

Personal Service for Sunday 15th August 2021

We gather together, from different places, but together all the same. We are in the presence of God; Father, Son and Spirit. So we worship in the unity that only He affords to mankind.

H & P. 36. (S t F. 103): God is Love, let heaven adore him.

Prayers of praise, thanksgiving and repentance.

Father God, in whom we live, breathe and take our rest and on whom we depend, for even the tiniest details of our lives, we come before you with hearts ready to praise and worship. We come, in this our present sanctuary, wanting, craving your presence. We come because you give us the freedom to do so. Thank you for welcoming us with open arms.

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, you promise us bread that never goes stale and water that will never run out. You are the source of our spiritual food and it is only because of you that we are welcome in this sanctuary today. We thank you for breaking wide the gates of heaven to let us in.

Guiding, challenging, comforting Spirit, you are the sanctuary that we find in our hearts. You are the presence of God in our daily lives. The whispering voice that challenges our prejudices and selfishness. The soothing murmur that comforts us in time of need. The prompting silence that keeps us on the true path to Glory. We thank you for your steadfastness as we try to be the people that you made us to be.

Father, Son and Spirit in you we are fed, in you we are lead, in you we are made whole. To you we come in joy, thanksgiving and humility. Amen.

When we are selfish and don't want to share our material blessings. Father forgive.

When we are selfish and don't want to share our intellectual blessings. Father forgive.

When we are selfish and don't want to share our spiritual blessings. Father forgive.

From you all goodness and mercy flows. We claim your merciful forgiveness now, knowing that your Son, our Saviour died for each and every one of us. We are resurrection people. Guide us as we try to reflect you in our lives. Amen

The readings for today.

Ephesians: chapter 5 verses 15- 20.

John: chapter 6 verses 51 – 58.

H & P. 258 (S t F. 365): Jesu, thou joy of loving hearts.

The Address.

No-one likes being interrupted but it is as though that is what has happened, so far, in our Gospel readings, throughout August. Part of this reading will, also, be repeated next week as well. We have heard bits of the same conversation but with gaps of a week between the parts. Our focus is still on Jesus' words, "I am the bread of life." However, this week's reading could be viewed as being controversial. His words certainly would have been to the listening Jews. Telling people to eat his flesh, cannibalism! To us that would sound abhorrent so imagine hearing it for the first time. To go on to state that his followers would have to drink his blood, well that too would sound abhorrent. Vampires. You can imagine the reaction in that crowd. The same crowd who had been fed and healed. The same crowd who wanted more, so followed Jesus to the other side of the lake. Even though they couldn't understand how he had gotten there. They didn't see him walk on water. What Jesus had to say must have been vitally important for him to repeat it over and over again. Still it didn't sink in. To be at flesh with Christ, means to be totally and utterly dependent on Him. Only He has that connection with God. Only He can lead us to God. Only He has the power to redeem. Only He has the will to become the final sacrifice. The one where flesh is pierced and blood is spilt. Only Jesus! So, when he exhorts the listeners to eat his flesh, and drink his blood, it is an invitation to become one with Him. Just as He is one with the Father. An invitation to the true feast of the Kingdom. The banquet of Heaven. And we are invited. However the invitation does carry conditions.

Read Ephesians again. Some of the conditions, for Christian living, are listed there. They are superb and speak to us in the same way that Jesus does. We are not to deny anyone our love, praise and kindness. We are to be wise in our example. We are to be the reflection of Jesus in our world today. Giving our all. Living simply so that others may simply live. Challenging ourselves when we are tempted to go astray. Placing ourselves in Christ's hands and trusting Him to be our guide. To be one with Him who died so that we might live. This is the challenge we commit ourselves to every time we join in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. We do not shy away from the words of the Sacrament. We must not shy away from living as the one, who gave us both the words and the sacrament, wants us to.

May the man who invites to His table bless and keep us. For it was Him who sought us, not the other way round. He waited for us until we found Him. Now we are his forever. May the Lord be praised! Amen.

H & P. 412 (S t F. 720): We turn to you, O God of every nation.

Prayers of Intercession.

Satisfying Lord, you felt pity for the hungry and the seeking. May we, who bear your name, reach out to all who hunger and thirst for you. We pray for all who worship today, wherever they are and by whatever means. May your word enter their hearts and empower them to become Christ like in all that they say, do and think. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Tender Lord, You didn't send anyone away to find food for themselves. You provided it for them. We pray for all who are physically hungry in our world today. We think of the many thousands who have had no choice but to turn to Food Banks during these months of pandemic. We think of those whose crops have failed due to the climate crisis. We think of those, who in desperation, have fled their own countries and embarked on terrifying journeys with nothing to sustain them, May we look on our neighbour, where ever we see them, with the compassion that we have learnt from You. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Healing Lord. You reached out and touched them whatever their ailment or condition. We pray for all in pain and distress. For the bereaved, for those suffering, directly or indirectly, because of the pandemic, for those who have watched their homes swept away by fire, flood or the hatred of others. May we follow your example of compassion and find ways, however small, to be their friend indeed. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Redeeming Lord. We thank you for the promise of a seat at your heavenly table. We rejoice that your flesh and blood are the source of life for all mankind. With joy in our hearts we remember our own personal saints; the ones who invited us in to meet with you. May we, honouring your welcome and their faith, be the lights that guide the feet of others. Your body is our Church. Thank you Father, Son and Spirit. Amen.

We are invited to join in the most perfect of all prayers as we say **The Lord's Prayer**

H & P. 685 (S t F.636, MP 515): O Love that wilt not let me go.

We join, separately but together as the body of Christ, in the words of **The Grace.**