

LIVERPOOL PARISH CHURCH

OUR LADY & ST NICHOLAS

Worship at home for the Fourth Sunday after Trinity, 5th July 2020

Find yourself a quiet, comfortable space that will allow your heart, mind and soul to focus on prayer and contemplation. You can pray these words out loud, quietly, in your head, or using a mixture of these approaches – whatever suits you best.

If you have a candle light it, and/or you can use a cross, crucifix, icon, or something else that gives you a visual focus to aid your time of prayer to, and worship of, Jesus Christ, the light of the world, the way, and the truth and the life.

Spend some time thinking about the past week, and bring before God anything that is troubling you, that you feel has challenged you, and that you feel you want God's help and guidance with. Then pray:

**Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.**

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

Gloria in Excelsis

**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.
Amen.**

Pray today's collect:

**Gracious Father,
by the obedience of Jesus
you brought salvation to our wayward world:
draw us into harmony with your will,
that we may find all things restored in him,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

Now read through these passages from The Bible:

Zechariah 9.9-12

Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem!
Lo, your king comes to you;
triumphant and victorious is he,
humble and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
and the warhorse from Jerusalem;
and the battle-bow shall be cut off,
and he shall command peace to the nations;
his dominion shall be from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.

As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,
I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.
Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope;
today I declare that I will restore to you double.

Romans 7.15-25a

I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin.

Matthew 11.16-19,25-30

‘But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one another,
“We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;
we wailed, and you did not mourn.”
For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, “He has a demon”; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, “Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!” Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.’

At that time Jesus said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

Spend some time thinking about the Bible readings. Here are some ideas you might want to reflect on in your prayers:

- The prophet Zechariah uses a lot of the language which we associate with Jesus Christ: he is king, yet he is humble. He is a strong leader, but brings peace. Listen for the voices which speak for peace and reconciliation in our own world. At this time of anxiety where we see frictions in our society, who is bringing peace? Think about moments in your life when you have done what you think is right through confrontation, and think about when you have brought peace. Pray for our city and communities, and pray for the church as the Body of Christ, and how the church can be a reconciler.
- St Paul writes about being pulled in two directions: he wants to act in one way, but finds himself doing something different. St Augustine wrote about the same thing: he spoke of having "two wills". This is something which affects us all: sometimes it is about temptation, and sometimes about expediency. Are we letting God down when we act against our own resolve, or are we just letting ourselves down? At other times, are wishes aspirational and not realistic. Pray for discernment in your own life, that you may know when you are letting yourself down, but also know when you are truly doing your best. Pray for an open heart which allows Jesus to speak to you, that your will and your action may be one.
- In the Gospel there is a lot about the relationship between Jesus and his Father. What are the main relationships within our Church life, and what makes you feel part of St Nick's? The Church is not a distant institution which you visit, but you are St Nick's. Today public worship resumes in Church, but not everyone will be able to attend and be part of the service, but those people 'are' St Nick's just as much as the people who will be there. Pray for our church community, and pray as well for your own part in that community, making us stronger and proclaiming the faith we share. Pray for the weeks ahead as we work together to build a stronger church as we emerge from the pandemic.

Now spend some time in your own prayers. You may want to pray and give thanks for:

- The Church across the world, and the communities that it serves
- All those who are physically, emotionally or spiritually isolated

- All those who are facing the fear of death, their own, or that of a loved one
- All medical, nursing, caring and support staff, and emergency responders around the world
- All businesses, business owners, industries and employees who are facing loss and change at this time of uncertainty
- Marginalised communities, the homeless, asylum seekers, and all those who are especially vulnerable at this time
- Essential service providers, frontline workers, volunteers, and charitable supporters
- Those named on the Parish prayer list on the “This Week” page of our website (https://www.livpc.co.uk/whats_on/this_week.html)

Then finish with your own prayers and intercessions with the Lord’s Prayer:

**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 this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who 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.**

If you have a candle, put it out when you end this time of worship, but perhaps keep your sacred space set up, so that you can use it whenever you need to, and keep the Bible readings and prayer for the week, praying, reading, reflecting and thinking about them over the next seven days.

The clergy and community of Liverpool Parish Church are praying for you, your family, our city, our country, and our world.