

Holy Cross



The Eucharist

with

Spiritual Communion

(Order One – Eucharistic Prayer B)

In Time of Pandemic

INTROIT HYMN O let the heart beat high with bliss

- 1 O let the heart beat high with bliss,
Yea, let it triumph at the sound
Of Jesus' name, so sweet it is,
For every joy therein is found.
- 2 The name that comforteth in woe,
The name of Jesus healing sin,
The name that curbs the powers below
And drives away the death within:
- 3 The name that soundeth ever sweet
In speech or verse or holy song,
And bids us run with willing feet,
Consoled, and comforted, and strong.
- 4 Then let the name of Jesus ring
With lofty praise in every place;
Let heart and voice together sing--
That name shall every ill efface.

O let the heart beat high with bliss

Exsultet cor praecordiis

Percy Dearmer

Latin, 15th century

DUKE STREET (LM)

John Hatton (d. 1793)

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THE COLLECT

Almighty God,

who in the passion of your blessed Son
made an instrument of painful death
to be for us

the means of life and peace:

grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ

that we may gladly suffer for his sake;

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING

A Reading from the Book of Numbers

⁴The Israelites set out by the way to the Red Sea,
to go around the land of Edom;
but the people became impatient on the way.

⁵The people spoke against God and against Moses,
'Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness?
For there is no food and no water,
and we detest this miserable food.'



⁶Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died.

⁷The people came to Moses and said,
‘We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you;
pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us.’

So, Moses prayed for the people.

⁸And the LORD said to Moses,
‘Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole;
and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.’

⁹So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole;
and whenever a serpent bit someone,
that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

Numbers 21.4-9

At the end, the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING

A Reading from Paul’s Letter to the Philippians

⁶Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,

⁷but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,

⁸he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death –
even death on a cross.

⁹Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,

¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2.6-11

At the end, the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

GRADUAL HYMN

- 1 Take up thy cross, the Saviour said,
If thou wouldst My disciple be;
Deny thyself, the world forsake,
And humbly follow after Me.
- 2 Take up thy cross, let not its weight
Fill thy weak spirit with alarm;
His strength shall bear thy spirit up,
And brace thy heart and nerve thine arm.
- 3 Take up thy cross, nor heed the shame,
Nor let thy foolish pride rebel;
Thy Lord for thee the cross endured,
And saved thy soul from death and hell.
- 4 Take up thy cross then in His strength,
And calmly sin's wild deluge brave,
'Twill guide thee to a better home,
It points to glory o'er the grave.
- 5 Take up thy cross and follow Christ,
Nor think 'til death to lay it down;
For only those who bear the cross
May hope to wear the glorious crown.
- 6 To Thee, great Lord, the One in Three,
All praise forevermore ascend:
O grant us in our home to see
The heavenly life that knows no end.

Take up thy cross, the Saviour said
Charles William Everest (1814 – 1877).
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BRESLAU (LM)

Anon from 'Hymnodus Sacer'
arr: Felix Mendelssohn (1809 – 1847)
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GOSPEL READING

Alleluia, alleluia.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

All Alleluia.

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

When the Gospel is announced the reader says

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to *John*.

All Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to Nicodemus:

¹³No one has ascended into heaven
except the one who descended from heaven,
the Son of Man.

¹⁴And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,
so must the Son of Man be lifted up,
¹⁵that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him may not perish
but may have eternal life.

¹⁷Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world,
but in order that the world might be saved through him.'

John 3.13-17

At the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

Back in the 1960s, there was a group of American theologians, who called themselves 'The Death of God Movement'. This is reminiscent of the German atheistic philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, who declared, 'God is dead ... and we have killed him'.

One of them, a Jewish rabbi, said, 'God died at Auschwitz' -- he claimed that you can no longer believe in a god who did not intervene to save his people in the Nazi death camps. There were former Christians among the group too. They recognised that the modern world and its culture lacks a sense of the sacred, of mystery such as in the sacraments, of purpose beyond earning money and material things, and of God gently steering the world along.

Despite what was happening in many parts of the world, perhaps less so in the Western world, they thought that was no hope of bringing people back to traditional Christianity or Judaism. They did have the noble ideal of inventing new ways of thinking about God, but *they* did not draw the crowds back because their arguments were convoluted and obtuse.

I believe that Dietrich Bonhoeffer, himself imprisoned and killed by the Nazis, was nearer the mark when he suggested a 'religionless Christianity'.

What he meant was that a deep personal faith was more important than conventional rituals, signs and symbols. He has a good point – ritual and complexity risk becoming an end in themselves instead of being windows into the sacred.

I do not believe that we *can* survive very long as solitary Christians, without the encouragement and support that praying as members of a church community gives us.

We need God, of course, and we have vertical relationship; but we also need each other we have a level relationship there (†). So, on Holy Cross Day, we could ask: 'Is God dead?'

Well, the old man with a long grey beard floating around on clouds, throwing down thunderbolts to punish naughty people is probably not alive in very many people's minds these days. But the God who was and is Christ and ever shall be Christ; the God who revealed his love for us in the incarnate life of Jesus; the God who was willing to sacrifice himself for our sakes in his death on the Cross, that God *was* dead, **but** only for 48 hours, Now, he lives forever!

Today is our opportunity for recognizing the Cross in a festal atmosphere that would be inappropriate on Good Friday as a symbol of triumph, as a sign of Christ's victory over death, and a reminder of Jesus' promise, "And when I am lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." (John 12:32) First century human beings thought they had killed him, but Jesus triumphed over death. Jesus rose from the dead.

And now, he also lives in all our hearts, minds, bodies and souls: he gives us courage and power when we have to confront pain or problems in our lives; he guides us when we are lost or confused. He lives forevermore, where he is gone to prepare a place for each one of us so that we can be with him in eternal happiness.

The bronze serpent held up on a stick filled the Jewish people in the wilderness with the confidence to overcome the desert snakes. How much more confidence does the sign of the cross give us in our lives because of what happened on one rough wooden cross 2000 years ago in Jerusalem.

But what are we Christians about, exalting an instrument of torture?

We are rejoicing that something so terrible, a barbaric instrument of torture and death has been transformed into a means of redemption for the whole human race.

Nietzsche might have said: 'God is dead ... and we have killed him', but we can say:
'God is not dead, but alive and working in all of us today!' Amen.

OFFERTORY HYMN - Lift high the cross

*Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim
till all the world adores his sacred name.*

1. Come, brethren, follow where our captain trod,
our King victorious, Christ the Son of God.
2. Led on their way by this triumphant sign,
the hosts of God in conquering ranks combine.
3. Each new-born soldier of the Crucified
bears on his brow the seal of him who died.
4. This is the sign which Satan's legions fear
and angels veil their faces to revere:
5. Saved by the cross whereon their Lord was slain
the sons of Adam their lost home regain.
6. From north and south, from east and west they raise
in growing unison their song of praise.
7. O Lord once lifted on the glorious tree
as thou hast promised, draw us unto thee.
8. Let every race and every language tell
of him who saves our souls from death and hell.
9. From farthest regions let them homage bring
and on his cross adore their Saviour King.
10. Set up thy throne, that earth's despair may cease
beneath the shadow of its healing peace.
11. For thy blest cross which doth for all atone
creation's praises rise before thy throne:

*Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim
till all the world adores his sacred name.*

Lift high the cross
George William Kitchin (1827 – 1912)
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CRUCIFER (10 10 R)
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POST-COMMUNION HYMN - And now, O Father, mindful of the love

- 1 And now, O Father, mindful of the love
that bought us, once for all, on Calvary's tree,
and having with us him that pleads above,
we here present, we here spread forth to thee
that only offering perfect in thine eyes,
the one true, pure, immortal sacrifice.
- 2 Look, Father, look on his anointed face,
and only look on us as found in him;
look not on our misusings of thy grace,
our prayer so languid, and our faith so dim:
for lo, between our sins and their reward
we set the Passion of thy Son our Lord.
- 3 And then for those, our dearest and our best,
by this prevailing presence we appeal:
O fold them closer to thy mercy's breast,
O do thine utmost for their souls' true weal;
from tainting mischief keep them white and clear,
and crown thy gifts with strength to persevere.
- 4 And so we come: O draw us to thy feet,
most patient Saviour, who canst love us still;
and by this food, so awful and so sweet,
deliver us from every touch of ill:
in thine own service make us glad and free,
and grant us never more to part with thee.

And now, O Father, mindful of the love
William Bright (1874)
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SONG 1 (10 10 10 10 10 10)
Orlando Gibbons (1583 – 1625)
Lyricist: William Bright (1824 – 1901)
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PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Faithful God,
whose Son bore our sins in his body on the tree
and gave us this sacrament to show forth his death until he comes:
give us grace to glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
for he is our salvation, our life and our hope,
who reigns as Lord, now and for ever.

Amen.

RECESSIONAL HYMN - Through the night of doubt and sorrow

- 1 Through the night of doubt and sorrow
onward goes the pilgrim band,
singing songs of expectation,
marching to the promised land.
- 2 Clear before us through the darkness
gleams and burns the guiding light;
pilgrim clasps the hand of pilgrim,
stepping fearless through the night.
- 3 One the light of God's own presence
o'er his ransomed people shed,
chasing far the gloom and terror,
brightening all the path we tread:
- 4 One the object of our journey,
one the faith which never tires,
one the earnest looking forward,
one the hope our God inspires:
- 5 One the strain that lips of thousands
lift as from the heart of one;
one the conflict, one the peril,
one the march in God begun:
- 6 One the gladness of rejoicing
on the far eternal shore,
where the one almighty Father
reigns in love for evermore.
- 7 Onward, therefore, Christian pilgrims,
onward with the cross our aid;
bear its shame, and fight its battle,
till we rest beneath its shade.
- 8 Soon shall come the great awaking,
soon the rending of the tomb;
then the scattering of all shadows,
and the end of toil and gloom.

Through the night of doubt and sorrow
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