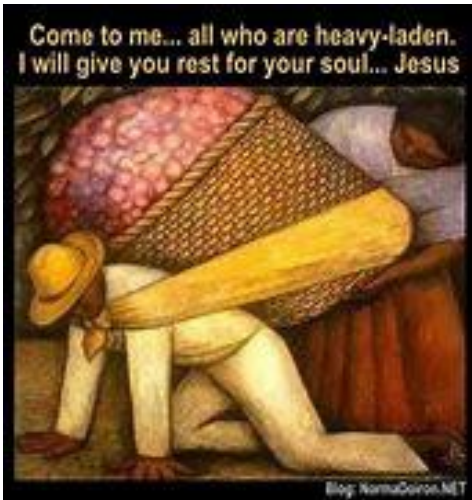


The Fifth Sunday after Trinity 5th July 2026



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

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
And also with you.

Prayer of Preparation

Holy God,
faithful and unchanging:
enlarge our minds with the knowledge of your truth,
and draw us more deeply into the mystery of your love,
that we may truly worship you,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

HYMN

1 COME, let us join our cheerful songs
With angels round the throne;
Ten thousand thousand are their tongues,
But all their joys are one.

2 "Worthy the Lamb that died," they cry,
"To be exalted thus:"
"Worthy the Lamb," our lips reply,
"For He was slain for us."

3 Jesus is worthy to receive
Honour and power divine:
And blessings more than we can give
Be, Lord, for ever Thine.

5 The whole creation join in one,
To bless the sacred name
Of Him that sits upon the throne,
And to adore the Lamb.

Father, you come to meet us when we return to you:

Confession

Most merciful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned
in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy
forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be;
that we may do justly,

love mercy,
and walk humbly with you, our God.
Amen.

Absolution

Almighty God,
who in Jesus Christ has given us
a kingdom that cannot be destroyed,
forgive us our sins, +
open our eyes to God's truth,
strengthen us to do God's will
and give us the joy of his kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Collect

Almighty and everlasting God,
by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church
is governed and sanctified:
hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people,
that in their vocation and ministry
they may serve you in holiness and truth
to the glory of your name;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

A reading from the Old Testament
Zechariah 9. 9-12

The Coming of Zion's King

9 Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!

Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!

See, your king comes to you,

righteous and victorious,

lowly and riding on a donkey,

on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

10 I will take away the chariots from Ephraim

and the warhorses from Jerusalem,

and the battle bow will be broken.

He will proclaim peace to the nations.

His rule will extend from sea to sea

and from the River to the ends of the earth.

11 As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you,

I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit.

12 Return to your fortress, you prisoners of hope;

even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

A reading from the New Testament
Romans 7. 15-25

14 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. 15 I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. 16 And if I do what I do not want to

do, I agree that the law is good. 17 As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. 18 For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

21 So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22 For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23 but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? 25 Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

HYMN

O for a closer walk with God,
a calm and heavenly frame,
a light to shine upon the road
that leads me to the Lamb!

Return, O holy Dove, return,
sweet messenger of rest;
I hate the sins that made thee mourn,
and drove thee from my breast.

Where is the blessedness I knew
when first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
of Jesus and his word?

The dearest idol I have known,
whate'er that idol be,
help me to tear it from thy throne,
and worship only thee.

So shall my walk be close with God,
calm and serene my frame;
so purer light shall mark the road
that leads me to the Lamb.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.
I am the way, the truth, and the life, says the Lord.
No one comes to the Father except through me
Alleluia.

The Holy Gospel is from the 11th Chapter of the Gospel of Matthew beginning at the 16th verse.
Glory to you O Lord

16 “To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others:

17 “‘We played the pipe for you,
and you did not dance;
we sang a dirge,
and you did not mourn.’

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ 19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’ But wisdom is proved right by her deeds.”

25 At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. 26 Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

27 "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

This is the Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you O Christ

The Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

Reflection

In this chapter in Matthew's gospel, Jesus challenges the expectations of the crowds. "What is it you are looking for; do you even know yourselves? John the Baptist doesn't suit you because he is too wild, I do not suit you because I mix freely with all. You are like children playing in the street, taking offence if you don't get your own way. "We play the flute and you don't dance we wailed but you do not mourn".

He is trying to point out their inconsistency; they don't really know what they do want. John is the ascetic, fasting and living so strangely they say he has a demon and Jesus is the one who joins with the crowd eating and drinking is called a glutton and drunkard. They do not know what they want to believe in and follow.

Jesus tells them that what is true is vindicated by its deeds. It is clear to be seen if we will but put aside our preconceived ideas and allow revelation. It is plain to see if we are willing. Human pride and lack of humility are the impediments to faith. Jesus is connecting lowliness and faith.

It is the heart and not the head which is the home of the gospel. A person's intellect can be a stumbling block for we need simplicity and trust, the innocence of the childlike heart. "Except you become as children, you cannot see the kingdom of heaven", Jesus tells us. Children have open eyes and ears, open minds and open hearts, so much of that is lost in the apparent 'cleverness' of 'growing up'.

I recall a man I knew who by the world's standards would not amount to much. I heard him once described pejoratively as 'simple'. I grew to know him well, 'simple' he was not. There was something about him that often put me to shame, a childlike, yet profound understanding of the divine which had no religiosity. This same truth was promoted by no lesser a theologian than the Lutheran mystic Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945). He called it "religionless Christianity."

He grasped that people were to move beyond the restrictions and framework of 'religion' to the deeper experience of the Christ.

We make a beginning within the framework but are drawn on to the underlying and deeper Christian experience itself. It is here, I suggest, that the sacraments of the Church become deep wells from which we drink. Developing from the 'outward and visible, to the inward and spiritual', gradually we perceive and accept that God is in all situations, and that God can and will use even bad situations for good, then everything and everywhere becomes an occasion for good and an encounter with God.

I recall a woman in my last parish who wanted to receive communion and become part of the church but despite confirmation preparation classes and numerous conversations. still felt she could not take that step because, in her words, she had to "fully understand it first". As far as I know she is still in that state of mind. God cannot be known in that way, only loved, only responded to, only desired. Such a response is all that is necessary. Such a simplicity is necessary if the words of Jesus invitation to be 'yoked' to him are to make any sense.

The people of his time were burdened under the weight of religion. Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees they "...bind heavy burdens, grievous to be born and lay them on men's shoulders...". It was a thing of endless rules and regulations all of which had to be observed dictating every aspect of life. The

Jew spoke of the yoke of the Law, the yoke of the commandment, the yoke of the kingdom, the yoke of God. They were also burdened by the many troubles of life that come to us all.

The people of that day understood about yokes, the wood which linked two animals together so they could pull or plough – they understood about yokes that they would use to carry loads themselves. So Jesus' use of the term would illustrate well what he is saying.

In today's gospel is one of the best known and loved sayings of Jesus.

“Come to me, all of you who are exhausted and weighted down beneath your burdens, and I will give you rest! Put on my yoke and learn from me. For I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

These are not just empty words – they are very practical. Jesus holds out to us the offer of companionship with himself. He will walk alongside us bearing the load with us if we will but come and harness ourselves with him. Just ask.

Jesus was a carpenter and there is a legend that he made the best ox-yokes in all Galilee and that from all over the country men came to Him for the best yokes that skill could make. To make a yoke that joined two animals together was not an 'off the peg' job. Each ox was brought, and the measurements taken, it was roughed out and the ox brought back to try on and carefully adjusted so that it would fit well and would not gall the neck of the patient beast. They were tailor-made.

When Jesus speaks of a yoke that is easy, this is the idea. He offers us a yoke that is well fitting – individually made just for you. A link that will fit you to him is easy and light because he knows all things and all things are held in his hand.

Bring all your worries, and fears as well as your hopes and desires. Simply believe his presence with you and begin to share your day. Two animals yoked and working together would get to know each other well! And we are alongside Jesus who has all the strength and hope we need.

And the promise is rest, allowing Him to infuse us with strength, to guide and help us – so practical. We find rest, rest from striving to rebuild our lives or striving to perfect ourselves. A rest in which we find ourselves in Him.

We don't come in strength, but in the simplicity of a child.

'Little ones to him belong, we are weak, but he is strong'.

Intercessions

Let us pray for the Church and for the world,
and let us thank God for his goodness.

High and holy God,
robed in majesty,
Lord of heaven and earth,

bring justice, faith and salvation to all peoples.
Inspire those in leadership with wisdom
And those who hold great power that they may seek the common good.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

You chose us in Christ to be your people
and to be the temple of your Holy Spirit;
fill your Church with vision and hope.
By your Spirit, give us a new and fresh vision
of what it means to be followers of Jesus
To be salt and light in our world
that our lives may make a difference for good.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

Your Spirit enables us to cry, 'Abba! Father!',
affirms that we are fellow-heirs with Christ
and pleads for us in our weakness;
we pray for all who are in need or distress.
Especially we pray for those countries where there is scarce healthcare
For whom these days are fraught with fear and mourning.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

We remember those we love but see no more
and give you thanks for their lives.
May your whole Church, living and departed,
come to a joyful resurrection in your city of light.
Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

Let us commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,
to the mercy and protection of God.
may all creation be held within His
merciful care and protection. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Being made one by the power of the Spirit,
as our Saviour taught us, so we pray

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.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and for ever.
Amen.

Grant, O Lord, we beseech you,
that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered
by your governance,
that your Church may joyfully serve you in all godly quietness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

And the peace of God,
Which passes all understanding,
Keep your hearts and minds
In the knowledge and love of God,
And of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
And the + blessing of God almighty,
The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
Be with you, and remain with you always
Amen

HYMN

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
and lighten with celestial fire.
Thou the anointing Spirit art,
who dost thy sevenfold gifts impart.

Anoint and cheer our soiled face
with the abundance of thy grace.
Keep far from foes, give peace at home:
where thou art guide, no ill can come.

Thy blessed unction from above
is comfort, life, and fire of love.
Enable with perpetual light
the dullness of our blinded sight

Teach us to know the Father, Son,
and thee, of both, to be but One,
that through the ages all along,
this may be our endless song:

Praise to thy eternal merit,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

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