



St Martin of Tours Chelsfield

*St Martin's worships and serves a loving God,
reaching out to the community in the name of Jesus Christ.*

Sunday 14 February 2021

THE SUNDAY NEXT BEFORE LENT (QUINQUAGESIMA)

One of the few good things that has happened to me during the last year of Coronavirus lockdowns has been finding more time to read. Not only the theological reading that is required to prepare worship and teaching, but also the joy of being able to curl up with a good novel and enjoy the mystery, romance, adventure and joy that a really good story provides.

I have always enjoyed a good story, from the bedtime stories told to me as a child (and now shared with grandchildren) through my early exploration of the local library, the set texts for school exams, discovering Dickens, the Brontës, Conan Doyle, C S Lewis and Tolkien and trying to solve murder mysteries before the author's summary.

Most people love stories, but more importantly all people have stories – each individual life story has all the ingredients of the best novels as it interacts with the stories of our families, the places we have lived, the things we have done.

Each year the church tells a very special story, that of the life of Jesus – from his birth at Christmas through his ministry, and now as we enter the Holy season of Lent we move towards the culmination of the wonderful story of God's love as we approach the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus.

After a year that has been difficult for all of us, and disastrous for some in this Covid year – we need to rediscover stories of hope and victory. We can do this in various ways. The Diocese is offering reflections on 'Living God's Story' - to share the extraordinary love of God in our ordinary lives.

Closer to home we offer a benefice wide course based on the great Christian story of hope – the Easter story. Often in Lent we major on the journey to the Cross and though we celebrate Easter with joy – this joy often seems short-lived. So this Lent we offer you an opportunity to explore Easter in more depth by sharing in the York course 'ON THE THIRD DAY' – details on the website. The story of Christ conquering death is surely apt as we battle with the Covid pandemic!

Revd John

*You are invited to spend a quiet time with these prayers,
readings and reflection.*

Prayers for the week

Almighty Father, whose Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death upon the cross: give us grace to perceive his glory, that we may be strengthened to suffer with him and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

[Collect for the Sunday next before Lent]

Holy God, we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ: may we who are partakers at his table reflect his life in word and deed, that all the world may know his power to change and save. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Post Communion for the Sunday next before Lent]

Today's psalm and readings

Psalm 50:1-6

The Acceptable Sacrifice

The mighty one, God the Lord,
speaks and summons the earth
from the rising of the sun to its setting.
Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,
God shines forth.

Our God comes and does not keep silence,
before him is a devouring fire,
and a mighty tempest all around him.
He calls to the heavens above
and to the earth, that he may judge his people:
'Gather to me my faithful ones,
who made a covenant with me by sacrifice!'
The heavens declare his righteousness,
for God himself is judge.

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

The Second Book of Kings 2:1-12

Elijah Ascends to Heaven

¹ Now when the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. ²Elijah said to Elisha, 'Stay here; for the Lord has sent me as far as Bethel.' But Elisha said, 'As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So they went down to Bethel. ³The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, 'Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?' And he said, 'Yes, I know; keep silent.'

⁴ Elijah said to him, 'Elisha, stay here; for the Lord has sent me to Jericho.' But he said, 'As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So they came to Jericho. ⁵The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, 'Do you know that today the Lord will take your master away from you?' And he answered, 'Yes, I know; be silent.'

⁶ Then Elijah said to him, 'Stay here; for the Lord has sent me to the Jordan.' But he said, 'As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So the two of them went on. ⁷Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. ⁸Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground.

⁹ When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, 'Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.' Elisha said, 'Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.' ¹⁰He responded, 'You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not.' ¹¹As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. ¹²Elisha kept watching and crying out, 'Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!' But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

The Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians 4:3-6

Jesus Christ Proclaimed as Lord

³ Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴ In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵ For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness', who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel according to Mark 9:2-9

The Transfiguration

² Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³ and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them.

⁴ And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. ⁵ Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' ⁶ He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷ Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!' ⁸ Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.



ASH WEDNESDAY

17 February

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing that you have made and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent: create and make in us new and contrite hearts that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may receive from you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; 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.

Isaiah 58:1-12

False and True Worship

- ¹ Shout out, do not hold back!
Lift up your voice like a trumpet!
Announce to my people their rebellion,
to the house of Jacob their sins.
- ² Yet day after day they seek me
and delight to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that practised righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;
they ask of me righteous judgements,
they delight to draw near to God.
- ³ 'Why do we fast, but you do not see?
Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?'
Look, you serve your own interest on your fast-day,
and oppress all your workers.
- ⁴ Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.
Such fasting as you do today
will not make your voice heard on high.
- ⁵ Is such the fast that I choose,
a day to humble oneself?
Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?
Will you call this a fast,
a day acceptable to the Lord?
- ⁶ Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?
- ⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?
- ⁸ Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you,
the glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard.
- ⁹ Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

¹⁰ if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.

¹¹ The Lord will guide you continually,
and satisfy your needs in parched places,
and make your bones strong;
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water,
whose waters never fail.

¹² Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.

Lent resources from the Diocese

A series of reflections for Lent on Youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLC1gFRuuMWtGhxU2KRD5xtuyuwv3kulyV>

General resources:

<https://www.rochester.anglican.org/resources/seasonal/lent/#Resources>

Prayers for all those affected by coronavirus

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious,
be with those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

A family prayer

Loving God, you know us and all that we are facing.
We thank you that we can come to you as we are – with
all our fears and concerns, our difficulties and challenges.
Please draw close to each of us and those we remember
before you now.
Bring to us your peace and comfort.
And fill us with your Spirit that we may be bearers of your
grace and hope to others.
As a country protect us, encourage us and keep us. In
the name of your Son Jesus, we pray.
Amen.

Scriptural Comfort

'Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand'

(Isaiah 41:10)

'Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'

(Philippians 4:6,7)

'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.'

(John 3:16)

As we do not know how long this situation will last it is important that we look out for one another.

Please let Revd John know of anyone who is ill or in distress.

***Or if you need prayer or spiritual support,
or are lonely and just need a short chat please phone***

PLEASE NOTE
ST MARTINS IS CURRENTLY CLOSED
FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP

**There will still be a midweek service
on Wednesdays at 9.30am
Holy Communion (BCP)**

- Please follow the signed instructions on notices.
- Stewards will be there to offer direction.
- There will be a one-way entry and exit system.
- You will need to register your attendance and provide contact details for tracking when you arrive — please bring your own pen to sign in with.
- Please use the hand sanitizer provided.
- Please wear a face covering if you are able.
- If you cannot wear a face covering or have another vulnerability please let a sidesman know, so that you can be directed to a more spacious area
- Please take all your belongings home with you.

Worship from St Martin's continues to be available online:

- A Sunday service on the web site —see panel below
- Daily prayer on Facebook at 8.15am on Tuesdays and Thursdays

Please let Revd John know of any urgent prayer requests or of people in particular need.

Sunday service on Zoom

There will be a Family Communion service at 10.00am on Zoom a recording of which will be available subsequently on Youtube.

If you wish to join the Zoom service please call 07826 516481 and ask for a link or email mediapr@stmartinchelsfield.org.uk

You can join by telephone if you don't have internet access.

The service sheet and hymns are on the web site.

Please note that to accommodate pastoral offices or with any changes to Diocesan or Government guidelines these arrangements are subject to change at any time.

For more information on St Martin's please visit our web site and Facebook page:

www.stmartinchelsfield.org.uk

www.facebook.com/ChelsfieldStMartins

Other links and resources

Daily HOPE is a national, free phoneline from the Church of England on **0800 804 8044**.

The line is available 24 hours a day and offers music, prayers and reflections, as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone.

For today's online Sunday service from the Church of England visit:

www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/church-online

Prayer for the nation:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/call-prayer-nation>

For other Church of England resources please visit:

www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-liturg-and-prayer-resources

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