

LIVERPOOL PARISH CHURCH

OUR LADY & ST NICHOLAS

Worship at home for the Third Sunday before Advent

8th November 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:

**God, our refuge and strength,
bring near the day when wars shall cease
and poverty and pain shall end,
that earth may know the peace of heaven
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Now read through these passages from The Bible:

Wisdom 6.12-16

Wisdom is radiant and unfading, and she is easily discerned by those who love her, and is found by those who seek her. She hastens to make herself known to those who desire her. One who rises early to seek her will have no difficulty, for she will be found sitting at the gate. To fix one's thought on her is perfect understanding, and one who is vigilant on her account will soon be free from care, because she goes about seeking those worthy of her, and she graciously appears to them in their paths, and meets them in every thought.

I Thessalonians 4.13-18

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Matthew 25.1-13

“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise replied, ‘No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I do not know you.’ Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

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

- In the Old Testament reading, wisdom is characterised and we are told how to seek them. Think of those people who you have gained wisdom from. Give thanks for them. How do you seek wisdom? The reading tells us that wisdom ‘meets us in every thought’- how do you try to orient your thoughts and deeds in the direction of the wisdom of God?
- This section of Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians deals with those who have died. It gives us hope and lays out the promises about new life that might be found in Christ. Paul is at pains to lay out that, in Jesus, there is little distinction between the living and the dead as all are loved by him. Use this as a time to remember those who have died and commend them to the love of Christ.

- This week's Gospel is very well known. It talks of the coming of the bridegroom (Jesus) and the necessity of being prepared. How do you keep spiritually awake to the signs of God in the world? When and where do you look for the coming of Christ and how do you prepare yourself to meet him? Spend some time in prayer and reflection and think on what spiritual disciplines might help you in this challenge.

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.