

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. He is present.

He is in what I do, in the people I meet, and the situations I find myself in daily.

Lord, today I offer you my memories, my understanding, my entire will.

All I ask in return is for your love and your grace,

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 9 v 35 to 10 v 8 (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...

Through dreams and visions, O God, you broaden the horizon and hope of your people, that we may discover the meaning of your covenant, even in the midst of trial and exile.

Increase the number of those who believe in your word so that all people may joyfully respond to your call and share in your promises.

**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 9 v 35 to 10 v 8

This morning we reflect on the fact that being a Christian is 'hard work'. As Jesus puts it, it is like being a 'labourer'. Think for a minute about what attributes you associate with the term 'labourer'? This is what Jesus calls us to be!

We too often associate labour as being centered around menial tasks and as such conclude that labourers are unskilled. But the skills required for labour seem to me to be of utmost importance. Qualities such as determination, endurance, single-mindedness and focus, fitness, health and courage are all qualities I saw in abundance when I worked with labourers in the construction industry. St Paul highlights many of these characteristics as qualities of Christian living. We might include the characteristics of patience and perseverance as labour often includes an element of persistence and repetition. The disciple of Christ is called to grow in the attributes we associate with 'labouring'. But this is not easy. It is hard work to develop the skills of determination and endurance and to continue to maintain good spiritual health and fitness. Like an athlete or a boxer training for their event St Paul says the labourer for the Gospel must stay focused and stay in training.

Jesus tells His first disciples: "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.". He does not say believers are few. He does not suggest that we ask the Lord for more students of the scriptures or more in attendance at religious services. He states that labourers are few. Those who are prepared to work hard and sweat and toil for the Divine purposes within Creation. Those who are focused and single minded about loving their neighbour. Such people are few and far between and we should be praying for more of such people in our world. And as we pray we should be prepared to answer this prayer in our own lives.

We are reminded this morning that Jesus summoned the disciples and sent them out to 'labour'. 'Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons' is the remit. The kind of work which will need vast reserves of faith and persistence and belief. We might expect that the reward will be great for such toil. However Jesus goes on 'You received without payment; give without payment'. There is no payment for this labour. The working environment will also be harsh. The Risk Assessment for this work site does not look good: 'I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles.' The Risk to the labourer is great.

All of this reminds us that we too when we commit ourselves to Christ commit ourselves to become labourers. Not healers or teachers or lawyers or financiers but labourers. Those who have a remit to work. To work towards a harvest which will not be for our benefit alone. We work in a vineyard for a harvest which will be for the common good. It is not an attractive proposition to the capitalist mindset. It is not a great prospect for the individual. But for the one who works for Christ there is a greater vision.

Jesus finishes his call for those who will labour with these words: 'the one who endures to the end will be saved .. truly I tell you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.'" So the work continues. More labourers are required. Let us work and pray to this end.