

Holy Communion for the First Sunday of Lent 2021.

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

All Amen.

The Greeting

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. Let us confess our sins remembering before God the times when we have fallen from temptation into sin.

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness
and cleanse me from my sin:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Make me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me:

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Cast me not away from your presence
and take not your holy spirit from me:

cf Psalm 51

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon *you*,
pardon and deliver *you* from all *your* sins,
confirm and strengthen *you* in all goodness,
and keep *you* in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Collect

Almighty God,
whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness,
and was tempted as we are, yet without sin:
give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit;
and, as you know our weakness,
so may we know your power to save;
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.

A poem written by Malcolm Guite, called On the Pinnacle.

‘Temples and spires are good for looking down from;
You stand above the world on holy heights,
Here on the pinnacle, above the maelstrom,
Among the few, the true, unearthly lights.
Here you can breathe the thin air of perfection
And feel your kinship with the lonely star,
Above the shadow and the pale reflection
Here you can know for certain who you are.
The world is stalled below, but you could move it
If they could know you as you are up here
Of course they’ll doubt, but here’s your chance to prove it
Angels will bear you up, so have no fear....’
‘I was not sent to look down from above
It’s fear that sets these tests and proofs, not Love.’

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

All Glory to you, O Lord.

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Last week, someone asked me how I'd describe this past year. I didn't think for long before replying: rocky, I'd say this year's been rocky. My immediate thought was that it was like being in a small boat on a stormy sea, rocking from side to side and having to hold on tight to avoid being thrown overboard. My second thought was that it was like walking on rocky ground, when you have to be very careful where you put your feet or else you're in danger of stubbing a toe or twisting an ankle. As well as having to watch out for trip hazards, when you're walking on rocky ground, it's hard work, it hurts your feet and it takes you longer than normal to get anywhere. And that's what this pandemic year has been like; we've all had to watch out and think about what we're doing, we've all tried to avoid infection for ourselves and everyone else and it's felt like hard work, it's taken longer to get anywhere or do anything when we're queuing at the shop or crossing the road to avoid coming too close to anyone.

So, I've got a big stone to accompany me through Lent, to remind me of this rocky road we're travelling.

On Ash Wednesday, it reminded me of the burden that weighs me down if I refuse to say sorry when I've done something wrong or refuse to forgive someone else when I really could do.

Today, it reminds me of the time that Jesus spent in the desert, thinking about his future and facing up to different temptations about the way forward.

St Mark doesn't go into a lot of detail, but with a few words he paints a vivid and challenging picture; Jesus was driven into the wilderness for forty days, he was tempted by Satan and he was with the wild beasts.

In the desert, Jesus would certainly have had to watch his step on the rough terrain and the dry, forbidding ground would have quickly drained his energy, but it sounds as though it was more than a rocky time doesn't it? It sounds dangerous and scary.

Thank God that Jesus chose to go through those forty days and made the brave decision to give up any claims to power, and to walk the rocky road of love and service to the world.

As the poet Malcolm Guite wrote in his poem:

*'I was not sent to look down from above
It's fear that sets these tests and proofs, not Love.'*

As we begin this Lent, let's dare to follow Jesus' journey of love, let's dare to look at where we are weighed down or held back by fears and temptation and continue walking this road together.

**We believe in God the Father,
God almighty, by whose plan
earth and heaven sprang to being,
all created things began.**

**We believe in Christ the Saviour,
Son of God in human frame,
virgin-born, the child of Mary
upon whom the Spirit came.**

**Christ, who on the cross forsaken,
like a lamb to slaughter led,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
he descended to the dead.**

**We believe in Jesus risen,
heaven's king to rule and reign,
to the Father's side ascended
till as judge he comes again.**

**We believe in God the Spirit;
in one Church, below, above:
saints of God in one communion,
one in holiness and love.
So by faith, our sins forgiven,
Christ our Saviour, Lord and friend,
we shall rise with him in glory
to the life that knows no end.**

Prayers of intercession.

Sharing the peace of Christ.

Since we are justified by faith,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has given us access to his grace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

Offertory Prayer.

God of our journey,
as we walk with you on your path of obedience,
sustain us on our way and lead us to your glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Lord be with you
All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All It is right to give thanks and praise.

And now we give you thanks
because he was tempted in every way as we are, yet did not sin.
By his grace we are able to triumph over every evil,
and to live no longer for ourselves alone,
but for him who died for us and rose again.
And so we gladly thank you,
with saints and angels praising you, and *saying*:

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.
On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.
When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.
So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice
made once for all upon the cross.
Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Jesus Christ is Lord:

**Lord, by your cross and resurrection
you have set us free.
You are the Saviour of the world.**

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**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.**

Every time we eat this bread
and drink this cup,

**we proclaim the Lord's death
until he comes.**

**Jesus, Lamb of God,
have mercy on us.**

**Jesus, bearer of our sins,
have mercy on us.**

**Jesus, redeemer of the world,
grant us peace.**

Jesus is the Lamb of God
who takes away the sin of the world.
Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

**Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word, and I shall be healed.**

Post Communion Prayers.

Lord God,
you have renewed us with the living bread from heaven;
by it you nourish our faith,
increase our hope,
and strengthen our love:
teach us always to hunger for him who is the true and living bread,
and enable us to live by every word
that proceeds from out of your mouth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Father of all,
we give you thanks and praise,
that when we were still far off
you met us in your Son and brought us home.
Dying and living, he declared your love,
gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory.
May we who share Christ's body live his risen life;
we who drink his cup bring life to others;
we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.
Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,
so we and all your children shall be free,
and the whole earth live to praise your name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Prayer of Blessing:

God,
who from the death of sin raised you to new life in Christ,
keep you from falling and set you in the presence of his glory;
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy spirit, be
among you and remain with you always.
Amen

Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.