

## Liturgical provision for the Commemoration of Thomas Traherne, 10<sup>th</sup> October

Commemorations are not provided with liturgical propers in the Church of England and are normally kept by a mention in prayers of intercession and thanksgiving. However, “A Commemoration may be observed as a Lesser Festival, with liturgical provision from the common material for holy men and women, ... where there is an established celebration in the wider church or where the day has a special local significance.” Also, “diocesan and other local provision may be made to supplement the national Calendar.” The material gathered here is offered to encourage the joyful keeping of the Commemoration especially in this the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of his death.

### About Traherne

Thomas Traherne was born in Hereford in about 1637, son of a shoemaker. After education in Hereford and Oxford in the Puritan years he was appointed the living of Credenhill, receiving episcopal ordination at the Restoration. His poems and meditations composed there, rediscovered in recent years, have established him as a major Anglican spiritual writer. His other writing, and the trials of the Civil War, show that he was no stranger to the seriousness of sin and suffering, but he was also exceptionally aware of the wonder and glory of creation, and his resolve was to draw deeply on the love and grace of God and seek the felicity that can bring. He died soon after leaving Credenhill in 1674. A fuller account can be found online at

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-38074>

### Local Provision for a Lesser Festival

#### *Collect*

God of all infinities  
in whom your servant Thomas Traherne  
found all his happiness  
in the countryside of Hereford,  
wondering at worlds both great and small  
and at our salvation in Jesus Christ your Son;  
open our eyes like his to the majesty of creation  
and our deep connectedness within it  
until we come to see you its Author face to face  
in all blessedness and glory,  
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DT

#### *A Reading from Proverbs 8.22-31*

The Lord created me at the beginning of his work,  
the first of his acts of long ago.  
Ages ago I was set up,

at the first, before the beginning of the earth.  
When there were no depths I was brought forth,  
when there were no springs abounding with water.  
Before the mountains had been shaped,  
before the hills, I was brought forth—  
when he had not yet made earth and fields  
or the world's first bits of soil.  
When he established the heavens, I was there,  
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,  
when he made firm the skies above,  
when he established the fountains of the deep,  
when he assigned to the sea its limit,  
so that the waters might not transgress his command,  
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,  
then I was beside him, like a master worker;  
and I was daily his delight,  
rejoicing before him always,  
rejoicing in his inhabited world  
and delighting in the human race.

### ***Psalm 119:129-136***

#### **Show the light of your countenance upon your servant and teach me your statutes**

Your testimonies are wonderful; ♦  
therefore my soul keeps them.  
The opening of your word gives light; ♦  
it gives understanding to the simple.  
I open my mouth and draw in my breath, ♦  
as I long for your commandments.  
Turn to me and be gracious to me, ♦  
as is your way with those who love your name.  
Order my steps by your word, ♦  
and let no wickedness have dominion over me.  
Redeem me from earthly oppressors ♦  
so that I may keep your commandments.  
Show the light of your countenance upon your servant ♦  
and teach me your statutes.  
My eyes run down with streams of water, ♦  
because the wicked do not keep your law.

#### **Show the light of your countenance upon your servant and teach me your statutes**

### ***A Reading from I John 4.7-16***

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's

love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.

***A Reading from the Gospel according to St John, 17.20 – end***

‘I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us,<sup>a</sup> so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ‘Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.’

***Post-Communion***

God of all Glories  
through whose grace we glimpse your glories  
in the heavens above and in the earth below,  
grant us also the grace to comprehend you  
in our hidden thoughts and sacred prayers  
which in Holy Communion belong to you;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
Amen.

*DT (See “Select Meditations” 87)*

**The Common Worship Common of Holy Men and Women**

provides material appropriate to Traherne. The liturgical colour is White.

***Invitation to Confession***

Christ calls us to share the heavenly banquet of his love  
with all the saints in earth and heaven.  
Knowing our unworthiness and sin,  
let us ask from him both mercy and forgiveness.

### ***Kyrie Confession***

Lord, you are gracious and compassionate:  
Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

You are loving to all,  
and your mercy is over all your creation:  
Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Your faithful servants bless your name  
and speak of the glory of your kingdom:  
Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

### ***Collect***

Almighty Father,  
you have built up your Church  
through the love and devotion of your saints:  
inspire us to follow the example of Thomas Traherne  
whom we commemorate today,  
that we in our generation may rejoice with him  
in the vision of your glory;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
Amen.

### ***Old Testament Reading: Proverbs 8.22-31***

### ***Epistle: I John 4.7-16***

### ***Gospel: John 17.20-end***

### ***Gospel Acclamation***

Alleluia, alleluia.  
I have called you friends, says the Lord,  
for all that I have heard from my Father  
I have made known to you.  
**Alleluia.**

### ***Intercession***

United in the company of all the faithful  
and looking for the coming of the kingdom,  
let us offer our prayers to God, the source of all life and holiness.

Merciful Lord,  
strengthen all Christian people by your Holy Spirit,  
that we may live as a royal priesthood and a holy nation  
to the praise of Christ Jesus our Saviour.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Bless *N* our bishop, and all ministers of your Church,  
that by faithful proclamation of your word  
we may be built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets  
into a holy temple in the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Hear our prayer as we remember today the life  
of your minister Thomas Traherne  
and his work and witness which declared your love  
and revealed your glory.  
Empower us by the gift of your holy and life-giving Spirit,  
that we may be transformed into the likeness of Christ  
from glory to glory.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Give to the world and its peoples  
the peace and felicity that comes from above,  
that they may find Christ's way of freedom and life.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Touch and heal all those whose lives are scarred by sin and pain,  
that, raised from death to life in Christ,  
their sorrow may be turned to eternal joy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Remember in your mercy those gone before us  
who have been well-pleasing to you from eternity;  
preserve us who live here in your faith,  
guide us to your kingdom, and grant us your peace at all times.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Hasten the day when those who fear you in every nation  
will come from east and west, from north and south,  
and sit at table in your kingdom.

**Lord, have mercy.**

And so we give you thanks  
for the whole company of your saints in glory,  
with whom in fellowship we join our prayers and praises;  
by your grace may we, like them, be made perfect in your love.  
Blessing and glory and wisdom,  
thanksgiving and honour and power,  
be to our God for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

### ***Introduction to the Peace***

May the God of peace sanctify you:  
may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness

that you may be blameless before him  
at the coming of our Lord Jesus with his saints.

***Prayer at the Preparation of the Table***

Eternal God,  
we give you thanks for the triumph of Christ  
in the life of your servant N.  
Accept this sacrifice of thanks and praise  
and give us grace to run our course with faith,  
that we may come with all your saints  
to the eternal banquet in heaven,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

***Preface***

And now we give you thanks  
that your glory is revealed in Thomas Traherne and all the saints.  
In their lives you have given us an example of faithfulness to Christ.  
In their holiness we find encouragement and hope.  
In our communion with them we share the unity of your kingdom.

***Extended Preface***

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.  
We rejoice in the glorious splendour of your majesty  
for you have given us a share with Thomas Traherne  
in the inheritance of the saints in light.  
In the darkness of this passing age  
they proclaim the glory of your kingdom.  
Chosen as lights in the world,  
they surround our steps as we journey on  
towards the city of eternal light  
where they sing the everlasting song of triumph.  
In communion with angels and archangels  
and all who have served you on earth  
and worship you now in heaven,  
we raise our voices to proclaim your glory,  
for ever praising you and saying:

***Post Communion***

Faithful God,  
who called Thomas Traherne to serve you  
and gave him joy in walking the path of holiness:  
by this eucharist,  
in which you renew within us the vision of your glory,  
strengthen us all to follow the way of perfection  
until we come to see you face to face;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Blessing**

God give you grace to share the inheritance  
of his saints in glory;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.

**(or)**

May God,  
who kindled the fire of his love in the hearts of the saints,  
pour upon you the riches of his grace.  
**Amen.**

May he give you joy and fellowship  
and a share in their praises.  
**Amen.**

May he strengthen you to follow them in the way of holiness  
and to come to the full radiance of glory.  
**Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.  
**Amen.**

### **Ending**

The Lord God almighty,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
the holy and undivided Trinity,  
guard you, save you,  
and bring you to the heavenly city,  
where he lives and reigns for ever and ever.

### **Acclamation**

In the city of God, night shall be no more:  
**the people of God need no light of lamp or sun.**  
For the Lord God will be their light:  
**and they will reign for ever and ever.**

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**From Michael Tavinor's *Diocese of Hereford, Praying with Saints: A Diocesan Calendar***

10 OCTOBER

THOMAS TRAHERNE c1636-74

Hereford's poet of ecstasy & inclusion

THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS in the Audley Chapel at Hereford Cathedral (by Tom Denny, 2007) commemorate the life of one of the city's greatest sons, whose prose and poetry have made a huge contribution to the life and spirituality of many, not least in recent years. The windows depict four key parts of Thomas Traherne's life: first, his love of the city of Hereford: he was born here in about 1636, and baptised in All Saints' Church. Denny depicts a scene: "The city seemed to stand in Eden, or to be built in Heaven. The streets were mine, the temple was mine, the people were mine." Traherne returned to Hereford and became incumbent at Credenhill. 'The little church is seen in the second window, which has an image of Traherne himself, bathed in light, the River Wye snaking into the distance. This scene, for Denny, was inspired by Traherne's lovely phrase "You are as prone to love as the sun to shine". The third light of the window shows a cross 'set on fire with invisible flame — the flame is love', a reminder of Traherne's emphasis on the inclusive love of Christ. Finally, in the fourth light, we see the poet running through a cornfield, which recalls his oft-quoted phrase, "The corn was orient and immortal wheat which never should be reaped nor was ever sown, a lovely image of Traherne's delight in the created world. Traherne published very little during his lifetime; many of his manuscripts were not signed, and they were lost until a chance purchase in 1896 led to the publication of some of his poems and the *Centuries*. Further unpublished manuscripts were identified as recently as 1997. Traherne moved to London in 1672 as chaplain to Sir Orlando Bridgeman. There he died in 1674 and was buried on this day in the chancel of St Mary's Church, Teddington.

GOD OF CREATION, who gave to your servant, Thomas Traherne, joy and felicity to see you in all around him: open our minds today to your beauty, inspire us to sing of your glory and daily to trust in the cross of joy and of suffering; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Revelation xxi, 10-14

Matthew xiii, 44-46, 52

*For your prayers*

All Christian poets and writers; thanksgiving for ways in which in the writings of others we can open our eyes to God's love.

## **Two readings from Traherne, as chosen by Michael Tavinor in *Saints and Sinners of the Marches***

*Centuries of Meditations II.66*

That violence wherewith sometimes a man doteth upon one creature, is but a little spark of that love, even towards all, which lurketh in his nature. We are made to love, both to satisfy



the necessity of our active nature, and to answer the beauties in every creature. By Love our Souls are married and solder'd to the creatures and it is our Duty like God to be united to them all. We must love them infinitely, but in God, and for God and God in them: namely all His excellencies manifested in them. When we dote upon the perfections and beauties of some one creature, we do not love that too much, but other things too little. Never was anything in this world loved too much, but many things have been loved in a false way: and all in too short a measure.

*Centuries of Meditations 1.66 – suggested for use as a prayer*

Is not sight a jewel? Is not hearing a treasure? Is not speech a glory? O my Lord pardon my ingratitude, and pity my dullness who am not sensible of these gifts. The freedom of thy bounty hath deceived me. These things were too near to be considered. Thou presentedst me with Thy blessings, and I was not aware. But now I give thanks and adore and praise Thee for Thine inestimable favors. I believe Thou lovest me, because Thou hast endued me with those sacred and living treasures. Holy Father, henceforth I more desire to esteem them than Palaces of Gold! Yea, though they were given me by Kings, I confess unto Thee that I am richer in them. O what Joy, what Delight and Jubilee should there always be, would men prize the Gifts of God according to their value!

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## **The Episcopal Church (TEC)**

provides propers for commemorating Traherne in a Lesser Festival in its *Book of Common Prayer, 1979*, online at <https://www.lectionarypage.net/LesserFF/Sep/Traherne.html>

### **Collect**

Creator of wonder and majesty, you inspired your poet Thomas Traherne with mystical insight to see your glory in the natural world and in the faces of men and women around us: Help us to know you in your creation and in our neighbors, and to understand our obligations to both, that we may ever grow into the people you have created us to be; through our Savior Jesus Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, in everlasting light. *Amen.*

**Old Testament:** [Jeremiah 20:7–9](#)

**Psalm:** [119:129–136](#)

**Epistle:** [Revelation 19:1–5](#)

**Gospel:** [John 3:1–8](#)

## **Lines from “The Improvement” by Traherne that can be used as a hymn**

*To the tune 'Unde et Memores' or 'Finlandia' (repeat last two lines of each verse).*

*Adaptation of words by Richard Willmott*

God's wisdom shines in spreading forth the sky;  
His pow-er's great in ordering the sun;  
His goodness very marvellous and high  
Appears in every work his hand hath done;

And all his works in their variety,  
E'en scatter-èd abroad delight the eye.

Herein we see a marvellous design,  
And apprehending clearly the great skill  
Of that great architect, whose love doth shine  
In all his works, we find his life and will.  
For lively counsels do the godhead show,  
And these his love and goodness make us know.

By wise contrivance he doth all things guide,  
And so dispose them that, while they unite,  
For man he endless pleasures doth provide,  
And shows that happiness is his delight,  
His creatures' happiness as well as his,  
For that in truth he seeks, and 'tis his bliss.

O Rapture! Wonder! Ecstasy! Delight!  
How great must then his glory be, how great  
Our blessedness! How vast and infinite  
Our pleasure; how transcendent, how complete  
If we the goodness of our God possess,  
And all his joy be in our blessedness!

Almighty power when it is employed  
For one, that he might be with glory crowned;  
Eternal wisdom when it is enjoyed  
By one whom all its pleasures do surround,  
Produce a creature that must, all his days,  
Return the sacrifice of endless praise.

## **Procession for the Feast of Thomas Traherne, Hereford Cathedral**

*When the procession arrives in the Lady Chapel, the choir stands on the altar steps facing west and the congregation gathers opposite the Audley Chapel*

### INTERCESSIONS

#### RESONSORY

To our God belong majesty, glory, and power:

**For right and just are his judgements.**

Praise our God, all that serve him:

**Those who fear him, both small and great.**

The Lord almighty has claimed his kingdom:

**Let us exult, rejoice, and give him glory.**

#### ACCLAMATION

Blessed are you, Lord our God, king of the universe: to you be glory and praise for ever! We rejoice in the glorious splendour of your majesty. For you have given us a share in the inheritance of the saints in light. In the darkness

of this passing age Thomas Traherne and all your saints proclaim the glory of your kingdom. Chosen as lights in the world they surround our steps as we journey on towards that eternal city of light where they sing the triumphal song. Open our eyes to behold your glory and free our tongues to join our song with theirs, for great and wonderful are your deeds, O Lord God almighty, just and true are your ways, O king of the ages. To you be praise and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

#### BLESSING

The Lord be with you:

**And also with you.**

May God the Father, who kindled the fire of his love in the heart of Thomas Traherne and all the saints, pour upon you the riches of his grace. Amen.

May God the Son give you joy in his fellowship and a share in the inheritance of the saints. **Amen.**

May God the Holy Spirit strengthen you to walk in the way of holiness and to come to the full radiance of his glory. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

*The choir and clergy move to the south-east transept for dismissal:  
the congregation is invited to disperse from the Lady Chapel.*