



Personal Service for Sunday 31st October 2021
– Written by Margaret Tate

Call to Worship.

Read Hebrews chapter 9 verses 11 - 14

H & P. 74. (S t F. 317): At the name of Jesus.

Prayers of praise, thanksgiving and repentance.

O Lord, our God, you are mightier than any power of humankind. You are wiser than all of the greatest teachers and philosophers. Your hands reach beyond the boundaries that we, in our small world and imaginations, impose on you. Your voice reaches in to and touches the soul of each and every one of your worshipping people. Your compassion rains down upon us like an unceasing shower of gentle rain. Your love seeks each human heart, and when the question is posed, “Where are you?” Your gaze directs our eyes to the Cross. We look up at the shame and pain that you allowed your Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour to endure because You love us so much.

So we come separately, but still united, in to this place of worship. We come to bow our heads in prayer and submission; to read your word and to experience Immanuel, God with us.

In simple trust we place ourselves in your hands, seeking your guidance for our lives. Father, Son and Spirit we thank you for your unending care and compassion. Amen.

Silence – for personal prayers of thanks.

In approaching God’s cross of freedom and redemption we lay aside our selfishness, and self-seeking. In the presence of Christ we long to divest ourselves of our cloaks of prejudice and intolerance. By the power of the Holy Spirit we seek to become people of the light. We know that we fall far short of those personal goals. Forgive us Lord we pray.

Silence.

We are bathed in the blood of Jesus. We are, by the grace of God, saved from eternal damnation and living resurrected lives. We are, each one of us, treasured by God. Thank you, Father, for the love that doesn't let us go. Amen.

The readings for today.

Psalm 146.

Mark: chapter 12 verses 28 – 34.

H & P. 678 (S t F. 736): In heavenly love abiding.

The Address.

From Psalm 146: - "Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, my soul. I will praise him as long as I live, I will sing to my God all my life."

Mark chapter 12, the last part of verse 28: - "Which commandment is the greatest of all?", so asked the man who already knew the answer. A teacher of the Law. Perhaps he thought that he could do what the Sadducees had failed to do – catch Jesus out. (Mark chapter 12 verses 18 -27). Or, perhaps, realising that he was in the presence of greatness, he simply wanted to hear more words of wisdom. The answer he received was this, "Listen, Israel! The Lord your God is the only Lord! Love the Lord your God with all your mind, and with all your soul, and with all your strength."

As Christians we walk in the gentle footsteps of the saints who preceded us. From the Patriarchs of the Old Testament, to King David, to the Prophets, to John the Baptist, to the Disciples and the Apostles, to those who bear the title of saints and those who don't. The ones who have quietly, devotedly and humbly served the Lord. The Eve of All Saints Day is a good time to reflect on those who lightened our path of faith. You might want to take a few moments to bring your guides to mind.

These are the ones who knew, and know the importance of that greatest commandment. That elemental need to put God first in our lives. The writer of Psalm 146 certainly did. Saints without halos and, some, without names, passengers on the same journey as ourselves. People whose desire is God and for God's ways. Not selfish in faith or in love. Those who live out the second commandment: - "Love your neighbour as you love yourself." Knowing that these first two, and greatest, commandments are intertwined, indivisible, indisputable. On showing his agreement, and understanding, the teacher of the Law received an amazing affirmation. "You are not far from the Kingdom of God," proclaimed the Lord. What a beautiful blessing.

However without the sacrifice of Jesus we would all be far, far away from the Kingdom of God. Saints can only be saints because Jesus first walked this earth, and prepared the way for them. The reading from Hebrews confirms this.

May we all aim to be saints, without halos or recognition, but definitely in the sight of God. Loving Him first and loving our neighbour as we love ourselves. All through, and with, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

H & P. 553: Lord speak to me that I may speak.

Prayers of Intercession.

Silence.

From places of need the world calls out to you, Father God.

The Church, your Church seeks to be heard, revived and revered. Inspiring God we ask you to make us bold in both speaking and living out your Word. Help us to speak out against the things that deny any one person worship. Trust us to live out your greatest commandment. Bring us to our knees for the sake of your Gospel.

Silence.

This world was made in perfection but humans have selfishly ravished its beauty and commandeered its resources. Awaken us to the realisation that it is not ours but Yours. Voices, young and old, are calling out, asking for a

solution before it is too late. Make those in authority listen. Open their ears and eyes to the desperation of those they claim to serve.

Silence.

You taught us to love without exception. Help us to bring peace for all our neighbours, whoever and wherever they are. Teach us to show us others how to share, unconditionally. Help all to love their neighbour as they love themselves.

Silence.

We pray for all those we know who are sick, in body, mind or spirit. We raise before you those who are dying and the bereaved. We pray for a fairer sharing of the world's medical knowledge and resources.

Silence.

The Lord hears our prayer.

Thanks be to God.

The Lord's Prayer

H & P. 478. O word of God incarnate.

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