

Swaythling Parish

Sunday 21 June 2020

St Alban's Patronal

Second Sunday after Trinity

Welcome

Below is a service sheet for you to use for this week's Sunday morning service. This is based on a service that is being broadcast as a video on Sunday morning through the YouTube channel. It will be available on YouTube from 10am on Sunday, (and afterwards). Please search for "Swaythling Parish" on YouTube to find and view it. If do not have access to watch the YouTube video, we hope you will be able to use these words and join us too in spirit.

Introduction from Peter

Welcome

Whether you are sharing in this service from a written sheet that came through the post, or watching on the video, we hope you feel truly part of the Swaythling family. There has been a lot of talk about churches opening their doors this week, as the government has permitted us to do so for private prayer. As with everything at the moment, the permission to do so is not the same as the capacity to do so, and there are many things that we must consider, as we work out what is right in our context. Bear with us in this.

This weekend is the day when churches that bear the name of St Alban remember his story. It is a story of sacrifice and faith, and one that we will tell later. I hope this service is for you a chance to engage and reflect on those powerful themes, in the knowledge that we are doing so together.

Greeting

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

Alleluia. Christ is Risen
He is Risen indeed. Alleluia

Prayer of Thanks

Sometimes the people closest to us can be very aware of our gripes, our frustrations, the things we wish to change about them or others, and yet we can assume that they just know that we are grateful for the positive things they give us, we don't ever get round to saying so. Whilst God knows the secrets of our hearts it is important to us to actually give voice to our thanks, to recognise the things that are good, so we will do that now. Call to mind things that have happened in the last weeks, or things or people in your lives that you are thankful for, and share that with God.

Lord God in the joys and the sorrows we seek to find causes to be thankful.

Amen

Hymn 273: Great is thy faithfulness

I Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;
as thou hast been thou forever wilt be.

*Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see:
All I have needed thy hand hath provided-
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

- 2 Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.
- 3 Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
strength for today and bright hope for
tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

T O Chisholm (1866-1960): © 1923, 1951 Hope Publishing Co

The Confession

In a song by the band *Faithless* you find the words "this is my church, this is where I heal my hurts", speaking of a whole range of places and spaces where reconciliation happens. In this place, out church, we can come to heal our hurts, and that can begin with acknowledging the mistakes we have made. So let us give our sorry to God now.

For the people we have hurt and those we have failed to love.

Lord, have mercy

Lord, have mercy.

For the times we have let ourselves and others down.

Christ have mercy

Christ, have mercy

For the choices we have made and the things we have done that we regret.

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 for St Alban's Day

Eternal Father, when the gospel of Christ first came to our land you gloriously confirmed the faith of Alban by making him the first to win a martyr's crown: grant that, following his example, in the fellowship of the saints we may worship you, the living God, and give true witness to 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

Reading :

Wisdom 3: 1-3

This passage from The Book of Wisdom offers the assurance that the righteous will be in God's care when they die.

Read by Jenny in the video

But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,
and no torment will ever touch them.
In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died,
and their departure was thought to be a disaster,
and their going from us to be their destruction;
but they are at peace.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Reading:

John 12: 24-26

Jesus assures his followers that death is part of the natural progression to the fruitfulness of eternal life.

Read by John in the video

Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The Story of Alban

(on the video there will be a stop animation telling the story made by Samuel and Jacob Dockree).

Back to the beginning

The story of Alban is a remarkable one. It not only takes us back to the beginning of the Christian faith in Britain and to a time when religious freedom was forbidden, but it is also an astonishing account of standing up for what you believe in.

Inspired

Alban lived in the early third century in the Roman city of Verulamium, just down the hill from where the Cathedral stands today. One day he gave shelter to a stranger fleeing from persecution. This stranger was a Christian priest, now known as Amphibalus. While sheltering the priest, Alban was inspired by how important faith was to the priest and asked to be taught more about Christianity.

Captured

It was not long until the Roman authorities caught up with Amphibalus. However, Alban's new-found faith would not allow him to let the authorities arrest the priest. Instead, Alban exchanged clothes with Amphibalus and was arrested, allowing the priest to escape.

*"I am called Alban and I worship and adore
the true and living God"*

Alban refused to renounce his beliefs and the magistrate ordered that he should receive the punishment intended for the escaped priest. Upon this ruling, Alban was led out of Verulamium and up the hillside where he was beheaded.

Continued

Alban is honoured as Britain's first saint, and his grave on this hillside quickly became a place of pilgrimage. This story of an ordinary man, doing an extraordinary thing has endured and continues to inspire to this day.

A Reflection from Peter

"In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died."

It can be hard to relate to stories of sacrifice. When you hear a dramatic tale of someone courageously risking themselves to step into danger to save someone else. Often the tales we get to hear are of the extreme end, and also until we are there in that very same situation, we simply can't know how we would react, what we would do. We have been watching the Alex Rider series on Amazon Prime this week and again and again you see bravery and courage on show for a bigger

cause. Those stories may be fun to watch but we often find them hard to relate to, because most of us have never been there and simply don't know what we would do if we were. Most of the biggest bravest decisions are moral ones that we make every day. Decisions to speak out on something that might make people dislike us if we do, perhaps the recent raising of the inequality from the BAME communities is one such example. The Gospel reading today asks us to take up our cross, but the toughest crosses to bear are not always the physical ones, they may not involve heroic actions, but simply defending someone from bullying or ridicule, or admitting that we agree with them. The best way to make a difficult choice is not by focusing on what we are risking but by focusing on the cause for which we are doing it.

When Alban decided to swap places with Amphibalus, to save his life, I don't know what he thought but in many ways it may not have been the risk he was taking but the cause he was following, he may not have given too much pondering to his own sacrifice, but was simply overwhelmed by the importance of this message that Amphibalus was so passionate and articulate in speaking of. In the first reading we had today we hear the words "*in the eyes of the foolish they seem to have died*". Sometimes the cause of faith is one for the worldly foolish. Believing in something beyond ourselves, believing that there is more than this, is foolish, and yet doing truly doing so, can lead us to make bold moral choices.

Throughout history from the major figures who changed history to the seemingly small acts of people simply deciding to be bold, to be kind, to be honest, to be sacrificial, they decided that a cause, an action, a principle was bigger than them, and they let that belief drive their actions.

Take a moment to ponder a situation in your own life. Perhaps someone you know you don't treat as you should because you worry how it looks, perhaps a decision you have been putting off taking because it is sacrificial, perhaps something you want to speak out on but never do. Take a step back now and focus on what really matters, focus on the God of justice, and the Jesus who broke so many social barriers, and reflect on what you believe about those and other things. What matters to you, what is most important. When you have done that think about one or two things you might do about it.

Prayers of Intercession

Written and read by Karen in the video

Pope John Paul the second said 'prayer joined to sacrifice constitutes the most powerful force in human history. Following the example of St Alban, who sacrificed all for his faith we worship and adore the true and living God who created all things, and who hears us when we pray.

Father God, draw your Church together into one great company of disciples, especially your church here in our parish. May we accept one another in your name, being open and welcoming to all people, so that all who are seeking may find welcome and kindness. We pray for those places in the world where, Christians, like St Alban, continue to make sacrifices and suffer for their faith,

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We thank you for all those who have made sacrifices to stand up for justice and the rights of the marginalised. We know that you stand

alongside them. At this time of the black lives matter movement, and in Pride month we pray for and stand with all those whose lives are affected in any way by prejudice. Lord help us to confront our own prejudices and privileges. Where there is division, may we work to bring restoration. Where there is inequality may we work to bring justice. Where there is powerlessness may we work to lift up the broken hearted. Where there is damage may we work to bring healing.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who suffer throughout the world, as the result natural disaster, acts of war and terrorism or as victims of poverty, disease, or the greed of others, particularly for the Yemen, for Afghanistan, and for Syria. We pray that you will lead the governments of the world from war and want by the pathways of justice and peace. We think particularly of those countries where managing the pandemic is hampered by poverty or an apparent lack of political will, thinking particularly of Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, and Somalia. We ask that all governments and health authorities will take appropriate steps for the good of the people. We pray for this country, for our Government and local authority and all in charge of schools, universities, and businesses as they plan the way forward to a new normal world.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Father, give us a genuine love for others, both those whom we like and those that we don't. We ask you to help us to build others up rather than to belittle, and to reach out to those who feel that they don't belong ; We share with you our love and concern for people in a dark place today. We remember before you the homeless, the destitute, the sick, those feel who have no one to turn to, and those who feel they are forgotten, for

everyone is known to you. We ask that you will be close to all those who suffer, give them an awareness of your presence and restore them to strength of mind and body Let your light shine through the darkness of all their pain and their suffering.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

May these prayers, and the prayers of each one of us throughout the week, not be the end of our work, but the beginning.

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

Prayer of thanks for Gifts

Thank you to those who have given of your money, time or prayers. To those who have been working in this time to make sure our buildings remain safe and to facilitate the delivery of food and support to those in our community.

If you would like to give to the life and work of this church then you can send a cheque made payable to Swaythling Parish, or give online at www.give.net/SwaythlingParish.

Let us take a moment now to give thanks to God:

We thank you Lord for all the gifts we have received, financial and in so many other ways. Help us to use them wisely to share your love in this place. **Amen**

Hymn: Take my life, and let it be

- 1 Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee.
Take my moments and my days;
let them flow in endless praise,
- 2 Take my hands and let them move at the impulse of thy love.
Take my feet and let them be swift and beautiful for thee,
- 3 Take my voice and let me sing always, only, for my King.
Take my lips and let them be filled with messages from thee,
- 4 Take my silver and my gold;
not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect and use every power as thou shalt choose,
- 5 Take my will and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne,
- 6 Take my love; my Lord, I pour at thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for thee.

F R Havergal (1836-1879)

Closing Blessing

This prayer is attributed to Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu adapted from an original prayer by Sir Francis Drake.

Disturb us, O Lord
when we are too well-pleased with ourselves
when our dreams have come true because we dreamed too little,
because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, O Lord
when with the abundance of things we possess,
we have lost our thirst for the water of life
when, having fallen in love with time,
we have ceased to dream of eternity
and in our efforts to build a new earth,
we have allowed our vision of Heaven to grow dim.

Stir us, O Lord
to dare more boldly, to venture into wider seas
where storms show Thy mastery,
where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars.

In the name of Him who pushed back the horizons of our hopes
and invited the brave to follow.

Amen

And the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you now and always. **Amen.**

*Thank you for joining in with us. If we can support you in any way, please get in touch. 023 8055 4231
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