

AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION 1st May 2022
3rd Sunday of Easter

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

Hymn

Will You Come and Follow Me

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| <p>1. Will You Come And Follow Me If I But Call Your Name? Will You Go Where You Don't Know And Never Be The Same? Will You Let My Love Be Shown, Will You Let My Name Be Known, Will You Let My Life Be Grown In You And You In Me?</p> <p>2. Will You Leave Yourself Behind If I But Call Your Name? Will You Care For Cruel And Kind And Never Be The Same? Will You Risk The Hostile Stare Should Your Life Attract Or Scare? Will You Let Me Answer Prayer In You And You In Me?</p> | <p>3. Will You Love The 'You' You Hide If I But Call Your Name? Will You Quell The Fear Inside And Never Be The Same? Will You Use The Faith You've Found To Reshape The World Around, Through My Sight And Touch And Sound In You And You In Me?</p> <p>4. Lord, Your Summons Echoes True When You But Call My Name. Let Me Turn And Follow You And Never Be The Same. In Your Company I'll Go Where Your Love And Footsteps Show. Thus I'll Move And Live And Grow In You And You In Me.</p> |
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CCLI 4668756, OL 87129

Peter denied Jesus three times. Yet Jesus didn't write him off. On the contrary, he restored him and made him chief shepherd of his flock. Jesus doesn't write us off either when we fail.

Lord Jesus, you are kind and full of compassion
Lord, have mercy, **Lord, have mercy.**

You do not treat us according to our sins, or repay us according to our faults
Christ, have mercy, **Christ, have mercy.**

You support all who fall, and raise up all who are bowed down.
Lord, have mercy, **Lord, have mercy.**

May the God of love and power forgive us and free us from our sins, heal and strengthen us by God's Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Collect (special prayer for today)

Almighty Father, who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples with the sight of the risen Lord: give us such knowledge of his presence with us, that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life and serve you continually in righteousness and truth; 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. **Amen**

READINGS

Acts 9:1-6

Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' He asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The reply came, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.'

John 21:1-19

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them, 'I am going fishing.' They said to him, 'We will go with you.' They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, 'Children, you have no fish, have you?' They answered him, 'No.' He said to them, 'Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.' So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the lake. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.' So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.' Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, 'Who are you?' because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' A second time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Tend my sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, 'Do you love me?' And he said to him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.' (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, 'Follow me.'

REFLECTION

In today's world, so many people are subject to sensory overload. We are told that we should turn off our computers well before going to bed in order to let our brain 'relax'. But throughout the day we are 'shouted' at by the media – newspapers, advertising boards, T.V. radio and the internet. The noise in the street can be an almost constant companion, even without the omnipresent mobile phone. It seems that times of peace and quiet and space for reflection are becoming rarer. The over busyness of our lives begins to numb us. Perhaps one positive thing to come out of the Covid lockdown was the way in which it made us all slow down, and gave us time to reflect.

And we are also vulnerable to emotional overload, especially at the moment with the news of events in Ukraine tearing at us. We might receive a grim medical diagnosis, suffer redundancy, the breakdown of a relationship, or be hit by the death of a loved one.

When we find ourselves in such situations, where we feel that we just can't take any more, when our human spirit is overwhelmed, it is natural to seek solace wherever we can find it. For some, that may be in familiar activities – baking, gardening,

shopping. For others, oblivion is sought in drugs or alcohol. Everyone has their own strategy.

For the disciples, the last week must have been overwhelming: the emotional high of the noisy entry into Jerusalem, the events in the Temple, the unusual and memorable Passover meal, and then the time in the garden of Gethsemane and Jesus' armed arrest, the fear leading to denial, the trial, the mob, and the execution from which they fled. Imagine how crushed, and numb they must have felt. And then, the rollercoaster continued – so emotionally draining – the empty tomb and the resurrection. Emotional and sensory overload if ever there was. They really needed the time and space to process what had happened, and how they felt about it.

So what did they do? Peter, as ever was the first to decide, 'I'm going fishing'. It is a common defence mechanism at such times to retreat to a place of safety, be it in memories of a happy childhood or by engaging in familiar activities. The disciples follow Peter, they can't take any more, but what has happened has changed their lives forever. Indeed it has changed the world.

The psalmist wrote *'Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.* Psalm 139:7 And when the disciples go back to the busyness of their old way of life, they find that Jesus is there waiting for them to serve and nourish them.

In this situation, only one of the disciples recognised Jesus – the beloved disciple; the one who was reclining next to Jesus at the Last Supper, resting in his presence. He then told Peter; impetuous Peter, who was so engrossed in with his everyday activities that he failed to recognise the one who could really bring him comfort.

And this begs the question, do we recognise Jesus in our daily lives, or are we just too busy seeking comfort, happiness, peace in whatever way we can? Could it be that 'reclining with Jesus', resting in his presence, spending time in prayer and opening our hearts to listen to him, are the key to recognising Jesus in our daily lives? Do we let our Peter-like impetuosity, our need to keep busy, constantly on the move, doing rather than wasting time just 'being' keep us from recognising God's presence in our daily lives?

We do need some of Peter's readiness for action, his persistence and heartfelt desire to serve as we face the trials and tribulations of the world. And we also need to be able to take time to 'recline at the breast of Jesus' in prayer and contemplation in

order to be revived both spiritually and emotionally. Then, even in the most trying and hostile situations we can 'feed his sheep' and spread his love in the world.

God is present with us now. Let us bring him our prayers and concerns for the Church and for the world.

Loving God, breathe your life into the Church, so that we speak your love to the world, and are willing to suffer and prepared for sacrifice.

Lord, through your love, **transform our lives.**

Loving God, breathe peace into the world so that we work together co-operatively, sensitive to one another's needs and differences. In particular, we pray for peace in Ukraine.

Lord, through your love, **transform our lives.**

Loving God, breathe your patience and forgiveness into our homes and all our relationships, so that we learn to cherish and respect one another and act with generosity.

Lord, through your love, **transform our lives.**

Loving God, breathe your encouragement into every suffering and sadness, so that dark and painful times become places of strong spiritual growth.

Lord, through your love, **transform our lives.**

Loving God, breathe your welcome deep into the souls of the dying, so that death is only the door leading to the joy of eternal life with you.

Lord, through your love, **transform our lives.**

Loving God, breathe your grace into our knowing and our feeling, so that we rejoice each step of the way, whatever the terrain.

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

Prayers by Susan Sayers

Gathering together all our prayers, we say the prayer that Jesus gave 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**

**Hymn
Thine be the Glory**

1. Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son;
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave clothes where thy body lay.
*Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son:
Endless is the victory, thou o'er death hast won.*
2. Lo! Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom.
Let the church with gladness, hymns of triumph sing;
for her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting.
Refrain
3. No more we doubt thee, glorious prince of life!
Life is nought without thee; aid us in our strife;
make us more than conquerors, through thy deathless love:
Bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above.
Refrain

Edmund L Budry (1854-1932), translated by Richard B Hoyle (1875-1939)
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We give thanks for the saving death and resurrection of Jesus and ask him to be with us 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**

We pray God's blessing on each other

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness, to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow him; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you and those whom you love and pray for, this Eastertide and for evermore.

Amen