



DURHAM CATHEDRAL

THE SHRINE OF ST CUTHBERT

Praying Together

*during the week beginning Sunday 3 May:
The Fourth Sunday of Easter*

During this time of great anxiety and uncertainty, we want to stay in touch with our regular worshippers and indeed with everyone who is associated with the Cathedral family.

This is particularly important to us at a time when, following the Church of England's instructions, public worship at the Cathedral has been suspended. The residential clergy are still saying the Daily Offices at home and they are being live-streamed via the cathedral website where there is a link that takes you to the Cathedral's Facebook page (you don't need a Facebook account).

We hope that this pamphlet will provide you with important worship and prayer resources for use at home as well as a reminder of how to keep in touch with us, especially if you have particularly needs. Please be assured that you are firmly in our thoughts and prayers, and please pray for us at this very difficult and worrying time.

Gospel

John 10. 1-10

Jesus said to the Pharisees: 'Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.' Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.' So again Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.'

Thought for the Day

by The Reverend Canon Michael Hampel

We're sometimes warned against mixed metaphors in our observations about life, the universe and everything but Jesus seems to bless the concept by describing himself as both the shepherd and the gate: the shepherd who guides the flock through the gate and the gate itself: which rather suggests that he might have to be in two places at once, unless one looks at it slightly differently and sees rather the image of a loving God drawing people into his heart of love – including the thieves and bandits who, if they were to experience that heart of love, might find themselves truly transformed.

That's a useful image, not least because it gently guides us away from the temptation to interpret the gate of the sheepfold as a stumbling block and Jesus as one who polices the gate in a censorious and retributive manner.

Admittedly, there are enough claims and counter claims in the Bible to make this cold and bleak image of God and his heaven viable and therefore, if that image is unattractive to us, we need to exercise that important discipline of looking more broadly at context and intention to see what we can make Jesus as Shepherd and Jesus as gate in this world which is so hungry for salvation and yet so preoccupied by simply getting through the day, never mind eternity.

For me, Jesus is a wholly attractive and persuasive personality and a relationship with God through him seems to me to be incomparable and incontestable. The idea that that means that I am saved and everyone who disagrees with me is damned is less attractive and less persuasive.

I remember a former Bishop of Jarrow – the saintly Alan Smithson – once quoting those who criticised him for being a universalist when they asked him, 'If everyone is saved, why bother?' His response was generous and beautiful. In fact it was persuasive and attractive, like Jesus: '*Unless everyone is saved, why bother?*'

It seems to me that the death of Christ on the cross did something rather remarkable to the gate of that sheep fold: it made the narrow gate of shibboleths and millstones suddenly so wide that it's almost impossible to see each gate post at the same time.

For religious leaders that's quite frightening because we like things to be neat and tidy and ordered. We like the right forms to be filled in and we like to count people for our statistics and we certainly don't want anyone to walk past the collecting box as they come or go so we've managed over the years since the first Easter Day to bring the gate posts closer together again – just for safety you understand. After all we don't want those thieves and bandits to steal them while we're not looking.

But I'm worried that we've made the gate too narrow again. (And yes I know there's a line elsewhere in the Bible that contradicts what I'm saying but context and intention lead me to this interpretation.)

Think of the hymn: 'There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea.' 'But we make his love to narrow by false limits of our own and we magnify his strictness with a zeal he will not own.'

The wide gate, with the loving shepherd beckoning us all in, is wholly attractive and persuasive. Jesus's personality is wholly attractive and persuasive. The Church (including you and me) needs to be just as attractive and just as persuasive. 'If our love were but more simple, we should take him at his word; and our lives would be all gladness in the joy of Christ our Lord.'

Prayers of Intercession

A form of intercession based on the Lord's Prayer.

Let us pray for our own needs and for the needs of others,
following the pattern which Jesus gave
when he taught us to pray to God our Father.

Through our love of the countryside,
through our care for animals,
through our respect for property and tools:

Father, hallowed be your name.

On our farms and in our homes,
in our colleges and schools,
where machinery is made,
and where policy is planned:

Father, your kingdom come.

By our seeking your guidance,
by our keeping your commandments,
by our living true to our consciences:

Father, your will be done.

For the millions who live in poverty and hunger,
for our own needs, and the requirements of our neighbours,
by cooperation, sympathy and generosity:

give us today our daily bread.

Because we have broken your commandments,
doing what we ought not to do and neglecting
what we ought to do:

forgive us our sins.

If any have injured us by injustice, double dealing or exploitation:

we forgive those who sin against us.

When prosperity lulls us to false security,
or hard times prompt us to despair,
When success makes us boastful,
or failure makes us bitter:

**lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

In the assurance of faith,
in the confidence of hope,
in the will to serve,
help us to love Christ as Lord,
and our neighbour as ourselves.

**for the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever.
Amen.**

An Easter Hymn

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Hearts to heaven and voices raise;
Sing to God a hymn of gladness,
Sing to God a hymn of praise;
He who on the Cross a victim
For the world's salvation bled,
Jesus Christ, the King of glory,
Now is risen from the dead.

Christ is risen, Christ the first-fruits
Of the holy harvest field,
Which will all its full abundance
At his second coming yield;
Then the golden ears of harvest
Will their heads before him wave,
Ripened by his glorious sunshine
From the furrows of the grave.

Christ is risen, we are risen;
Shed upon us heavenly grace,
Rain, and dew, and gleams of glory
From the brightness of thy face;
That we, Lord, with hearts in heaven
Here on earth may fruitful be,
And by angel-hands be gathered,
And be ever safe with thee.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Glory be to God on high;
To the Father, and the Saviour,
Who has gained the victory;
Glory to the Holy Spirit,
Fount of love and sanctity;
Alleluia! Alleluia!
To the Triune Majesty.

Christopher Wordsworth

Church of England Prayer Resources

For those who are ill

Merciful God,
we entrust to your tender care
those who are ill or in pain,
knowing that whenever danger threatens
your everlasting arms are there to hold them safe.
Comfort and heal them,
and restore them to health and strength;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

For hospital staff and medical researchers

Gracious God,
give skill, sympathy and resilience
to all who are caring for the sick,
and your wisdom to those searching for a cure.
Strengthen them with your Spirit,
that through their work many will be restored to health;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Contact details for The Reverend Canon Michael Everitt

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A Prayer for use during the Coronavirus outbreak

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who are 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.

A Prayer of Kenneth Cragg

Every history of ours, O Lord, is the history of all.
For no church is an island, entire to itself.
For the fire of thy servants in far centuries,
thy name be praised, O Lord;
for ancient stones and liturgies,
for ripened learning and long disciplines
of prayer and peace, thy name be blessed, O Lord;
and every saint, O lord, preserve, renew, and multiply,
in the eternal Christ. Amen.

The next issue of *Praying Together*
will be published on Monday 11 May