

Morning Prayer
Fourth Sunday in Lent
March 22, 2020

Good morning and blessings to you all!

If you wish to follow along in the Book of Common Prayer, we will start on Page 78.

Send out your light and your truth, that they may lead me, and bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling.

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done,
and what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Almighty God, have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ,
strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, keep us in eternal life. Amen.

The Invitatory and Psalter

Officiant Lord, open our lips
People And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: Come let us adore him.

Venite *Psalms 95:1-7*

Come, let us sing to the Lord;
Let us sing for joy to the Rock of our Salvation.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving
And raise a loud shout to him with psalms.
For the Lord is a great God,
and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are the caverns of the earth,
and the heights of the hills are his also.
The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands have molded the dry land
Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.
Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: Come let us adore him.

The Psalm or Psalms Appointed

Psalm 23

The Lord is my Shepherd,
I shall not be in want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
and leads me beside still waters.

He revives my soul,
and guides me along right pathways for his Name's sake.

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I shall fear no evil;
For you are with me,
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You spread a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me, you have anointed my head with oil, and my cup is running over.

Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever, Amen.

The Lessons

Ephesians 5:8-14

Once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of the light—for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore, it says,

“Sleeper awake!

Rise from the dead,

And Christ will shine on you.”

Canticle 14, a Song of Penitence

O Lord and ruler of the hosts of heaven,
God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,
and all of their righteous offspring,
You made the heavens and the earth,
with all their vast array.

All things quake with fear at your presence,
they tremble because of your power.
But your merciful promise is beyond all measure;
It surpasses all that our minds can fathom.
O Lord, you are full of compassion,
long suffering and abounding in mercy.
You hold back your hand;
you do not punish us as we deserve.
In your great goodness, Lord,
you have promised forgiveness to sinners,
that they may repent of their sin and be saved.

And now, O Lord, I bend the knee of my heart,
and make my appeal, sure of your gracious goodness.
I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned,
And I know my wickedness only too well.
Therefore I make this prayer to you:
Forgive me Lord, forgive me.
Do not let me perish in my sin,
nor condemn me to the depths of the earth.

For you, O Lord, are the God of those who repent,
and in me you will show forth your goodness.
Unworthy as I am, you will save me,
In accordance with your great mercy,
and I will praise you without ceasing all the days of my life.

For all the powers of heaven sing your praises,
and yours is the glory of ages to ages. Amen.

John 9:1-41

As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask "Is not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "it is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened.?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he received his sight. He said to them "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, as he does not observe the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that he now sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes, Ask him; he is of age He will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said "He is of age; ask him."

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." He answered "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" Then they reviled him, saying "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been that

anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.” They answered him, “You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?” And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man? He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshipped him. Jesus said “I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.” Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say ‘We see, your sin remains.’”

Reflection—The Rev. Deacon Nancy Slavin

Greetings in the name of Christ, dear friends,

So much has changed since we last worshipped all together as a congregation! Now we are being told not to gather in groups for any reason. We are unable to access the conveniences of life, like going out to eat at a restaurant or going to the barber shop or salon for a haircut. Lines at most grocery stores are long, and we find many empty shelves there. Sadly, at HCSM, we have also been unable not only to share the bread and the cup, but unable to share signs of Christian community with handshakes or hugs, or even just worshipping together in the same space.

Yes, so much has changed. I am sure that without thinking too hard you could name many other ways that life has changed for you in the past several days. And sometimes all the changes can feel unnerving or overwhelming and can cause problems for us in many aspects of our lives. Maybe some are even wondering where God is in this pandemic situation.

So, let us remember some the things that have not changed, even a little, in these past few weeks. The most important of these, that has not changed in any way, is God’s great love and compassion toward us. God loves us extravagantly now, as God always has. Like the blind man in today’s Gospel passage, whose blindness was not because of his own or his parent’s sin but rather that God’s love might be revealed in him, God continues to work in our lives.

The working of God persists among us, despite Covid-19, and in fact, no matter what is occurring in the world. We can rest assured that God now and always hears our prayers, even when we are praying in solitude or with a family member rather than as a congregation gathered all together in our sanctuary or other meeting places. God understands our fears and our frustrations. God understands the feelings of isolation or loneliness we might have right now. And I believe that God still abides with us even though “wherever two or more are

gathered in my name” just can’t happen physically at this time. What a great and understanding God we have!

Our responsibility as God’s beloved children also has not changed. We are still called to do our part in furthering the Kingdom of Heaven. Our own ministries might look different these days due to the “shelter in place” mandate, but there are still many ways in which we can be of service to God and others. Staying in touch with others by phone or internet can be a simple way to let others know that you are thinking about them, praying for them, or checking in to see if they need anything. Connecting like this is definitely a worthy ministry, even when we can’t be there in person. And in praying together on the phone, we can still be gathered in Christ’s name. Donating to agencies that help those in need during this time (including the Church), is a form of ministry, as well.

And like always, but even more importantly now, we need to nurture our own spirituality. We must keep up our own relationship with God. Checking out the many choices we have for on-line worship services and reflections is one way. Engaging in our own study of the Bible, having a daily time of prayer and study, and reflecting on the good things God is doing in our lives despite current conditions are all possible ways of staying connected with our Lord and Savior. A good resource is our Book of Common Prayer which has outlines for Morning, Noon, and Evening Prayer that can be done at home. Another spiritual tool that I frequently use is listening or reading along to Morning and Evening Prayers and Compline on-line at missionstclare.com.

I would love to hear from each of you about how God is working in your lives these trying days. Where do you see God’s action in your life? How are you serving God? What are your practices for maintaining communion with God despite the inability to worship at HCSM? Email me at axis3lifesaver@yahoo.com. I look forward to reading your responses.

In closing, I will leave you with this prayer by Cameron Bellm, that reminds us to have the compassion for others that God has for us.

May we who are merely inconvenienced

Remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors

Remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home

Remember those who must choose between preserving their health or making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close

Remember those who have no options

May we who have to cancel our trips

Remember those that have no safe place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the economic market

Remember those who have no margins at all.

May we who settle for quarantine at home

Remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country

Let us choose love.

During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other,

Let us find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbors. Amen.

The Apostles Creed.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,

Creator of heaven and earth,

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord,

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day, he arose again.

He ascended into Heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father/

He will come again 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 of the world to come.

Amen.

The Prayers.

The Lord's Prayer.

Suffrages A

Show us your mercy O Lord,
And grant us your salvation.
Clothe your ministers with righteousness,
Let your people sing with joy.
Give peace, O Lord, in all the world.
For only in you can we live in safety.
Lord, keep this nation under your care,
Guide us in the way of justice and truth.
Let your way be known upon earth;
Your saving health among all nations.
Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;
Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.
Create in us clean hearts, O God;
And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.

Collect of the Day

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world; Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us and we in him, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Other collects

A Collect for Grace.

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day; Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity, and in all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplication and prayers which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

You may now offer your own intercessions and thanksgivings.

We pray for the governments of the nations of the world, that we may have wisdom and foresight in dealing with the worldwide health crisis we are now facing. We pray for all the medical

personnel and first responders, that they may be guided by your mercy and grace as they work to insure our safety and well being.

We pray for all government workers, sanitation workers, grocery store personnel, and all those who faithfully provide essential services during this time.

We pray for all who are ill with Covid 19, and ask for restoration of health. We pray for those who have died, and their families. May our Lord Jesus walk with them and comfort them.

We pray for all those who are unemployed because of the pandemic, and for those who face economic uncertainty.

We pray for those most vulnerable among us; the homeless, the poor, the elderly, the mentally ill. Give us hearts of compassion to care for them in their need.

And Lord, we pray for all who suffer fear, anxiety, loneliness or depression during these difficult times. Help them to know that you are God, and will never leave or forsake them.

We pray for our HCSM family, for safety, comfort, hope, and strength. Keep us bound to each other with ties of love and solidarity.

We give thanks to you God for your love that will never leave us, and for our precious connections with others. We thank you for hope, and that it is still your beautiful world. Most of all, we thank you this Lent and Easter Season for the gift of your Son Jesus Christ, who has conquered sin, evil, and death forever, and who comes to bring abundant life and hope out of sadness and despair.

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name, you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us, granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting, Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks are to God.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, is with us all evermore. Amen.
