

This short act of worship has been produced for you by Sandra Rose. If you are well enough and able, why not spend a few moments with God, perhaps at a time when you would normally be sharing with others in church - pray for them as they pray for you.

Call to Worship

Psalm 90:1-2

Lord, you have been our dwelling place
throughout all generations.

² Before the mountains were born
or you brought forth the whole world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Hymn: StF 11 Holy, Holy, Holy

Sing/Read/pray/proclaim the words or listen to it here

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zzM9P_Gqw-s

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee:
holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
who wert, and art. and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,
though the sinful human eye thy glory may not see,
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee,
perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea;
holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Reginald Heber (1783-1826)

Prayers of Adoration and confession

Everlasting God, you hold all things in your hands;
time, space and all creation.

We realise how small we are,
And yet we rejoice that through your Spirit
We are enabled to respond to your goodness.
The wonder of your suffering love,
revealed to us in your Son Jesus Christ,
Is almost too much for us to bear,
and beyond our expression in word or thought.

Accept, we pray, the unspoken adoration
that comes from our thankful hearts;
for the sake of our Saviour, Jesus Christ . **Amen**

Confession

Loving Father, we are so readily tempted,
so fearful, so prone to lose our courage.
Sometimes we take the easy way out,
allowing evil to triumph,
shrinking from action,
because we do not hold firmly to our true beliefs.
We complain about our own suffering
which is as nothing
in comparison with that of your Son, our Saviour.

Forgive us Father,
that it is our own waywardness, our own blindness,
that prevents us from recognizing you in every part of our lives.
Forgive us that we too often expect to find all the answers or to see
the way ahead.
May we be more ready to learn from our Lord Jesus Christ
the way of trust in your fatherly care.
We ask it in his name. **Amen**

Assurance of forgiveness

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.
He says to each and every one of us,

“Go in peace. Your sins are forgiven.”

Amen

Reading: The Gospel of John 12: 1– 8

12 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ² Here a dinner was given in Jesus’ honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. ³ Then Mary took about a pint^[a] of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus’ feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

⁴ But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, ⁵ “Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year’s wages.^[b]” ⁶ He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

⁷ “Leave her alone,” Jesus replied. “It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. ⁸ You will always have the poor among you,^[c] but you will not always have me.”

⁹ Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see

Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ¹⁰ So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, ¹¹ for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him.

Reflection

So, we have arrived at the fifth Sunday in Lent, Passion Sunday, and our eyes are fixed on the Cross and all that happened there.

What is the most important thing in the world to you? Stop whatever you are doing and think. What is most important to you? How do you express this?

Last weekend I visited my family. My elder son cooked me a meal, having previously asked me what I'd like to eat. We had roast chicken with lots of roast potatoes, sweetcorn and broccoli. Dessert was carrot cake. It was a meal designed to please me and sons and my grandsons. Of course, what made it better was that I hadn't cooked it and that I could sit and eat it with my sons and grandsons and then on Sunday morning a massive number of daffodils were delivered, all this made me feel very loved.

If I was able to ask Mary in our story today what was most important to her, what did she love most, she would undoubtedly have said, 'Jesus'.

She showed how important he was to her by anointing his feet with perfume worth a whole year's wages, A denarius was a Roman coin given for a day's work. So, three hundred denarii would be approximately a year's wages for an average workman.

Judas Iscariot objected to this gift of Mary's, saying that the money it was worth could have been given to the poor. The Gospel writer makes it clear that he is not saying this out of concern for the poor but because, as carrier of the joint purse of the disciples, he was a thief.

Jesus is quick to defend Mary recognizing that she was symbolically embalming him. She has sensed that he won't be with them much longer. The time when the disciples can express their love for Jesus is fast running out, the immediacy of his death supersedes the needs of the poor.

Mary's actions show an extravagant love and an affectionate friendship that anticipates Jesus' short time left with them. But one part of her actions would have been disturbing to the onlookers. She wiped his feet with her hair. Jewish women did not let down their hair in public. This expression of her devotion would have been viewed as extremely improper as it would in most cultures. We don't know why Mary did this. The most obvious possibility was her sheer gratitude for what Jesus had done for her brother and the revelation it brought her of

Jesus' identity, power, authority and grace, she shows great humility in anointing his feet as they would either be muddy or extremely dusty. As she has come to realise a bit more of the one who has been a friend to her and her brother and sister, her faith deepens and she recognises her unworthiness.

The challenge for us this Eastertide has to be, how do we acknowledge what God means to us? How can we live our lives in thankfulness for all he has done for us? It is not inappropriate to think back to the words we said at the Covenant Service a few weeks ago 'I am no longer my own but yours, put me to what you will ... I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal. Amen

A time of intercession

In the presence of God, the giver of all life,
let us lift our hearts and pray,
We pray for all who are training
for ministry in your church;
May they grow in wisdom and humility,
And be increasingly filled with the life
You have won for us,
Lord, breathe into us **that we may live.**

We pray for all areas of bureaucracy
Which frustrate and delay the course of useful action;
For areas where anarchy undermines stability;
For areas of political corruption;
That whatever is good may flourish and grow,
So evil is rendered powerless and overthrown.

Lord, breathe into us **that we may live.**

We pray for all who are engaged or newly married;
For those coping with family problems,
Difficult circumstances or bereavement;
May they lean on your loving presence
Which dispels all fear, and brings life and peace.

Lord, breathe into us **that we may live.**

We pray that your calming reassurance
Will bring peace of mind and spirit
to those worried about the future,
those dreading some difficult event,
and those who are frightened of dying.

Lord, breathe into us **that we may live.**

Father, with thankful hearts we offer these concerns
For the church and for the world.
Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,

Our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

**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.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen**

Our final hymn is **StF566 Take my life and let it be**
Sing/Read/pray/proclaim the words or listen to it here
<https://youtu.be/Gf11rReeWIs>

Take my life , and let it be
Consecrated, Lord to thee
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in endless praise.

Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love
Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee

Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only, for my King
Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee

Take my silver and my gold
Not a mite would I withhold
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose

Take my will, and make it Thine
It shall be no longer mine:
Take my heart, it is Thine own
It shall be Thy royal throne

Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee

Frances Ridley Havergal (1836 - 1879)

Blessing

Go out into the world in the power of the Holy Spirit to live and to work for the kingdom of God. And may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore. **Amen**

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