

Sunday 'Spiritual Communion' in Ordinary Time

*You may wish to find a space for prayer in front of a cross, a candle, or a special place. The words in **bold** you are encouraged to say out loud as worship and prayer.*

Opening Prayer

The Church of which we are members is not defined by the walls of a building but by the Body of Christ of which we are members.

We are joining with Christians everywhere to be nourished by the one who tells us, 'I am the Bread of Life'.

Opening Sentences in the Season of Ordinary Time

My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, I will wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word do I hope. We make our prayers this season...



**In the name of the Maker, who lit the world and breathed the breath of life for us
In the name of the Son, who saved the world and stretched out his hand to us
In the name of the Spirit, who encompasses the world and blesses our souls with yearning**

This is the Trinity of Love; God above us, God beside us, God beneath us.

Prayers of Preparation and Confession

Almighty God to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen

I slow myself down for a moment, and try to realise that God is present to me here and now.

As I spend this time with you, Lord, I am aware of how blessed I truly am.

I think of the love and laughter in my life and I feel grateful

We allow ourselves to think about our lives, what has been, what is, what will be ..

You may wish to pray:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.



A reading from the Gospel

Read Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52 (A reflection is attached to the end of the service sheet)

Intercessions

Let us pray for the needs of the world, for our local community, and for those close to you.

End with the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father...

Lord, help me to be fully alive to your holy presence in this world.

Enfold me in your love.

Let my heart become one with yours.

I ask for the grace to know that doing your will is a joy because your will is my deepest unknown desire.
And you are always willing what is best for me.

**O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.**

Life-giving God, heal our lives,
that we may acknowledge your wonderful deeds
and offer you thanks from generation to generation
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing and Peace

May the Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,
and keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

The Peace of the Lord be always with you



Reflection on Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

In our reading this morning Jesus seems to be responding to a question from the crowd. It is as though someone in the crowd has asked .. what is the Kingdom of Heaven like? And Jesus seems to sit the people down and respond reflectively.

Well He says .. it's a bit like this ... or think about it like this .. or to put it another way it is like this! We know the scenario as we have been there ourselves. Someone asks us to define or describe something they have not seen. It is like being asked to explain what the sea is like to someone who has never seen it. One description will never do ... because in truth it's a bit like this .. but sometimes more like this .. or at other times .. and so it goes on. This is how Jesus is explaining the Kingdom of Heaven to the crowd.

Is it clearly difficult to think about the Kingdom of Heaven whilst on earth. Jesus seems to know this. There is no doubt for many people think about the Kingdom of Heaven in terms of where we go when we die. There God is waiting for us with everyone that we have loved and lost, and it's a beautiful place full of angels. However Jesus is encouraging the crowd to think about this in a more subtle way. He does not talk about the Kingdom of Heaven as a physical place. Rather He starts to talk about values and behaviour. Jesus does not draw a map but rather describes a realm over which God reigns as King and what this is like. It is the values and the characteristics of the Kingdom of Heaven Jesus is interested in.

So if you want to understand these stories about the great joy of finding the Kingdom of Heaven you must ask yourself what a future Kingdom of love and without suffering would be like? What would it look like, sound like, feel like to live in such a kingdom? What would the coat of arms for that future Kingdom look like? What would it's anthem be? What medals of honour would be given out there? What would the front page of a newspaper in the Kingdom of Heaven read like? Take a moment to wonder about this Kingdom this morning. The crowds were wondering about the Kingdom of Heaven and Jesus told them it is like the most valuable of seeds, it works like yeast in bread, it is like the finest pearl and like a net full of fish! He then asks what will you do to be part of this Kingdom not just in the future but now!

There is a modern parable I have heard about the Kingdom of Heaven ... a young girl arrives at a car boot sale one Sunday morning with her grandma. I suppose you're looking for *more* animal toys for your room like at the last car boot sale? *Yes Grandma* she replies *I'm going to look at these stalls. I'll see you in a bit.* At the first stall the girl sees a toy she likes. How much for this she asks? £1 is the reply. *I'll give you 50p.* Done! Moving to the next stall she asks *how much for these?* £2. *But this one is chipped!* Ok . . . £1.50. Done! Moving to a third stall she sees a stuffed lion. *Oh wow! He's just perfect . . . he's just the right size, just what I've always wanted. He's beautiful, so precious. How much for this?* He comes with the whole box of toys he is in as a job lot. It's £20. *I can't afford £20 and I want it so badly.* Sorry . . I can't split the lot. But what I always say is if you want something badly enough, there's usually a way you can make it happen. *H'mm said the girl. . . . would you put the box aside for me? Just until the end of the day?* And so she rushed home and quickly gathered all of her much loved toys, then returned to the car boot sale as a stall holder for the rest of the morning!

What do we think the Kingdom of Heaven is like? And what are we willing to do and to give in order to be part of it I wonder?