

DIOCESE IN EUROPE

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



A Service of Prayer for the Friends' of the Diocese in Europe

20th October 2020

Opening

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

Holy God, in love you created us and called our being “good.” With open hearts, we praise you for your unfailing love. With open hands, we offer you our labours. Bless and guide us now as our day turns towards evening; through your grace, may we share with others the love we receive from you. In the name of God our Creator, Jesus our brother, and the Spirit who lights our way. **Amen.**

First Reading: John 13:12-20

After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, ‘Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them. I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfil the scripture, “The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.” I tell you this now, before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am he. Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.’

Response

Teach us to seek your wisdom

as we embrace the folly of your love

A Song of Christ's Compassion

- 1 Jesus, like a mother you gather your people to you; ♦
you are gentle with us as a mother with her children.
- 2 Often you weep over our sins and our pride, ♦
tenderly you draw us from hatred and judgement.
- 3 You comfort us in sorrow and bind up our wounds, ♦
in sickness you nurse us, and with pure milk you feed us.
- 4 Jesus, by your dying we are born to new life; ♦
by your anguish and labour we come forth in joy.
- 5 Despair turns to hope through your sweet goodness; ♦
through your gentleness we find comfort in fear.
- 6 Your warmth gives life to the dead, ♦
your touch makes sinners righteous.
- 7 Lord Jesus, in your mercy heal us; ♦
in your love and tenderness remake us.
- 8 In your compassion bring grace and forgiveness, ♦
for the beauty of heaven may your love prepare us.

from Anselm of Canterbury

Second Reading: Vocation *from* "No Man Is an Island" by Thomas Merton

Each one of us has some kind of vocation. We are all called by God to share in His life and in His Kingdom. Each one of us is called to a special place in the Kingdom. If we find that place we will be happy. If we do not find it, we can never be completely happy. For each one of us, there is only one thing necessary: to fulfill our own destiny, according to God's will, to be what God wants us to be.

We must not imagine that we only discover this destiny by a game of hide-and-seek with Divine Providence. Our vocation is not a sphinx's riddle, which we must solve in one guess or else perish. Some people find, in the end, that they have made many wrong guesses and that their paradoxical vocation is to go through life guessing wrong. It takes them a long time to find out that they are happier that way.

In any case, our destiny is the work of two wills, not one. It is not an immutable fate, forced upon us without any choice of our own, by a divinity without heart.

Our vocation is not a supernatural lottery but the interaction of two freedoms, and, therefore, of two loves. It is hopeless to try to settle the problem of vocation outside the context of friendship and of love. We speak of Providence: that is a philosophical term. The Bible speaks of our Father in Heaven. Providence is, consequently, more than an institution, it is a person. More than a benevolent stranger, He is our Father. And even the term Father is too loose a metaphor to contain all the depths of the mystery: for He loves us more than we love ourselves as if we were Himself. He loves us moreover with our own wills, with our own decisions. How can we understand the mystery of our union with God Who is closer to us than we are to ourselves? It is His very closeness that makes it difficult for us to think of Him. He Who is infinitely above us, infinitely different from ourselves, infinitely "other" than us, nevertheless dwells in our souls, watches over every

movement of our life with as much love as if we were His own self. His love is at work bringing good out of all our mistakes and defeating even our sins.

In planning the course of our lives, we must remember the importance and the dignity of our own freedom. A man who fears to settle his future by a good act of his own free choice does not understand the love of God. For our freedom is a gift God has given us in order that He may be able to love us more perfectly, and be loved by us more perfectly in return.

Response

If anyone is in Christ,
there is a new creation.

Break for presentations

Prayers

God our Father, you give us gifts that we may work together
in the service of your Son:
bless the leaders of your Church,
that they may be firm in faith,
and humble before you.

Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

Bless those who teach,
that they may increase our understanding,
and be open to your word for them.

Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

Bless those through whom fresh vocations are nurtured,
that through their prayer and gentle guidance,
those whom you call open their ears to your invitation to serve.

Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

Bless those who work in your world today,
that in the complexity of their daily lives
they may live for you, fulfil your purposes,
and seek your kingdom first.

Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

Bless those who are uncertain of their gifts
and those who are powerless in this world's eyes,
that they may be made strong in your gift of the Holy Spirit.

Lord of the Church,
in your mercy hear us.

Bless the life of the Friends' that in its work and witness it may help to strengthen
the bonds of prayer and fellowship across our diocese.

Lord of the Church,
**in you we live and move and have our being: we humbly pray you so to
guide and govern us by your Holy Spirit, that in all our cares and
occupations of our life we may not forget you, but may remember that
we are ever walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Jesus taught us to call God our Father and so we have the courage to pray:

**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.**

Collect

Almighty God,
you have entrusted to your Church
a share in the ministry of your Son our great high priest:
inspire by your Holy Spirit the hearts of many
to offer themselves for the ministry of your Church,
that, strengthened by his power,
they may work for the increase of your kingdom
and set forward the eternal praise of your name;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Conclusion

To God the creator
Who loved us first
And gave this world to be our home.

To God the Redeemer
Who loves us and by dying and rising
Pioneered the way of freedom.

To God the Sanctifier
Who spreads the divine love in our hearts
Be praise and glory and for eternity.

The divine Spirit dwells in us.
Thanks be to God.



Ford Maddox Brown (1821-1893), Jesus washes Peter's feet, Tate Britain, London
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Madox-Brown-Christ-washing-Peter%27s-feet.jpg>

Acknowledgements:

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