!

But Jesus is quite clear that after this we will still have, indeed are encouraged to have “treasure”. We are to treasure the things we love – above all to treasure our relationships. To love and care for our family and friends, our neighbours, especially those in need – those seeking alms.

He’s really saying that the thing that matters is not our possessions, but the quality of our relationships; how much love we are giving, how well we’ve fulfilled the two commandments to love.

I suppose the type of treasure he’s referring to is like the mythical “Brownie Points” (did they ever exist?) which we earn when doing a good deed. (In my case I perhaps earned “Cub Points” since by saying the Cub promise I promised to do a good deed every day!)

Looking back at the end of a day, we may see that satisfaction comes from reflecting on how helpful we were – maybe listening to someone’s story, sympathising with their hardship, visiting someone who is sick or in hospital.

Such satisfaction rightly gives us a bit of a glow, a little like what a miser hopes for when counting their gold coins – but never receives. Looking back on the day and counting our blessings.

So far, so good. The disciples had heard this from Jesus many times before.

And I expect that when Jesus starting talking about a wedding feast and having lamps ready, they said to themselves “We’ve heard this one before too – it’s about running out of oil, being ready.” But they were wrong – Jesus goes in a completely different direction.

We need to be dressed ready for action, lamps lit, and ready to welcome the master home from the wedding he’s been at. He didn’t know when he’d be back, so we’ll just sit around and wait, and then be ready to help him to bed. Perhaps he’ll be rather the worse for the wine he’s been drinking?

That’s what dutiful servants are expected to do – another late night, and then up first thing in the morning to serve breakfast to the master.

But that’s not how the story went – far from it. What did happen?

The master came back eventually – late at night or just at dawn. And was he off to bed? Not a bit of it.

The master tightens his belt, and then gets all his servants and workers to sit down and he serves them a feast! He is warm and generous, friendly and relaxed.

It turns out that he really cares for them, he’s putting their needs ahead of his own needs, he’s affirming their importance. It’s as if they are cashing-in their brownie points.

Sometimes it may feel that being a Christian is all about giving and not receiving, that it’s a hard and thankless task. In a famous prayer of St Ignatius, we are told not to count the cost, not to seek any reward:

Teach us, good Lord,
to serve you as you deserve,
to give and not to count the cost,
to fight and not to heed the wounds,
to toil and not to seek for rest,
to labour and not to ask for any reward,
save that of knowing that we do your will.
Amen.

And yet Jesus is saying something more, far more.

We will be rewarded, with the pearl of great price, the water of life, the food of God. And not just in heaven, but now, here on earth.

The whole driving force of Jesus’ gospel is about bringing in his wonderful Kingdom on earth. To enable everyone to live life to the full, to live life abundantly. To enjoy life!

Freed from sin, building loving relationships, putting material possessions firmly in their place, enjoying good company, bringing peace and joy to those around.

This is not just a reward that balances out the cost – this is the real thing – this is what it is to be fully human. To trust God and relax in his love. Enjoying our teddy bears, our friends, the people we meet, God's beautiful creation – to live as God always intended.

May we experience this too.

Amen.

Hymn - God is love: his the care

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Giju_BKA1PE

God is love: his the care,
tending each, everywhere,
God is love, all is there!
Jesus came to show him,
that we all might know him!

Sing aloud, loud, loud!

sing aloud, loud, loud!

God is good! God is truth!

God is beauty! Praise him!

None can see God above;
we can share life and love;
thus may we Godward move,
finding him in creation,
holding ev'ry nation.

Sing aloud, loud, loud!

Jesus lived on the earth,
hope and life brought to birth
and affirmed human worth,
for he came to save us
by the truth he gave us.

Sing aloud, loud, loud!

To our Lord praise we sing,
light and life, friend and King,
coming down, love to bring,
pattern for our duty,
showing God in beauty.

Sing aloud, loud, loud!

Percy Dearmer
(1867-1936)
© Oxford University Press

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 – Will you come and follow me

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pnXOEUS7BBM>

Will you come and follow me
if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown,
will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown
in you and you in me?

Will you leave your self behind
if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
should your life attract or scare,
will you let me answer prayer
in you and you in me?

Will you love the 'you' you hide
if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside
and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
to reshape the world around
through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true
when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same.
In your company I'll go
where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow
in you and you in me.

John Bell (b1949)
Graham Maule (b1958)

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.**

The peace of God,
which passeth 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 Ghost,
be amongst you and remain with you always.
Amen.