

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

Lord, you have called me by my name.
You have carved me in the palm of your hand.

If God were reassuring me or challenging us, would we notice?
Let us ask for grace to be free of our own preoccupations and open to what God may be saying to us..

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 10:26-33 (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, you have engraved my name on the palm of your hand.
Even if others forget me, you never will.

Lord You are always so much closer than we might imagine,
Yet we often do not take the time to even imagine ...
Help us to open our minds to your presence with us.

**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 10 v 26-33

Our Bible passage this morning is one of intimacy. It is a message from heaven that we are loved and cherished and known. A message that although this love sometimes seems to be shrouded in the mists of this world it will one day be acknowledged from the rooftops. A promise that those whispers of love we are sometimes able to hear from heaven will one day be a proclamation to the whole world.

Read verse 27 again and reflect on what emotions this statement conjures up for you?

I would suspect that for most of us the initial emotion is one of fear and shame. The idea that the inner chaos of our lives will be broadcast to the wider world is a fearful prospect. And yet the intention of this passage is not to unsettle us but to bring comfort and security. Isn't this strange, that we tell ourselves a different story to the one Jesus is telling us here. We hear a story of fear and loathing whilst Jesus tells a story of peace and acceptance. To be reminded God knows everything about us and knows what we have whispered in the darkness is not a message of judgment but a message of love! How can that be?

We are being invited to accept this morning that there is no point in pretending before God. God knows us better than we know ourselves. It seems we have been trained by ourselves and our society to think it is wrong to allow any dark or negative feelings into our lives and our prayers. We have become accustomed to keeping especially negative or dark feelings to ourselves. But the Christian journey invites us to learn to grow out of this worldly training and to learn to express our feelings and thoughts freely before God and trusting that our Creator already knows how we feel and still loves us.

How do we know that we are not deceiving ourselves? How do we know these words are true and that we *are* accepted? These are valid questions but in this passage we are being asked to simply trust. This might not seem easy but it is not very complicated.

Consider the situation when a child is frightened in the night. A parent goes and lifts the child and says again and again, 'It's all right'. And the child gradually quiets. The child might have many legitimate fears and reasonable questions that have unsettled their sleep and made their minds chaotic .. just like ours. However, it is not in the end an answer to these questions which brings peace and sleep. It is simply the presence of someone who loves them, someone who is bigger than them, someone who cares for them. The questions are hushed by whispers in the darkness which are not answers at all.

Now if the child replies with continued questions, 'but what about the virus, what about the future of the environment, what about global leadership and poverty and the potential lack of employment in the years ahead?' then the parent really has a problem in their arms. The chaos will not be stilled through continued questions but only through the experience of a loving presence who knows every hair on your head and the true value of your life.

Let us be stilled this morning. Let us allow our loving God to hold us and tell us 'it's alright' without us becoming restless or anxious. Let us listen to the whispered message of the one who has heard our cries and come to us in love. And when we have heard this whispered message 'it's alright' let us not be afraid to speak it into the light when the dawn breaks upon us ... that others might hear it too.