



Morning Prayer
Sunday next before Lent
14th February 2021

An Order for Morning Prayer on Sunday

14 February 2021

Sunday next before Lent

† Preparation

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you
and also with you.

This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

We have come together in the name of Christ
to offer our praise and thanksgiving,
to hear and receive God's holy word,
to pray for the needs of the world,
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins,
that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

Prayers of Penitence

Jesus says, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.'
So let us turn away from our sin and turn to Christ,
confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

**Lord God,
we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
and restore to us the joy of your salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

May the Father of all mercies
cleans us from our sins,
and restore us in his image
to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Blessed is the Lord,
for he has heard the voice of our prayer;

Therefore shall our hearts dance for joy
and in our song will we praise our God.

Blessed are you, Lord our God,
creator and redeemer of all;
to you be glory and praise for ever.
From the waters of chaos you drew forth the world.
and in your great love fashioned us in your image.
Now, through the deep waters of death,
you have brought your people to new birth
by raising your Son to life in triumph.
May Christ your light ever dawn in our hearts
as we offer you our sacrifice of thanks and praise.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:
Blessed be God for ever.

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;
let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept.

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
so may the light of your presence, O God,
set our hearts on fire with love for you;
now and for ever.

Amen.

† The Word of God

Psalmody

Psalm 50.1-6

- 1 The Lord, the most mighty God, has spoken
and called the world from the rising of the sun to its setting.
- 2 Out of Zion, perfect in beauty, God shines forth;
our God comes and will not keep silence.
- 3 Consuming fire goes out before him
and a mighty tempest stirs about him.
- 4 He calls the heaven above,
and the earth, that he may judge his people:
- 5 ‘Gather to me my faithful,
who have sealed my covenant with sacrifice.’
- 6 Let 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.

First Reading

2 Kings 2.1-12

¹When 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.’
⁴Elijah 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.’

⁶Then 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.

⁹When 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.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The reading may be followed by a time of silence.

Old Testament Canticle

A Song of David

- 1 Blessed are you, God of Israel, for ever and ever,
for yours is the greatness, the power,
the glory, the splendour and the majesty.
- 2 Everything in heaven and on earth is yours;
yours is the kingdom, O Lord,
and you are exalted as head over all.

- 3 Riches and honour come from you
and you rule over all.
- 4 In your hand are power and might;
yours it is to give power and strength to all.
- 5 And now we give you thanks, our God,
and praise your glorious name.
- 6 For all things come from you,
and of your own have we given you. *1 Chronicles 29.10b-13, 14b*

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.

Second Reading

Mark 9.2-9

²Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. ⁵Then 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.' ⁶He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!' ⁸Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

⁹As 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.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The reading may be followed by a time of silence.

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead

And Christ shall give you light.

You have died and your life is hid with Christ in God.

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead.

Set your minds on things that are above,

not on things that are on the earth.

And Christ shall give you light.

When Christ our life appears you will appear with him in glory.

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead,

and Christ shall give you light.

Gospel Canticle

Benedictus

- 1 Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel,
who has come to his people and set them free.
- 2 He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour,
born of the house of his servant David.
- 3 Through his holy prophets God promised of old
to save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all that hate us,
- 4 To show mercy to our ancestors,
and to remember his holy covenant.
- 5 This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham:
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
- 6 Free to worship him without fear,
holy and righteous in his sight
all the days of our life.
- 7 And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
- 8 To give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of all their sins.

- 9 In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
- 10 To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace. *Luke 1.68-79*

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.

Sermon (There is a reflection at the end of this booklet)

The Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

Amen.



Prayers

Let us pray that the Church and the world shall be filled with the glory of God.

Guide the Church to be faithful to the wisdom of the past and open to the revelation of the future ... As we rejoice in our times of worship, keep us from lingering too long on the heights, and lead us back to do the work appointed for us.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Grant to all the peoples of the world the blessing of quiet times set apart from daily concerns, and renewal of strength for the service of all ... May those who hold authority find the inner peace that will lead them to seek the peace of the nations.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

May our lives be so filled with the glory of the Lord, that we may show his grace in our lives ... Bless our homes, bless all those whose lives are near to ours, with the wonder which the disciples knew on the holy mountain.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

We pray for all who suffer and feel far from the divine love ... Bring into their lives the radiance of hope and courage to look beyond the present and trust in the promise of a happier time to come.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Receive in mercy those who have walked through the valleys of the world, glimpsed the wonder of the mountains, and are now forever with Christ ... Make them perfect in the light which they knew in part and followed with faith.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

We pray in the name of Christ, seen in flesh, revealed in glory.

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

The Collect is said.

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.

The Lord's Prayer is said

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

¶ The Conclusion

The Blessing

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

Amen.

Copyright acknowledgement (where not already indicated above):

Some material included in this service is copyright: © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ, USA

Some material included in this service is copyright: © The Archbishops' Council 2000

Rubric: The minister may say © The Archbishops' Council 2002

Sunday next before Lent

by Bridget Nichols

IF YOU were to choose a reading to get you through Lent - a reading full of hope and promise, and yet not denying the reality of the Passion and crucifixion - then the story of the transfiguration would surely be a very strong contender. Bishop Kenneth Stevenson insisted that its place in the lectionary at this point in the year is "not as a kind of pre-packaged reward in advance, in order to soften the pain". It is there to teach us that those desolating events and a vision of glory "belong together".* The transfiguration is about Jesus, and about his identity as the Messiah and Son of God. It is a foretaste of the eternal glory that is to come. The appearance of Moses and Elijah on the mountain points to God's faithfulness in speaking through the Law and the prophets. The lone figure of Jesus as they vanish is an emblem of the way God speaks now, through the Son (Mark 9.7; see also Hebrews 1.1-3).

We ponder this event with the assistance of forms of interpretation of the person and ministry of Jesus which begin very early in the Christian tradition. One example is 2 Corinthians 4.3-6. Others are provided in last week's readings from Colossians 1.15-20 and John 1.1-14. For those who were actually present at the time, there was no such assistance, and frightened people can say very silly things - things they would not wish to be remembered on later occasions. I have heard myself offer another cup of tea to a scholar of whom I was much in awe, while struggling internally to think of a profound theological question. All that Peter can summon up, when confronted by the shining unearthliness of his master, is a proposal to build three dwellings for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah (Mark 9.5). Among the Synoptic Gospel-writers, only Mark understands the humanity of this embarrassing utterance. His Peter "did not know what to say, for they were terrified" (Mark 9.6). The obvious thing was to do something practical, though the suggested action barely conceals a longing to stop time altogether.

Did the disciples fear that Jesus would be suddenly taken from them? It would be the natural conclusion, given the characters who were present. They knew that Moses did not accompany his people into the Promised

Land (Deuteronomy 3.23-28; Deuteronomy 34; Joshua 1.1-3), and that Elijah was caught up into heaven before Elisha could make any formal parting speech (2 Kings 2.11-12). Once again, Bishop Stevenson is illuminating. Peter wishes to capture a "magic moment". Yet, without realising it, he is entering something much more significant. Together with James and John, he is "contemplating a new way of God's presence with his people. . . . Jesus is no longer someone to be looked back to".

The first glimmer of this different knowledge and different way of being comes very soon after the event. "As they were coming down the mountain, [Jesus] ordered them to tell no one what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead could mean" (Mark 9.9-11). A new responsibility is now handed to the disciples; and the knowledge of Jesus which they are still digesting must be kept secret, lest it be misused as further events unfold and move inexorably towards trial and crucifixion. To speak prematurely of the transfiguration would have had much the same effect on public understanding of the resurrection as explaining an illusion.

*Kenneth W. Stevenson, *Rooted in Detachment: Living the transfiguration* (DLT, 2007)