

AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION 2nd October 2022

16th Sunday after Trinity

This service has been prepared by The Reverend Sue Linford and is available on **01308 293062**

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Hymn How shall I sing that majesty

1 How shall I sing that Majesty
which angels do admire?
Let dust in dust and silence lie;
sing, sing, ye heavenly choir.
Thousands of thousands stand around
thy throne, O God most high;
ten thousand times ten thousand sound
thy praise; but who am I?

2 Thy brightness unto them appears,
whilst I thy footsteps trace;
a sound of God comes to my ears;
but they behold thy face:

they sing because thou art their sun:
Lord, send a beam on me;
for where heaven is but once begun,
there alleluias be.

3 How great a being Lord, is thine,
which doth all beings keep!
Thy knowledge is the only line
to sound so vast a deep:
thou art a sea without a shore,
a sun without a sphere;
thy time is now and evermore,
thy place is everywhere.

John Mason (c.1645-1694) CCLI Licence 2370586

We are called to be servants – servants of God, and of one another. But we don't find service easy. Let us turn to God now, asking pardon for our selfishness, and seeking the help we need to be good and faithful servants.

Lord Jesus, you call us to be faithful in our service.

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy**

You enable us to be joyful in our service.

Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

You remind us that those who serve do your will.

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

May the God of love and power forgive us and free us from our sins, heal and strengthen us by God's Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Collect (special prayer for today)

Lord of creation, whose glory is around and within us: open our eyes to your wonders, that we may serve you with reverence, and know your peace at our lives' end, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith!' The Lord replied, 'If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, "Be uprooted and planted in the sea", and it would obey you.

'Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from ploughing or tending sheep in the field, "Come here at once and take your place at the table"? Would you not rather say to him, "Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink"? Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, "We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!" '

REFLECTION

Brother Lawrence (c. 1611–1691) was a lay monk who served as cook in the monastery of the order of Discalced Carmelites in Paris. (The term *discalced* comes from the Latin meaning *without shoes*). He discovered the secret to cultivating holiness by "practicing the presence of God" in the ordinary business of life.

He wrote: 'The time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were upon my knees at the blessed sacrament.'

For thirty years Brother Lawrence chose to retain his humble status as a lay brother, serving in the monastery kitchen as a cook. Then as his physical strength waned, even though he himself went barefoot, he took to repairing broken sandals until failing eyesight meant that he was relieved of his duties a few years before his death. Brother Lawrence cultivated a simple way of communing with God in his everyday duties of cooking, cleaning pots and pans, and whatever else he was called upon to do, which he termed "practicing the presence of God." Everything he did, whether it was spiritual devotions, church worship, running errands, counselling and listening to people, no matter how mundane or tedious, he saw it as a way of expressing God's love: "We can do little things for God; I turn the cake that is frying on the pan for love of him, and that done, if there is nothing else to call me, I prostrate myself in worship before him, who has given me grace to work; afterwards I rise happier than a king. It is enough for me to pick up but a straw from the ground for the love of God."

Brother Lawrence understood that the attitude and motivation of the heart were keys to experiencing the fullness of God's presence at all times.

"We ought not to be weary of doing little things for the love of God, who regards not the greatness of the work, but the love with which it is performed."

And when, in our Gospel reading, Jesus links the ideas of faith and service, he is talking about a way of life. Those who serve God do so with a sense of duty and delight, living a life according to God's commandments. We serve God and one another, not for an 'end of year bonus', and not only because that is what God calls us to do. We serve God because we follow the master who 'came not to be served but to serve', and because our faith tells us that he will provide all that we need to be good and faithful servants. Amen.

INTERCESSIONS

Let us pray in humility to God who creates and sustains all things.

We pray for the Church, the body of Christ; that regardless of rank or position, its members may be noticeable because of their unselfish humility, so that through their good work God may be glorified.

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

We bring before God the world's leaders and their governments. We pray that they may make good use of their power, and serve their people with integrity justice and compassion.

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

We pray for all those who suffer in body, mind or spirit, and commit them to the healing embrace of Christ.

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

And we pray that the Lord will grant us a strong and courageous faith; a faith that burns brightly even in times of darkness; a faith that doesn't falter even when there are no miracles or happy endings; a Good Friday faith that trusts in the dawn of Easter; a faith that is rooted in his love for us, and which expresses itself in love for others.

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

Prayers by Susan Sayers

Gathering together all our prayers, we say the prayer that Jesus gave us

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass
against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen**

Hymn How deep the Father's love for us

1 How deep the Father's love for us,
How vast beyond all measure,
That He should give His only Son
To make a wretch His treasure.
How great the pain of searing loss -
The Father turns His face away,
As wounds which mar the Chosen One
Bring many sons to glory.

2 Behold the man upon a cross,
My sin upon His shoulders;
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice
Call out among the scoffers.

It was my sin that held Him there
Until it was accomplished;
His dying breath has brought me life -
I know that it is finished.

3 I will not boast in anything,
No gifts, no power, no wisdom;
But I will boast in Jesus Christ,
His death and resurrection.
Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer;
But this I know with all my heart -
His wounds have paid my ransom.

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We give thanks for the saving death and resurrection of Jesus and ask him to be with us now

**Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits you have given me,
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.
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**

We pray God's blessing on each other

May the Lord help you to grow in love, so that you may live a life worthy of the calling he has given you.

May the Lord guide your steps, and confirm your hearts in his love.

May the Lord protect you and keep you in his care now and for ever.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you and those whom you love and pray for, this day and for evermore. **Amen**