

Sunday 28th June 2020

Opening Prayer

Lord, calm my thoughts as I come into your presence to worship you. Open my heart to welcome you in and to receive the blessing of Jesus' love, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Hymn: Open The Eyes Of My Heart Lord (StF 451)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=do_wLvIN04M

*Open the eyes of my heart, Lord,
Open the eyes of my heart;
I want to see you, I want to see you.
Open the eyes of my heart, Lord,
Open the eyes of my heart;
I want to see you, I want to see you.*

To see you high and lifted up,
Shining in the light of your glory.
Pour out your power and love;
As we sing holy, holy, holy.

Refrain

To see you high and lifted up,
Shining in the light of your glory.
Pour out your power and love;
As we sing holy, holy, holy.

Holy, holy, holy,
Holy, holy, holy,
Holy, holy, holy,
I want to see you.

Paul Baloche

Let us pray together

Creator God, I praise you for the beauty of the world that you have made, for richness of texture, colour and form in nature, and for the caring communities around me. Forgive me when I fail to be thankful for the good things in my life.

God is full of grace and mercy; I receive his forgiveness and his love. Amen.

Today's Gospel Reading: Matthew 10:40-2

Time to Reflect

Have you ever been sent out to knock on a stranger's door with a message or a request? If so, did you wonder what sort of a welcome you might, or might not, receive? The disciples were about to take the good news of Jesus' love into the wider world. In these verses Jesus reminded the disciples that, as his followers, they were representing him and the one who sent him, his Father, God. For those who received and accepted them, it would be as if they were welcoming Jesus himself into their homes.

The concept of welcome and hospitality in the Middle East is of high importance. Visitors are treated as honoured guests and food and drink is generously shared. That generosity can be a humbling experience. On a fact-finding visit to Jordan in 2015, I was welcomed into a damp and shabby basement by Nahla, a young Syrian refugee mother of six. There was very little in the way of furniture or equipment and nothing of comfort in this makeshift home. The older children were out in the streets scavenging for whatever scraps they might make use of or sell. Yet Nahla insisted I have some tea with her. Not wanting to take from her meagre supplies, I refused politely, but Nahla was offended by this. It was deeply embedded in her culture and tradition to offer hospitality to guests. Poor though she was, she wanted to share what little she had with her guest. Generosity and welcome may come from the most unexpected sources, often from the poorest who understand what it is to have nothing.

I did not find knocking on doors for a house collection for Action for Children easy. It was even more challenging to find that those who lived in larger houses gave for less, or even nothing, than those who lived in more crowded or less affluent conditions.

Jesus gave an example of how people should show unselfish generosity to others through the giving of a cup of cold water to "little ones", arguably not just children but the adult poor or marginalised too. (See Matthew 18:6)

Not everyone welcomes Jesus' offer of love and salvation. Some may reject us and our gospel message. For those who choose to welcome Jesus into their lives, there is an amazing reward in heaven; eternal life and peace with Jesus Christ.

Like the disciples, our lives should reflect God's generous love to others. How will you receive the one who knocks on your door?

Take a time to sit quietly

A time of prayer

Let us pray for the church, for the world and for ourselves.

Loving God, we pray for your guidance and wisdom as your church finds new ways of reaching out into the world with the good news of your generous love and forgiveness. Gift leaders with the innovation and inspiration that comes from the Holy Spirit so that your church may be more effective witnesses of your saving grace.

Lord Jesus, as the world continues to suffer the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic, we pray for compassion and fairness in sharing practical resources and medical expertise so that there might be healing and wholeness for all.

We pray for all those who have influence over the lives of others might make decisions based on kindness and for the common good. We pray Holy Spirit that you infuse with love the hearts of those who use war as a weapon of power. Hear our prayers for an end to all conflict, and for recognition and support to be given to refugees and displaced people around the world.

Compassionate Christ, we pray for comfort and strength for those who are still isolated, for parents and children, for the elderly and those suffering long-term illness. Lord, lift anxiety from those who are worried about the future, their jobs, businesses and their financial situation. May they know that they are not alone, that Jesus is always with them.

Holy Spirit, we pray for ourselves, for our plans that have been changed, for the people we have lost and miss still, for our hopes and dreams for the future. Strengthen our faith, deepen our commitment to your ways and help us to better serve God and to see Jesus in everyone we meet.

Thank you Lord that your love never fails.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Father I Place Into Your Hand (StF 519)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBfRNrvvUfc

Father, I place into your hands
The things I cannot do.
Father, I place into your hands
The times that I've been through.
Father, I place into our hands
The way that I should go,
For I know I always can trust you.

Father, I place into your hands
My friends and family.
Father, I place into your hands
The things that trouble me.
Father, I place into your hands
The person I would be,
For I know I always can trust you.

Father, we love to see your face,
We love to hear your voice.
Father, we love to sing your praise
And in your name rejoice.
Father, we love to walk with you
And in your presence rest,
For we know we always can trust you.

Father, I want to be with you
And do the things you do.
Father, I want to speak the words
That you are speaking too.
Father, I want to love the ones
That you will draw to you,
For I know that I am one with you.

Jenny Hewer (b.1945)

A prayer of blessing

Receive these words into your heart.

Jesus opens his arms to welcome and accept you, whoever you are and whatever your circumstances. Open your heart and your hands to receive him now, and the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you and those whom you love, now and always. Amen.

*Original Materials by Claire Hargreaves
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