

Welcome to a short time of prayer and reflection for the twelfth Sunday after Trinity. Let us be still and recognise we are in the presence of God: Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen

The Lord be with you

Today's gospel is a continuation of the conversation Jesus is having with his disciples about who he is, and what his followers are called to be. Today he turns towards the cross, trying to help that see that he is the Messiah who saves through entering into the depths of human suffering and that his followers will learn to embrace that truth.

As we come to reflect on this quite challenging gospel passage, let's take a moment to bring to mind all that we find it hard to bear in life, the times when we would prefer that God just erased our difficulties, the times we find it hard to realise God's love in our lives. We bring to God our confession, seeking healing and forgiveness:

Out of the depths have I cried to you, O Lord hear my voice Lord have mercy

If you Lord, were to mark what is done amiss, Lord who could stand? Christ have mercy

But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered. Lord have mercy

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits for him: in his word is my hope.

May Almighty God have mercy upon you, forgive you your sins and bring you to everlasting life Amen

Let us pray:

Almighty and everlasting God,

you are always more ready to hear than we to pray

and to give more than either we desire or deserve:

pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy,

forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid

and giving us those good things

which we are not worthy to ask
but through the merits and mediation
of 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.

We listen to a reading from the Gospel of Matthew 16:21-end
The Gospel of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Sermon : see additional attachment

Let us pray:

Father, through the cross your Son has opened the door to eternal life and drawn a people to you. We pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the world, especially for those who know most keenly what it is to take up the cross in places where faith is persecuted. Guide us all to discover and bear witness to the fullness of life that we enter as we walk with Jesus his way of the cross.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Lord we pray for your world, that those who have positions of power may use them in service of the common good. We pray that all may rediscover the value of the natural world we share and discover together more thoughtful ways of caring for it. Bring healing from all that stifles our flourishing – from war, from inequalities and from the current pandemic.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

May our love be genuine for all with whom we share our lives: help us to show our compassion to friends, family and neighbours. Today we especially pray for teachers and students, parents and children as they prepare for a return to school. Guide all involved in education with wisdom and protect all our schools and colleges.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We persevere in prayer for all who are ill, injured or in distress at home, in hospital or being cared for in the hospice. Bless with the comfort of your presence and such healing that is according to your will all those who we know to be suffering at this time, and those whose pain is known only to you.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Eternal God, we commend to your everlasting love all who have died: those we love and see no longer; those who have died recently and those whose anniversary of death falls around now. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We gather all these intercessions in the prayer 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. Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory. Forever and ever, Amen.

Giving thanks for the communion we share through baptism with one another and with God in Christ Jesus our Lord we make an act of spiritual communion in the words of this prayer:

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. As I cannot receive you sacramentally today, 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.

And we pray for God's blessing on each other and all who we love and pray for:

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord: and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen