

The Order of Service for Home Worship

THE THIRD SUNDAY before LENT



Hymn: : Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us

Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us
o'er the world's tempestuous sea;
guard us, guide us, keep us, feed us,
for we have no help but thee;
yet possessing every blessing,
if our God our Father be.

Saviour, breathe forgiveness o'er us:
all our weakness thou dost know;
thou didst tread this earth before us,
thou didst feel its keenest woe;
lone and dreary, faint and weary,
through the desert thou didst go.

Spirit of our God, descending,
fill our hearts with heavenly joy,
love with every passion blending,
pleasure that can never cloy:
thus provided, pardoned, guided,
nothing can our peace destroy

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**
Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Heavenly Father, all hearts are open to you. No secrets are hidden from you. Purify us with the fire of your Holy Spirit that we may love and worship you faithfully, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

As we come into the presence of our heavenly Father let us seek his forgiveness of our sins that we may know his peace is our hearts.

Lord Jesus, mighty God and Prince of Peace. **Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, Son of God and Son of Mary. **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, Word made flesh and splendour of the Father.. **Lord, have mercy.**

May almighty God have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

**Alleluia, alleluia, glory be to God on high;
Alleluia, to the Saviour who has gained the victory;
Alleluia to the Spirit, fount of love and sanctity;
Alleluia, Alleluia, to the Triune Majesty.**

Collect: O God, you know us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright: grant to us such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah **17. 5-10**
Thus says the Lord: Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from the Lord. They shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when relief comes. They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land. Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit. The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse—who can understand it? I the Lord test the

mind and search the heart, to give to all according to their ways, according to the fruit of their doings.

'This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 1.

Response: The Lord watches over the way of the righteous

Happy are those
who do not follow the advice of the wicked,
or take the path that sinners tread,
or sit in the seat of scoffers;
but their delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law they meditate day and night. (R)

They are like trees
planted by streams of water,
which yield their fruit in its season,
and their leaves do not wither.
In all that they do, they prosper.
The wicked are not so. (R)

They are like chaff
that the wind drives away.
Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgement,
nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
for the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish. (R)

A reading from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians 15. 12-20

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain, and your faith has been in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins.

Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. 19If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to Saint Luke 6. 17-26.

Glory to you, O Lord.

He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them. Then he looked up at his disciples and said: 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. 'Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. 'Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice on that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets. 'But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. 'Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. 'Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

'This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Meditation

Today's gospel may sound familiar when compared with the Sermon on the Mount. There are however differences – The Sermon on the Mount was delivered on a mountain whereas today's gospel was delivered on a level place. A message of stern discipleship was given to the multitude and to the twelve disciples who, when Jesus called them to be his disciples, left everything to follow him and in doing so not only

joined the ranks of the poor but ministered to the poor, hungry and persecuted. Jesus then continues with the four beatitudes and the four woes. He begins, "Blessed are you poor." – he doesn't say blessed are the poor as there is a distinct difference. Poverty in itself is not a blessing in fact it is more often a curse. Here however, Jesus was speaking about a self-imposed poverty for His sake and not speaking of people who are poor because of tragedy or circumstances beyond their control. Jesus then speaks of, "Blessed are you who hunger now." This does not refer to the many people who are suffering from malnutrition but refers to the disciples of Jesus who deliberately adopt a life of self-denial in order to help alleviate human need, both spiritual and physical. The third beatitude is "Blessed are you who weep now." Here Jesus is speaking about tears that are shed for his sake, for lost, perishing mankind. and of the divided state of the church. The final of these beatitudes is "Blessed are you when men hate you, exclude you, revile you and cast out your name as evil." This beatitude is not for those who suffer for their own sins or stupidity but for those who suffer because of their loyalty to Christ. We can see that the four blessings describe the ideal person in the Kingdom of God – the person who lives sacrificially, austerely, soberly and enduringly. We then hear the four woes which demonstrate that Jesus is sad that people have their priorities wrong, and they present those who are least esteemed in Christ's new society. "Woe to you who are rich." These words of Jesus act as a reminder to those who are tempted to save and hoard treasures on this earth. Jesus contrasts the poor with the so called rich people who are self satisfied and focus their lives on material things. These are the people who neglect God or move him to the margins of their lives and who know nothing of his forgiveness and when they need him, they cannot find him. "Woe to you who are full." There are many who spare no expense when it comes to groceries. Yet we live in a world where several thousand die daily of starvation. "Woe to you who laugh now." This is aimed at those whose life is a continuous cycle of amusement, entertainment and pleasure. These are people who act as if life was made for fun and frolic and seem oblivious to those who are in need, but they are also the people who will mourn and weep when they look back over wasted opportunities, selfish indulgence and their own spiritual impoverishment. Finally we have, "Woe to you when all men speak well of you." This may mean that it is a sign that people are not living the gospel and are more interested in the favour shown or spoken to them than in the praise of God. We see that the Beatitudes reverse the world's understanding of true happiness showing that it is not found in riches, gratifications, entertainment and fame but in God. When we speak

with God, we meet him in our spiritual poverty and hunger to worship him. Not to lose our spiritual hunger, we need to stay focused on Jesus. He is perfect but we are not. He knows all things whereas we do not, and he can do all things, and we cannot. Through reminding ourselves of these, we realise how poor we are compared with him and then we will start to hunger for him and to weep for our sins – which is when we will find his rich gifts to satisfy us deeply and like tasty food, make us hunger for more. Amen.

Intercessions:

In the power of the Holy Spirit and in union with Christ let us bring our prayers for the Church and for the world to our heavenly Father.

We pray for the Church throughout the world, for the leaders of the Church among them Mary our Bishop. We pray for the clergy and people of our diocese and for our own ministry area; that the Church may faithfully work with Christ to proclaim the saving love of God to the world.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the people of the world, for the victims of violence and oppression, for all suffering the effects of natural disaster and for those suffering from famine or drought; may there be peace where there is conflict and hope where there is despair.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our own community, for our families, friends and neighbours. We give thanks for all who serve the needs of the vulnerable; may Christ make his home in our hearts that through us the light of his love may shine in our community.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are in need, for those who are sick, for those who are bereaved, for the lonely and isolated and for all in any kind of need. We hold in our hearts before God those known to us who are in need at this time and all whose names are recorded in our intercession books; may they be strengthened by the Holy Spirit and consoled with the love of Christ.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who have died. We remember before God our own departed loved ones and we pray for the recently departed and those whose anniversary of death falls at this time. May they share the eternal glory of heaven in the company of all the saints.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We bring all our prayers to our heavenly Father as we pray together:

**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.**

The Peace:

Our Saviour Christ is the Prince of Peace; of the increase of his government and of his peace there shall be no end. The peace of the Lord be with you and with all those whom you love.

And also with you.

Let us pray:

Refreshed by your holy Word, Lord God, we seek your mercy: that by listening faithfully to your only Son, and being obedient to the prompting of the Spirit, we may be your children in name and in truth through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Blessing:

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

The peace of God which is beyond all understanding guard your hearts in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

Hymn: Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine

**1 Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine;
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.**

**This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.**

**2 Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels descending, bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.**

**This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.**

**3 Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Savior am happy and blest;
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.**

**This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.**