**Wednesday Morning Service 24th March 2021**

**Readings:** Psalm 130, John 12.20-33

This is the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

**Reflection**

A few days before the crucifixion some Greeks from Bethsaida in Galilee came to Philip and Andrew and asked to be introduced to Jesus, saying “Sir, we wish to see Jesus”, This request aroused tension in the mind of Jesus. It may possibly have suggested that the cross might be evaded if he were to go out on the wider mission to the world, which was always in his mind. There it seemed that there would be people to welcome him and his message. Jesus was troubled; a debate arose in his mind.

The issue is finally decided by a thought from nature that unless a grain of corn falls into the earth and dies, there can be no harvest. In the same way without the death of Jesus there will be no harvest of people, of souls. Jesus does not pray to be saved from the cross, but that God may be glorified in all that is about to happen. In his heart there is now the confidence that “when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people unto me, and through me to the Father.”

Many people today do not know Christ, or even know much about him. They ought to be able to see something of him in us, in me and in you, see his influence in our lives, our thinking, our attitudes, our behaviour. The more we accompany him in prayer. in meditation and the more we study Jesus in the gospels, the more we shall grow closer, and pray to be more like Him.”

It is interesting to note the closing remarks of Matthew, Mark and Luke about our Lord’s forty days retreat; all three imply that a decision has been reached. Mark’s is the briefest; “Angels ministered to him”, implying the interest of heaven in the struggle, and perhaps angelic satisfaction at the outcome. However, Matthew adds to Mark’s conclusion with these words “then the devil left him” realizing he could do nothing more. In contrast Luke concentrates on the devil’s defeat, but he expects further attacks for “when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time should arise.”

We are not told what the final decision was; we have to discover that from the rest of Jesus’s ministry. Yet it would seem that Jesus chose the way of love, the way of humble service, the way of suffering, and, if necessary, the way of sacrifice and death. Through it all, the Father’s love was to be revealed. If people were to ignore him, if they were to reject him, even if they were to kill him, He must not fail in love. Already Jesus could see at the end of the journey the shadow of the cross: and that cross would symbolize a cross in the heart of God.

It has been said that there was already a cross in God’s heart before ever there was a cross on Calvary; a cross symbolizing the pain of our sinfulness, our foolishness and refusal of love. Indeed that cross would continue until the last prodigal son or daughter, finally came home to be embraced in the everlasting arms of God.

Each and every loving disciple will want to dedicate their life to the same task, each of us to share in the world’s pain, to be Simon of Cyrene, and thereby lessen the pain in the heart of Jesus, and in the eternal heart of God.

Indeed when each one us of can speak of Jesus as the Son of God. who loves us and gave his life for us. then each one of us can go forward and tread in the way of love, the way of the cross, which leads us to the heart of God and His everlasting love and mercy.

Praise be to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**What is God saying to us. to you and to me through this passage today?**

**What does God want you and me to do about it**?

**Prayers**

***Collect for the Fifth Sunday in Lent***

Most merciful God, who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ

delivered and saved the world: grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross

we may triumph in the power of his victory; 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.**

***A Prayer for the National Day of Reflection***  
God of Love,  
As we think about all that has changed this year, help us to trust that you are always with us. As we remember those who have died, help us to trust they are at peace with you.  
As we reach out to others with kindness and care, may hope shine out in every heart and home.  
**Amen.**

**Intercessions**

* Each week we pray for roads in our two parishes – this week we are praying for all who live and work in George Street & Canal Court (Sunnyside) and in Pouchen End Lane and London Road (St John’s).
* For the work of DENS in feeding the hungry and helping the homeless
* Those who are mourning for loved ones, all those who have died. and all those in hospital being cared for.
* Teachers, parents and students as they settle back into the school routine, college and university life, the joy of being together and progressing in knowledge and learning.
* NHS workers, care workers and other key workers, who have shown such abundant diligence and loving care.
* People who are lonely or fearful; and all those who are struggling financially or worried about losing their occupation and security.
* All the dedicated volunteers delivering the vaccine for Covid-19 here and in other countries to bring safety to all across the world.
* Leaders of the nations of the world and our government. for wisdom in their decision making
* Leaders of all churches, including Archbishop Justin and our Bishops: Alan, Michael and Richard; for our Vicar Rebecca. and all those preaching and leading us, also our musicians and their gift, indeed everyone’s gift to us in inspiration and dedication as well as the commitment of our Churchwardens, Elders and PCC.

**In the name of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit**

**Thy will be done and Thy Kingdom come.**

***Alternatively, you might like to use these prayers***

**Prepare us for your way**

Lord you know that we love you and we know what you ask us to do.

But for those times when we have been too busy, when we have been hard hearted,

when we have been luke-warm we say sorry and ask for your forgiving love.

Prepare us for your way, O Lord. **Your kingdom come, your will be done.**

Lord you know our good intentions and we know your will, but hold us back long enough to listen to those in need and to learn from them and to learn of our own need. Where we think we are sent, make us ready to receive; where we are keen to teach, make us ready to learn. Prepare us for your way, O Lord.

**Your kingdom come, your will be done.**

Lord you know our deepest desires and we know the vision of your kingdom. We bring before you those elements of our lives in need of your transforming power; that which we misuse or neglect, that which we must reluctantly let go of, that which we believe is not good enough. Inspire us and disturb us to examine our deepest desires. Prepare us for your way, O Lord. 

**Your kingdom come, your will be done.**

Lord you know our potential, but what is your purpose for our lives? In our uncertainty and in the knowledge of your faithfulness, prepare us for your way, O Lord.  **Your kingdom come, your will be done. Amen.**