

Morning Prayer 27th September 2020

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

Service with Bishop Trevor Musonda Mwamba



Personal preparation before the service begins.
Please take time to remember where you are,
and why you are here.
Give thanks and become still
in the presence of God

Prelude

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with us.
This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

SoF 390 Meekness And Majesty

Meekness and majesty, manhood and deity,
in perfect harmony, the Man who is God.
Lord of eternity dwells in humanity,
kneels in humility and washes our feet.

Refrain

O what a mystery, meekness and majesty.
Bow down and worship _____
For this is your God, _____
This is your God.

Father's pure radiance, perfect in innocence,
yet learns obedience to death on a cross.
Suff'ring to give us life, conqu'ring through sacrifice,
and as they crucify prays: 'Father forgive.'

Refrain

Wisdom unsearchable, God the invisible,
love indestructible in frailty appears.
Lord of infinity, stooping so tenderly,
lifts our humanity to the heights of His throne.

Refrain

This is your God.

CCLI Song # 1400
Graham Kendrick
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Let us pray with words from Psalm 25
(sung by Hans, congregation joins in the refrain)

REFRAIN: *Simply* (♩ = 84-88) **1st time: Cantor, All repeat; thereafter: All**

Melody

To you, O Lord, I lift up, I lift up my soul, my God.

D/G C 1-4 D (1st time: D.C. to Verses) Final D G Fine

Your ways, O Lord, make known to me;
teach me your paths.
Guide me in your truth,
for you are my God,
and for you I will wait.

Refrain

Good and upright is the Lord;
he shows us the way.
He guides the meek to justice;
he teaches the humble

to follow his ways.

Refrain

Your way, O Lord, is kindness
to those who are true.
Your friendship is with those who love you;
you reveal to them your Word.

Refrain

The Collect for today, the 16th Sunday after Trinity.

O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to hear the prayers
of your people who call upon you;
and grant that they may both perceive and know
what things they ought to do,
and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil
them;
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.

The first reading is taken from Philippians 2:1-13

Let us prepare ourselves for the word of God
Our hearts and our minds are open

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being
united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any
common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and
compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-
minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and
of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain
conceit. Rather, in humility value others above
yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each
of you to the interests of the others.

In your relationships with one another, have the same
mindset as Christ Jesus:

Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be
used to his own advantage;
rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is
Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always
obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more
in my absence—continue to work out your salvation
with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you
to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

The reading is taken from Matthew 21:23-32

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to
Matthew

Glory to you, O Lord

Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was
teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people
came to him. “By what authority are you doing these
things?” they asked. “And who gave you this
authority?”

Jesus replied, "I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. John's baptism—where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or of human origin?"

They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' But if we say, 'Of human origin'—we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet."

So they answered Jesus, "We don't know."

Then he said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

"What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'

"I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

"Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.

"Which of the two did what his father wanted?"

"The first," they answered.

Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Homily

God's humility

Al Pacino as the devil in the movie the Devil's Advocate says this memorable line: 'Vanity is definitely my favourite sin'.

Simone Weil the French philosopher, mystic, and political activist, thought, 'Sin is not a distance it is the turning of our gaze in the wrong direction '.

To understand the 'wrong direction ' we must journey back in time into God's presence to observe a fascinating angel named Lucifer who was God's Chief of Staff!

Lucifer was a suave character a cross between George Clooney and Denzel Washington, with a French accent.

He had flattering press reviews. Die Zeit called him, God's finest creation, Der Spiegel, a model of perfection, Freiburger Wochenbericht described him as full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

The reviews went to his head like bubbles of champagne intoxicating him with hubris. One day admiring himself in a full length mirror he asked, 'Mirror, mirror on the wall who is the fairest of them all'?

Lucifer's gaze was in the 'wrong direction ' from God to himself. His sin was that he willed to be like God not depended on God. The beginning of pride is to forsake the Lord. The heart withdraws from its Maker. And the mantra becomes: 'Pride is definitely my favourite sin. Mirror, mirror on the wall who is the fairest of them all'?

We know the answer.

The finite making itself infinite, the created thinking it's the Creator. This the essence of the sin of pride the belief that we can live independently of God. It's misplaced self - sufficiency. The belief in self, in our abilities, becomes our downfall.

Self love is sin because it ignores God who is our source of self and everything we have. We focus on me, myself and I - the self trinity. Everything must

rotate around us. Our self interest must prevail over all. The early Church Fathers believed that of the seven deadly sins the deadliest was the sin of pride, hubris.

We need in life to learn that with or without our consent or knowledge, we live within one great system of mutual interdependence and spiritual meaning.

We exist in God to exist. The true expression of our autonomy lies in this Jewish wisdom, 'Everything is in the hands of Heaven except whether or not you are reverent.' To be reverent is to be humble.

Which direction we gaze is always up to us.

The ancient hymn in Philippians reveals God's gaze is always towards each one of us. It reveals how the love of God is reverent to us coming as divine humility. Have you ever thought of God as humble?

I recall the wise words of Archbishop Michael Ramsey, 'Since we have lost the capacity to humble ourselves before our Creator; the Creator will humble Himself before us, His creatures.'

So the ancient hymn in Philippians teaches us:

'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

Christ, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be
used to his own advantage;
rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a human,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death —
even death on a cross!
(Philippians 2. 3-8).

Jesus Christ does not stand admiringly gazing at himself in a full length mirror and asking, 'Mirror, mirror on the wall who is the fairest of them all'?

No. Christ empties himself of his divine nature to gaze at us and assumes our human nature.

This is the incarnation, the amazing good news that Jesus has entered our human pride by His birth at Bethlehem to death at Calvary. Jesus lives out His love for us by self giving and service, healing, helping, and making people love God and one another.

What about us? We like Lucifer puff ourselves with pride and exalt ourselves beyond our limits as God's creatures.

We gaze in the wrong direction always admiring ourselves in the full length mirror of hubris. We are blind to the meaning of life that God is not puffed up with pride but loving and humble.

St Augustine of Hippo diagnosed our sin well and it's cure, 'So deep has human pride sunk us that only divine humility can raise us.'

Our prayer is that divine humility dwells in us and we forsake not the Lord. That being humble we gaze in the right direction to Jesus Christ the author and finisher of our Faith.

In the words of that beautiful hymn we turn our eyes upon Jesus:

'Look full in His wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace...'

Our prayer is that our gaze be locked in God's gaze.

Our prayer is that we live the words of St Peter:

'Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you'. (1 Peter 5.6-7).

'Pride was not created for human beings'....so divine humility is the power that comes to make us different to have the same mindset as Christ Jesus who emptied himself of his glory.

Let's conclude with the words of the saintly Archbishop of Canterbury Michael Ramsey:

" Your humility...will be the condition of your ...witness, which represent our Lord and make him known and loved, and enable people to have an awareness of God...

It is only the humble person who is authoritatively a man or woman of God, a person who makes God real to others."

Are we making God real to others?

Intercessions (by Helen Rose)

Loving God,
emptying yourself of all but love you came, in Christ, to be alongside us. Trusting in your presence with us, we bring our prayers to you.

You expressed your love by teaching about God's kingdom. We pray for those who follow you in teaching, and for those who learn from them. Today we bring before you especially Bishop Trevor, who is now ministering to us, and Lasse Collmann, the new minister of the Petrusgemeinde.

We pray: **Help all to know and live your love.**

You expressed your love by healing the sick. We pray for all who follow you in the healing professions and for all who need their help, bringing before you Brian and Margaret, and all those suffering the effects of the Corona pandemic, directly and indirectly.

We pray: **Help all to know and live your love.**

You expressed your love by welcoming children and encouraging young people. We pray for children and youth and for those who are responsible for their nurture. We remember especially the young members of our congregation in this somewhat strange new school year and the confirmees of the Petrusgemeinde

during their Confirmation Service this and next weekend.

We pray: **Help all to know and live your love.**

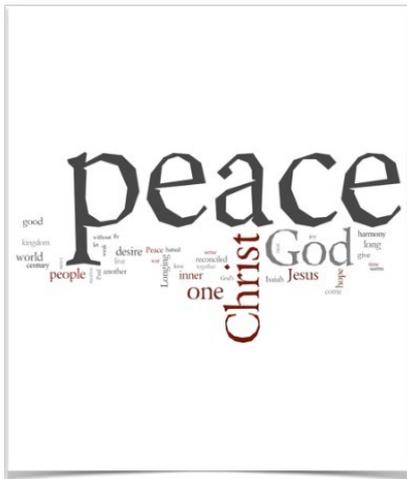
Loving God,
**accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

In the language of our hearts, let us pray as our
Saviour taught us

A sign of peace

God is love
And those who live in love live in God
And God lives in them.
We meet in the name of Christ and share his peace.



SoF 469 **Praise To The Holiest In The Height**

(Cantor)
Praise to the Holiest in the height,
and in the depth be praise:
in all His words most wonderful,
most sure in all His ways.

(Cantor)
O loving wisdom of our God,
when all was sin and shame,
a second Adam to the fight
and to the rescue came.

(All)
O wisest love, that flesh and blood,
which did in Adam fail,
should strive afresh against the foe,
should strive and should prevail;

(Cantor)
and that a higher gift than grace
should flesh and blood refine,
God's presence and His very self,
and essence all-divine.

(All)
O generous love, that He who smote
in Man for man the foe,
the double agony in Man
for man should undergo,

(Cantor)
and in the garden secretly,
and on the cross on high,
should teach His brethren, and inspire
to suffer and to die.

(All)
Praise to the Holiest in the height,
and in the depth be praise:
in all His words most wonderful,
most sure in all His ways.

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The Blessing



The Lord bless you and watch over you,
the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you,
the Lord look kindly on you and give you peace;
and the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and always.
Amen.

The Conclusion

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,
and keep us in eternal life.

Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude