

~AT HOME WORSHIP~



30th August 2020

Service Theme: Jesus asks us to,
“take up our cross and follow him”

Welcome

Preparation

In preparation for this act of worship, why not make a cross and have it in front of you? You could choose a simple pen drawn cross, stitch or crochet one, find out a Palm Sunday cross or look at a picture from the internet – or use the picture here to settle yourself into God’s presence. This shows the Resurrection Cross that is in St Mary’s sanctuary.

We bring our crosses
as we gather here today,
crosses of worry, fear, hope or love.
Thank you, God,
that you are always ready to welcome us,
whatever crosses we are carrying.

Amen.

Reflective Hymn: Be still my soul

<https://youtu.be/mq59iE3MhXM>

Be still, my soul, The Lord is on thy side
Bear patiently, the cross of grief or pain
Leave to thy God, to order and provide
In every change, He faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul, thy best thy heavenly
friend
Through thorny ways, leads to a joyful end

Be still, my soul, thy God doth undertake
To guide the future as He has the past
Thy hope, thy confidence, let nothing
shake
All now mysterious shall be bright at last
Be still, my soul, the waves and wind still
know
His voice who ruled them while He dwelt
below

*In You I rest, in You I found my hope
In You I trust, You never let me go
I place my life within Your hands alone
Be still, my soul*

Be still, my soul, the hour is hastening on
When we shall be forever with the Lord
When disappointment, grief and fear are
gone
Sorrow forgot, love’s purest joys restored
Be still, my soul, when change and tears
are past
All safe and blessed, we shall meet at last

In You I rest...

Kari Jobe performing Be Still My Soul (In You I Rest) [Lyrics]. (P)
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Opening Prayer

Thank you, Lord,
that you do not call us to anything
without also giving us the resources to cope.
You do not ask us to go anywhere you haven't been.
You call us to take up our cross,
and we come to you with fear and trembling,
but knowing that ultimately your way is the best.
Be with us, Lord, and help us to understand.
Amen.

Prayer for the Day

God of constant mercy,
who sent your Son to save us:
remind us of your goodness,
increase your grace within us,
that our thankfulness may grow,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Saying Sorry - an interactive prayer for all ages

Looking at your image/drawing/craft of the cross, take your time to sit and reflect on the prayer – say the words slowly and quietly.

Lord Jesus,

thank you that you went to the cross,

and that through your death

we can be forgiven.

We are sorry for the times

when we fail to pick up our own cross

and walk in your way,

choosing instead to do things our way.

Help us to follow you always.

Amen.



BIBLE READING



Romans 12:9-end

⁹Love must be completely sincere. Hate what is evil, hold on to what is good. ¹⁰Love one another warmly as Christians, and be eager to show respect for one another. ¹¹Work hard and do not be lazy. Serve the Lord with a heart full of devotion. ¹²Let your hope keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles, and pray at all times. ¹³Share your belongings with your needy fellow Christians, and open your homes to strangers.

¹⁴Ask God to bless those who persecute you—yes, ask him to bless, not to curse. ¹⁵Be happy with those who are happy, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶Have the same concern for everyone. Do not be proud, but accept humble duties. ¹⁷Do not think of yourselves as wise.

¹⁷If someone has done you wrong, do not repay him with a wrong. Try to do what everyone considers to be good. ¹⁸Do everything possible on your part to live in peace with everybody. ¹⁹Never take revenge, my friends, but instead let God's anger do it. For the scripture says, "I will take revenge, I will pay back, says the Lord." ²⁰Instead, as the scripture says: "If your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them a drink; for by doing this you will make them burn with shame." ²¹Do not let evil defeat you; instead, conquer evil with good.

Matthew 16:21-end

Jesus Speaks about His Suffering and Death

²¹From that time on Jesus began to say plainly to his disciples, "I must go to Jerusalem and suffer much from the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law. I will be put to death, but three days later I will be raised to life."

²²Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "God forbid it, Lord!" he said. "That must never happen to you!"

²³Jesus turned around and said to Peter, "Get away from me, Satan! You are an obstacle in my way, because these thoughts of yours don't come from God, but from human nature."

²⁴Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you want to come with me, you must forget yourself, carry your cross, and follow me. ²⁵For if you want to save your own life, you will lose it; but if you lose your life for my sake, you will find it. ²⁶Will you gain anything if you win the whole world but lose your life? Of course not! There is nothing you can give to regain your life. ²⁷For the Son of Man is about to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then he will reward each one according to his deeds. ²⁸I assure you that there are some here who will not die until they have seen the Son of Man come as King."



Reflection Time

Short Reflection by Revd Teresa Townsend

For children: why not do the colouring sheet that is provided with the children's sheets.

The very first sentence of our Romans reading says "love must be completely sincere". In a busy week and a bit where I've had the privilege of watching my son marry his beautiful bride surrounded by immediate family only, where I have enjoyed a 'significant' birthday that now means I can book a Saga holiday, or buy a retirement apartment with Nic and set up a funeral plan (!), celebrated our 31st wedding anniversary and where I've been able to have a brief holiday with my now official granddaughter who is ten, those words have really struck a chord with me. Love must be completely sincere.

The reading goes on to talk of loving one another, letting hope keep us joyful and patient, sharing with others, being happy. All of us can have those behaviours and attitudes – all of us can show compassion and care and love others. I've seen it in abundance over the last fortnight – it has enriched my life and encouraged me. The gifts I've received for my birthday, in words and items have shown that others care about me – I'm on the receiving end as well as, hopefully, being a giver too.

But the reading also focuses on the aspect of love that those who are Christians can give – serving the Lord with a heart full of devotion – a way of living that affords us all to look outward and not just inward – a reminder that at the heart of everything there is God and the gift that he has given us is greater than any birthday or wedding gift – his gift has been Jesus Christ – his Son – given to us through love and to offer us a fullness of love for eternity. The cross, where Jesus was cruelly crucified is a beacon of hope and light to us all – the cross reminds us of his open arms – arms that were in pain, but that can now wrap around us when we are in need, when there is sorrow, when there are tears, where despair causes us to fall – the cross reminds us that we are not alone.

How then do we follow Christ's call to his disciples in the reading from Matthew's gospel. "If any of you want to come with me, you must forget yourself, carry your cross, and follow me." Our possessions, our lifestyles and our own ways of thinking about our lives need to come under scrutiny. For some, their calling to Christ may indeed lead to them leaving everything behind and going forward in faith with nothing. For most of us, to follow Christ means to take stock, reflect on who we are in Christ at the moment – look for ways in which to amend our lives to be more like him – lose some habits, attitudes or prejudices, be less materialistic and more focused on supporting others, give more time to reading the Bible and praying than to the computer games or TV.

Most of all, we are called to be accountable to Christ for our actions and to be a voice that speaks of Christ as our hope and our redeemer, a voice that is willing to be heard above those who say that religion is nothing or meaningless, a voice that is willing to say that we have made mistakes in the past and we are sorry – we want to learn to live our lives as Christ calls us to.

There are times for us all when it feels too much to carry a cross and follow Jesus. We feel burdened with busyness and weighed down by it all. But, at times, that is our cross – the weight of our lives is what we are carrying, but if we remember that Christ is there too, that through him, no burden can be too heavy, even when it feels it is crushing us. The cross is our focus for looking to him first, in all things, that no part of our lives are separated from him – we can follow him through it all and we can rejoice in the confidence that we can be made new by him.

One of my greatest joys in the past week was listening to my son and his wife saying their marriage vows to each other and seeing the vicar's stole being wrapped around their joined hands – a symbol that 'those whom God has joined together, let no one put asunder'. God has joined them in their marriage – they are bound by him and to him through their vows and through the blessing given to them. They start their married life strengthened by the love of God.

For each of us, we can be strengthened too – we are not alone when we look to the cross, we are loved, we are cared for – we can look to the cross as our own guide for following Jesus and for becoming the people he calls us to be; to step out in faith, hope and love and let others see Christ for themselves by the way in which we think, act and speak. It is a challenge, it is not easy, but it is the right thing to do to show that our love for others is completely sincere.

Children's Reflection on the Matthew Reading **And/or you could do the Family Time Sheet together (separate sheet).**

What do you remember about that reading?

Jesus is trying to teach his friends what it means to be a disciple. A disciple is someone who wants to follow in Jesus' footsteps but this isn't always easy.

Jesus says that sometimes it is difficult to follow him. *Can you think why this would be?*

The Lord is trying to teach us to trust in him and to see that we are all one big family.

Jesus also asks us not think not as humans think but as God thinks. *What do you think this means? How do you think people could tell that you followed Jesus?*

Jesus also says that we should take up our cross and follow him. *How could we do this?*

How will you show your love for others, both here and around the world in the coming week?



Family Song (optional)

Every Step by Nick and Becky Drake

https://youtu.be/nZBhKp5_HwE

Time for Prayer

The following activity could be done during the service or used during the week as a way of entering into prayer.

Sit in a quiet place and write down your thoughts and concerns about suffering. Write as much or as little as seems right to you. When you have finished writing, sit in silence and hold the paper. In your mind, say: 'Lord, take my thoughts and feelings, my faith and my doubts.' Repeat the words several times with periods of stillness and silence in between.

To those who carry the cross of persecution and oppression, loving Lord:

give strength and courage.

To those who carry the cross of anger and abuse,
loving Lord:

give strength and courage.

To those who carry the cross of pain and suffering,
loving Lord:

give strength and courage.

To those who carry the cross of isolation and loneliness,
loving Lord:

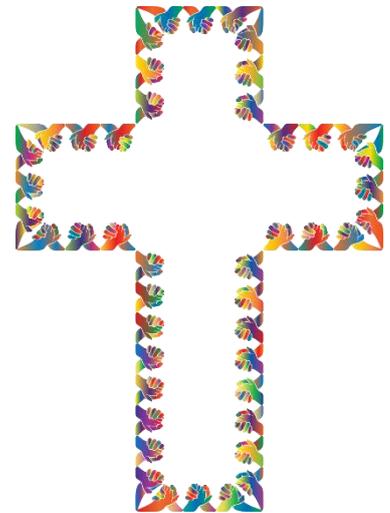
give strength and courage.

To those who carry the cross of grief and mourning,
loving Lord:

give strength and courage.

Living and loving God,
give wisdom and encouragement
to us and to all your children,
as we seek to take up our cross
and to follow you faithfully.

Amen.



Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done
On earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread
Forgive us our sins
As we forgive those who sin against us
Lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
And the glory are yours
Now and for ever.
Amen.**

Praise Hymn – This is Amazing Grace

<https://youtu.be/cgsbaBlaoVc>

Who breaks the power
of sin and darkness
whose love is mighty
and so much stronger
the King of Glory,
the King above all kings

Who shakes the whole earth
with holy thunder
who leaves us breathless
in awe and wonder
the King of Glory,
the King above all kings

*This is amazing grace
This is unfailing love
That You would take my place
That You would bear my cross
You would lay down Your life
That I would be set free
O Jesus, I sing for
All that You've done for me*

Who brings our chaos
back into order
who makes the orphan
a son and daughter
The King of Glory,
The King of Glory

Who rules the nations
with truth and justice
shines like the sun
in all of its brilliance
the King of Glory,
the King above all kings

This is amazing grace...

Worthy is Lamb
who was slain
Worthy is the King
who conquered the grace
(x3)

This is amazing grace...

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Closing Prayer

Lord God, you knew what was going to happen to you.
You didn't flinch, or back away.
You calmly told the disciples – and us – what to expect.
As we go out now, remind us constantly to look to you in the good and the tough times.
Guide us as we go in your name. **Amen.**

Dismissal

May God the Father remove all the stumbling blocks
from our path.
May God the Son give us the courage to take up our cross.
And may God the Holy Spirit empower us
to walk with confidence, day by day.
Amen.

God bless you now and always

