

# Swaythling Parish

## Sunday 28 February 2021

### Second Sunday of Lent

#### Welcome

*Below is a service sheet for you to use at home. You can also find our Sunday morning reflection on YouTube channel, available at 10am on Sunday, (and afterwards). Please search for "Swaythling Parish" on YouTube to find and view it.*

*If we can support you in any way at the present time, or you would just like to chat, do please get in touch: 023 8055 4231  
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#### Introduction from Rev Peter Dockree

Welcome to our service today, however you are joining us. This Sunday is the second Sunday of lent, a time of reflection, a time when we are invited not to rush to the next stage but to wonder anew in this one. Later we will be exploring the lonely road of life and faith.

#### Greeting

Grace mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you

**And also with you.**

The Lord be with you,

**And also with you**

Before we go further let's just acknowledge

the goodness that is around us, the love that is given to us, and the hope that is held out to us all. Let us give thanks for it all now.

Let us sing about that very thing, Give thanks.

#### Hymn: Give thanks with a grateful heart

Give thanks with a grateful heart  
Give thanks to the Holy One  
Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ,  
His Son

And now let the weak say, "I am strong"  
Let the poor say, "I am rich"  
Because of what the Lord has done for us"  
And now let the weak say, "I am strong"  
Let the poor say, "I am rich"  
Because of what the Lord has done for us"

Henry Smith © Copyright 1978 Integrity's Hosanna! Music

#### Readings

##### Genesis 17: 1-7, 15-16

*Abraham and Sarah are given their new names as a sign of their new beginning.*

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.' Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, 'As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the

ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. God said to Abraham, 'As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.'

##### Mark 8: 31-end

*Jesus tells his disciples that he will suffer, and tells us all that following him will involve sacrifice.*

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to

save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

I will speak in a moment about loneliness and feeling out of kilter with those around us, and with God. Perhaps one key way in which we can feel out of kilter is in the inner burdens we carry, the things we feel others would never or could never understand. The mistakes we hold heavy.

We believe in a God who does get it, and so we are going to give those things to God now.

### **Prayer of Confession**

For the mistakes we have made and the guilt that weighs us down.  
Lord have mercy, **Lord have mercy**  
For the things we hold too tight and dare not admit to ourselves, others and to you Lord.  
Christ have mercy, **Christ have mercy**

For the way we treat our fellow human beings.  
Lord have mercy, **Lord have mercy.**

May the God of love  
Bring us back to himself,  
Forgive us our sins,  
and assure us of his eternal love  
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **The Collect**

Almighty God,  
by the prayer and discipline of Lent  
may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings,  
and by following in his Way  
come to share in his glory;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **A Reflection by Rev Peter Dockree**

In the first film of the Hunger games series we find our key character, Katness Everdeen, stuck in a brutal dystopian game show where the characters have to fight to the death. They are all placed in a giant set with woods and lakes, and the fifteen characters have to fight until only one is left. I remembered that film

when I was reading this morning gospel because I was reminded that sometimes we can feel very alone even in the midst of company. Katness and others found temporary alliances, working together, but there was always a sense that none of these were truly real because in the end they would all have to turn on each other. In case you may yet watch it, I will not plot spoil and tell you what actually happens, but there are parallels with Jesus's story here. In the account we just heard read Jesus starts by chastising Peter. Peter was his loyal friend and comrade. He had given up so much to follow him, but still Jesus knew that Peter's friendship was not all that it seemed, and he expresses frustration that Peter was not on exactly the same page as Jesus, he was inadvertently pulling Jesus off course.

In a season when everyone's experiences are so different, when one person's burden is another's relief, when loneliness is all around, the experience of Jesus is all the more relevant to us. Whether we are in a busy home with lots going on or living alone, there is a very real possibility of feeling out of kilter with those around us. Either in craving a bit of space and time to one's self or in watching others on screens who seem to be experiencing all the contact and company that you most long for. That feeling of being out of kilter is one that was felt in a most profound way by Jesus himself, and embodied in that rebuking of Peter. So if you are feeling

disconnected with many of the people that you would normally think of as being closest to you right now, then perhaps remembering that even Jesus experienced that emotion may offer some comfort.

Sometimes though we are called to actively do things that may put us in that place. Jesus of course made a decision to follow the path set before him. We may have to make decisions to speak against the tide. To take up our crosses (not normally leading to great physical sacrifice or death, or at least not in this country). To clap (not literally but figuratively) for the NHS when everyone has stopped clapping, and to ask on their behalf the tricky questions of those making the decisions. To ask why the poor aren't fed and to keep doing our bit to make sure that the most vulnerable are supported both on our doorsteps and around our world, even when society has moved on to the new normal. To lay the challenge to think beyond our own bubbles, our own families, our own communities, our own societies. If we are doing these things then we will find ourselves out of kilter with those around us, and that is one thing that walking in Jesus's footsteps can mean.

### Prayers

*Let us pray for our world, our community and those in need around us. You may wish to light some candles as you pray.*

For the moments of brokenness and despair.

For the moments of light and possibility. For the people battling to survive either physically or emotionally. For those who fear a "return to normal". For the promise of vaccines and timelines out of lockdown. For business desperate for custom to return, and those whose jobs rely on this.

For places of darkness and places of light, in own country and across the world. For politicians and those who would govern us. For the national church and the challenges it faces to be your hands and feet.

For the season of lent, its opportunities and its challenges.

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

**Amen**

### Hymn: 379 Jesus calls us o'er the tumult

- 1 Jesus calls us o'er the tumult  
of our life's wild, restless sea;  
day by day his sweet voice soundeth,  
saying "Christian, follow me."
- 2 As, of old, apostles heard it  
by the Galilean lake,  
turned from home and toil and kindred,  
leaving all for his dear sake.

- 3 Jesus calls us from the worship  
of the vain world's golden store,  
from each idol that would keep us,  
saying "Christian, love me more."
- 4 In our joys and in our sorrows,  
days of toil and hours of ease,  
still he calls, in cares and pleasures,  
"Christian, love me more than these."
- 5 Jesus calls us; by thy mercies,  
Saviour, may we hear thy call,  
give our hearts to thine obedience,  
serve and love thee best of all.

Cecil Frances Alexander (1852)

### Closing Blessing

Thank you to everyone for worshiping with us today.

May this season be for you a time to face the things that we struggle to face,  
A time to meet God and to learn afresh how we may follow God.  
A time to count our blessings, and experience the power of grace.

May the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit  
be among us and remain with us always.

**Amen**

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