

LIVERPOOL PARISH CHURCH

OUR LADY & ST NICHOLAS

Worship at home for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity, 12th 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:

**Almighty God,
send down upon your Church
the riches of your Spirit,
and kindle in all who minister the gospel
your countless gifts of grace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Now read through these passages from The Bible:

Isaiah 55.10-13

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
and do not return there until they have watered the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

For you shall go out in joy,
and be led back in peace;
the mountains and the hills before you
shall burst into song,
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;
and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial,
for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Romans 8.1-11

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the just requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

Matthew 13.1-9, 18-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and

since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!”

“Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

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

- Isaiah’s vision is one of the transforming power of the Word of God. We know Christ Jesus to be the Word incarnate- think perhaps about the ways your life is transformed by him. Ask what fruits your life and words bring forth. The vision is rich with metaphor from the natural world- think and pray about those parts of life than need pruning. Pray for all those whose lives are yet to be transformed by Christ, pray for those who are still suppressed under the thorns and briars that so often arise in this life.
- ‘No condemnation now I dread, Jesus and all in him is mine’ so wrote Charles Wesley in the hymn ‘And can it be’, paraphrasing St Paul’s great statement of faith in the Resurrection and the power of God over death. Paul was writing to reassure those who, like us, have moments of fear. Think of those times you have been fearful and give them over to God in a moment of quiet. Paul also draws out the distinction between flesh and spirit- associating the former with the ways of death and the latter with hope in Christ. Pray for the coming of the Spirit into the life of the Church- for renewal and for assurance for those who live in fear.
- In the Gospel Jesus tells the parable of the Sower. Think about those parts of your life where weeds or stony ground might be inhibiting the power of the word. Think too about, and give thanks for, those parts of your life where God has blessed you with abundance of joy- and think perhaps about how you might share that joy and love and so multiply it a hundred fold. Pray for the work of the Gospel in this land and across the world, and for all those who seek to sow the seed of joy.

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.