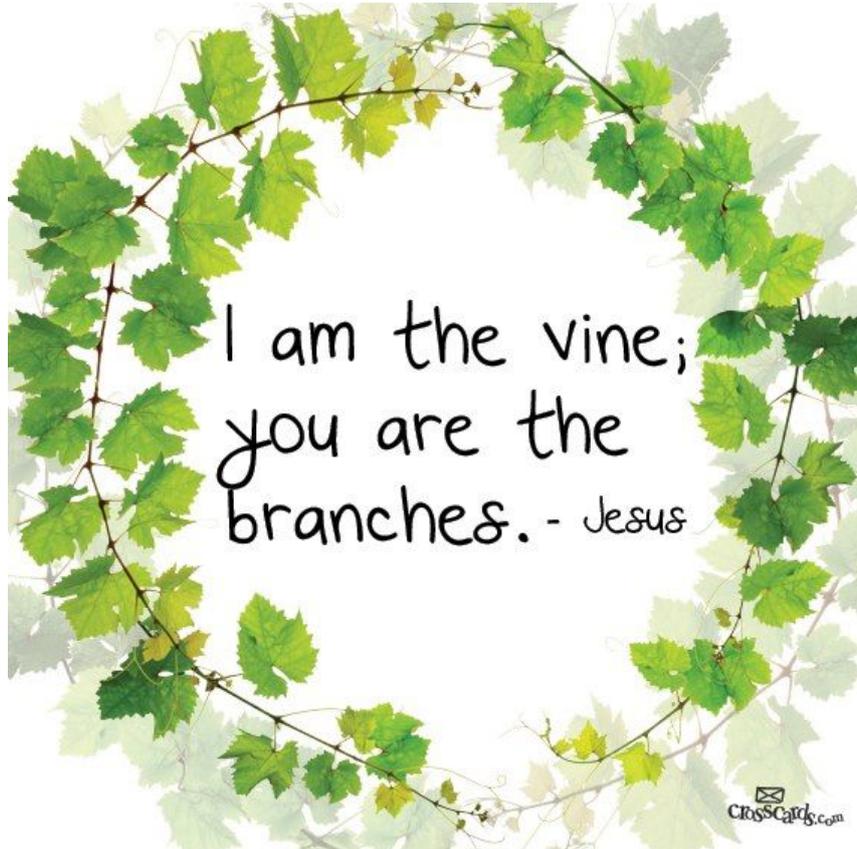


The Parish of Wednesbury
Saint Bartholomew's

Sunday 2nd May, 2021

Fifth Sunday of Easter



A Service of Spiritual Communion

The term 'Spiritual Communion' has been used historically to describe the means of grace by which a person, prevented for some serious reason from sharing in a celebration of the Eucharist, nonetheless shares in the communion of Jesus Christ.

This form of prayer offers Christians an opportunity to give thanks for their communion with him, particularly at times when they would ordinarily be present at the Eucharist.

The Book of Common Prayer instructs us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', although we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves.

- *Introduction to the Season*

The Great Fifty Days of Eastertide form a single festival period in which the tone of joy created at the Easter Vigil is sustained through the following seven weeks, and the Church celebrates the gloriously risen Christ:

Triumphant in his glory now,
his sceptre ruleth all,
earth, heaven and hell before him bow,
and at his footstool fall.

(Fulbert of Chartres)

Early Christians gave the name Pentecost to this whole fifty-day span of rejoicing, which Tertullian calls 'this most joyful period' (laetissimum spatium). It is sometimes also called 'Great Sunday'. In those places where the custom of lighting the Easter Candle at the beginning of Easter is followed, the lit Candle stands prominently in church for all the Eastertide services.

The Alleluia appears frequently in liturgical speech and song; Morning Prayer begins with the traditional collection of Pauline texts known as the Easter Anthems, and white or gold vestments and decorations emphasize the joy and brightness of the season.

On the fortieth day there has from the late fourth century been a particular celebration of Christ's ascension. He commissions his disciples to continue his work, he promises the gift of the Holy Spirit, and then he is no longer among them in the flesh. The ascension is therefore closely connected with the theme of mission. The arrival of the promised gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost completes and crowns the Easter Festival.

- *Introductory Hymn*

Abide With Me

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84YASWe3_2Q

- *Preparation*

Please take some time now to still your mind before you begin. Perhaps you could have a few minutes of silence or light a candle to remind you of the presence of Christ, the light of the world.

- *Introduction*

Today, as the Church continues to celebrate the gloriously risen Christ, I partake in this celebration in union with the Church throughout the world. "Christ is risen!"..... "He is risen indeed! Alleluia!"

- *Begin by reflecting upon the week that has passed and on your relationships.*

Saint Paul says, 'Be imitators of God; love as Christ loved; do not grieve the Holy Spirit; put away all anger and bitterness, all slander and malice.' So let us confess our sins to God, who forgives us in Christ.

Ephesians 4.30 – 5.1

- What good things have come from God this week?
- Where have I fallen short?
- What might I do about this in the week that is to come?

May almighty God,
who sent his Son into the world to save sinners,
bring *me* His pardon and peace,
now and for ever.
Amen.

- *Pray the Collect for this week.*

Almighty God,
who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ
have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life:
grant that, as by your grace going before us
you put into our minds good desires,
so by your continual help we may bring them to good effect;
through Jesus Christ our risen Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

- *Read and reflect upon today's readings.*

First Reading

Acts 8:26-40

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth." The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

- *Gradual Hymn/Song*

A New Commandment https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4P5ILde_og

Gospel Reading

John 15:1-8

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

I am
the
vine;
you
are
the
branches.
John 15:5

• *A Time of Prayer*



WHEN YOU PRAY, GO TO YOUR PRIVATE ROOM
AND, WHEN YOU HAVE SHUT YOUR DOOR,
PRAY TO YOUR FATHER WHO IS IN
THAT SECRET PLACE.

MATTHEW 6:6

JESUITS
in Britain

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ,
I pray now to my Heavenly Father.

In these times of restraint and continued physical distancing,
when it is a challenge for the body of Christ to meet,
we gather through the Holy Spirit in our many different places
and call out to you. Hear our prayers, O God:
Lord, listen to our prayer.

Let us pray for the health and well-being of our nation,
remembering all those who bring healing and care,
all those who work in hospitals,
nurses, doctors and all who bring healing,
Lord, listen to our prayer.

Remembering all those who provide for our needs,
all those who work in shops,
all who work in supermarkets,
all who help in anyway to provide our food.

We give thanks for their work and for providing our daily bread.
Lord, listen to our prayer.

We remember all those all those who are fearful and anxious,
We remember those struggling with isolation and loneliness,
may they have peace of mind and be free from worry:
Lord, listen to our prayer.

For those with no one to help,
that we may be alert to their needs,
and care for them in their vulnerability:
Lord, listen to our prayer.

For our homes and families,
our schools and young people,
and all in any kind of need or distress:
Lord, listen to our prayer.

For a blessing on our local community,
that our neighbourhoods may be places of trust and friendship,
where all are known and cared for:
Lord, listen to our prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ,
Help us to always hear your voice, our one true shepherd.
And, help us always to have life abundantly.
We trust in your great compassion and unconditional promise
To always to be with us:
Listen to our prayer. Amen.

- *A time of private prayer*

Pray for:

- *your local community, your neighbours for example*
- *for those close to you*
- *for all those that you know suffering as a result of the coronavirus*
- *for all those working to relieve suffering*

God of healing and hope,
in Jesus you meet us in our places of pain and fear.
Look with mercy on those who have suffered because of the virus.
Through this time of continued global concern,
by your Holy Spirit bring out the best not the worst in us.
Make us more aware of our interdependence on each other,
and of the strength that comes from being one body in you.
Through Christ our wounded healer.
Amen.

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.

- **The Lord's Prayer.**

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

- *Give thanks for the saving death and resurrection of Jesus and ask him to be with you now.*

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have given me, for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.

Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.

O most merciful redeemer,
friend and brother,
may I know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly,
day by day.
Amen.

Spiritual Communion Prayer

My Jesus,
I believe that You are present in the
Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment
receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You
as if You were already there
and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be
separated from You.

Amen



- *You might then add one or more of the following prayers:*

Lord Jesus Christ,
you said to your disciples, 'I am with you always'.
Be with me today, as I offer myself to you.
Hear my prayers for others and for myself,
and keep me in your care.
Amen.

Lord, in these days of mercy,
make us quiet and prayerful;
in these days of challenge,
make us stronger in you;
in these days of emptiness,
take possession of us;
in these days of waiting,
open our hearts to the mystery of your cross.
Amen.

- *Conclude with the following.*

God the Father,
by whose glory Christ
was raised from the dead,
strengthen me to walk with Him
in His risen life;
and may the
Lord bless us,
and preserve us from all evil,
and keep us in eternal life.
Amen.

- *Dismissal.*

With the power that raised Jesus from the dead at work within me,
may I now go in peace to love and to serve the Lord. Alleluia, alleluia.

- *You may want to listen to this final hymn and as you do reflect upon the image and the short reflection below.*



What is Jesus trying to teach me with the metaphor of the vineyard?

In the Gospel reading, the Father is the vinedresser and Jesus is the vine. If we are not connected to the vine we wither and die. If we are fruitful, the vinedresser will prune us as part of the process so that we will produce even more fruit.

It is not what we do that matters, but rather, what we allow the vinedresser to do for us so that we are more fruitful in our lives.

Am I detached enough to willingly allow this to happen?

Jesus promises "Live in me, and let me live in you, so that my branches may bear much fruit."

Over to you...

- *Final Hymn/Song*

I danced in the morning

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0neq_axOslk

Notice

Every Sunday, there will be two services, the first at 9am followed by a second at 10am. If you have previously attended either of these services then your seat will automatically be kept for you.

PLEASE DO NOTE that if you or anyone that you have been in contact with have displayed any symptoms then **PLEASE DO NOT ATTEND CHURCH**. We shall maintain our Covid-safe environment for some time with sanitising, social distancing and facemasks being compulsory.

On Sunday the 30th of May, we will have our APCM. This will be, as it was last year, a simple meeting with a single service being held at 10am. If you normally attend the 9am service then please do consider attending the 10am and showing your support for the church and its future. These are incredibly challenging times!

Once again, thank you to those who have already started making their contribution electronically. If you haven't already done this during these difficult times then please do consider doing this as it helps us to ensure both our sustainability as a church and to also ensure its future. Therefore, if you could please consider making your weekly contribution electronically that would be very much appreciated.

Keep safe, keep well and God bless you all

Fr. Mark

Go and share God's love and remember...

Bring hope in these challenging times!

