

OPENING PRAYERS AND HOLY COMMUNION ARE AVAILABLE AS A VIDEO HERE

PART 1 – OPENING PRAYERS

WELCOME

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.
His steadfast love endures for ever!
Grace and peace be with you
and also with you.

SENTENCE

They cried out in fear, but Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.'
Matthew 14.26–27

LIGHTING THREE CANDLES

We light a light in the name of the Maker,
 who lit the world and breathed the breath of life for us
We light a light in the name of the Son,
 who saved the world and stretched out his hand to us
We light a light in the name of the Spirit,
 who encompasses the world and blesses our souls with yearning
We light three lights for the trinity of love:
God above us, God beside us, God beneath us:
the beginning, the end, the everlasting one.

CANTICLE: A SONG OF CHRIST'S GOODNESS
written by Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109)

In trying times, this Canticle reminds us of the love and compassion of Christ.

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

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

My brothers and sisters, not out of dread and fear, but believing that God is faithful to forgive, let us rid ourselves of what we need to carry no longer.

Merciful God, we have sinned in what we have thought and said, in the wrong we have done and in the good we have not done.

We have sinned in ignorance: we have sinned in weakness: we have sinned through our own deliberate fault.

We are truly sorry. We repent and turn to you.

Forgive us, for our Saviour Christ's sake, and renew our lives to the glory of your name. Amen

May God forgive you, Christ befriend you,
and the Spirit renew you and change your life. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Mighty God and ruler of all creation,
give new strength to our faith,
that we may recognise your presence
even when all hope seems lost.
Help us to face all trials with serenity
as we walk with Christ through the stormy seas of life
and come at the last to your eternal peace.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

PLEASE PAUSE THE VIDEO

PART 2 — AN ALL AGE VIDEO PART 4 OF *WHERE IS GOD?* FOCUSSED ON FINDING GOD IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES AND DOWNLOADABLE MATERIAL FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN [HERE](#)

PART 3 — LOOK UP AND READ THROUGH THE READINGS, LISTEN TO THE [SERMON PODCAST](#) (READ ALONG IF YOU WISH) BY REV JENNIE SAVAGE, AND PRAY THE INTERCESSIONS, TODAY BY RICHARD BROOKS

READINGS

Romans 10:4-15

Psalm 85:8-13

Matthew 14:22-33

SERMON BY REV JENNIE SAVAGE

Available to listen online and/or download – access via Pentecost 2020 link and notice also a reasonable library of past sermons for you to listen to as you exercise or meditate...

Matthew 14:22-33

Let us pray:

Lord, we thank you for the gift of your Word; open our hearts and our minds to your Spirit as we reflect and pray. Amen.

When our kids were primary school age, we had a holiday in Queensland with the obligatory day at a theme park, Dreamworld.

Ross wanted to go on the big roller coaster with two big loops, the 'Thunderbolt'.

Kach was too small to go on it, while Ross was just tall enough to be admitted, but he needed to be accompanied by an adult.

Sav refused on physical grounds, and I would have liked to have refused on grounds of fear.

But how can you say no in what seems a one in a lifetime opportunity for an excited boy.

So, Ross and I joined the long queue, and with each shuffle forward, I felt my heart become more and more a frozen lump.

We finally got onto the ride and I was focusing on breathing calmly.

The Thunderbolt first slowly climbed up a very steep track to get to the height where it then seemed like all hell would break loose.

As we made the ascent, my eyes nervously swivelled around taking in the sheer fall over the side of the carriage – there was no comforting rail or wall on the sides to catch the carriage, should it come off the rails, you just looked straight down to the ground that was getting further and further away.

As we neared the top of that first incline, I was ready to scream prematurely *I want to get off!*

But of course, I couldn't.

The moment before the carriage hit the top and started careering downwards, I decided, *just close your eyes!*

I jammed them shut and felt us take off, screeching along the tracks, hitting corners literally, feeling my head flung side to side, the big loops where you are upside down I could only guess at as those parts would have been the smoothest part of the ride, but there was no way I was going to get a visual on that!

As I felt the carriage slow and pull back into its station, I opened my eyes, breathed, turned to Ross and said, *did you enjoy that dear?*

While I had been well and truly out of my comfort zone, Ross had been enjoying an adrenalin rush.

Fear and adrenalin are not necessarily poles apart.

Think of the term 'fight or flight'.

My fear led to flight by virtue of closing my eyes and blocking the ride out.

Ross did admit he was feeling nervous, but that translated into excitement, the adrenalin rush, the 'fight'.

So with that in mind, we approach today's gospel reading.

It was the end of a long day during which Jesus had withdrawn into the desert after hearing the news of the execution of John the Baptist. The crowd though had found him, and he had compassion on them and ministered to them, the day culminating in the event of the feeding of the 5,000.

At the end of this day Jesus sends his disciples away in their boat, to head to the other side of the lake, while he dismissed the crowds.

He then went up the mountain to pray, finally finding that solitude he had sought earlier.

The text notes that it was evening while he was up there alone, and *at the same time* the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land for the wind was against them.

The suggestion seems that the disciples should have got to the other side of the lake by now, but the storm has prevented them, they are still *far from the land*.

The time is noted as being in the evening.

Next, the time is noted as *early morning*.

Hours and hours have passed.

Hours and hours battling this storm.

Imagine the state of the disciples: the exhaustion, both mental and physical, perhaps by then hallucinating, on the edge of life and death, when they see a figure coming towards them on the stormy sea – what else could it be but a ghost?

They cry out in fear, then the figure identifies himself as Jesus.

Would we assume then, that they are immediately calmed?

As I imagine myself into this scenario with the storm still raging around, and this figure standing there on the sea, I feel that Peter perhaps speaks with some hysteria, *Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water!*

Why does he have to be commanded?

Why not just get out and throw himself at Jesus?

One scholar suggests this is a test, a faith test, of stupidityⁱ.

Not given by Jesus, but by Peter.

This test is compared to the type of temptations Jesus faced in the desert.

The satan in effect says to Jesus, if you are you, do something stupid.

The three stupid things Jesus could do in that scene were:

1. Break his fast, and his teeth, on rocks (turn stones into bread).
2. Worship someone other than God.
3. Leap to his death.

But he resisted and did none of them.

In today's scene, Peter in effect says, *if you are you, order me to do something stupid*; and Jesus says, *okay, do something stupid*.

Hysteria usually does not result in sane behaviour.

Hysterical people often do something stupid.

Peter gets out of the boat, and surely does not walk, but tries to stagger towards Jesus.

(You really wonder if the translation into English does lose the essence of the storytelling).

There's a storm still going on, and no one walks in a storm the way they would in a park on a sunny day (yet we often seem to read it in this way).

Then Peter sinks like his namesake, a rock (Peter means rock).

He fails his own test, the stupid test he put upon himself.

And he then cries out, *Lord save me!*

The truer cry and action of faith.

And Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him.

The true response to faith.

But what does Jesus mean by saying, *You of little faith, why did you doubt?*

Was it about Peter's failed attempt to walk on water?

Or was it Peter's doubt over whether it was Jesus who was coming to them?

Was it over his hysterical reaction?

The storm was not over until they were all back in the boat.
In the Bible, no one ever tries to walk on the water again.

Another aspect of this story is that of Jesus himself.

We often imagine Jesus strolling hovering millimetres above the sea, impervious to the wind and lashing rain, not getting wet, not even breaking into a sweat; while all the time the his disciples are rowing for their lives in the threat of the storm and sea that may any moment swamp them.

Imagine this differently.

Jesus walks on the water the way people walk on deep snow: sometimes on the surface crust, sometimes breaking through, sometimes floundering, stumbling as the almost solid enough snow gives way unevenly.

This Jesus gets wet, and works very hard indeed, as he struggles through the storm and the water, sometimes on the surface, sometimes wallowing almost to his waist, walking to help people who are also tortured by the waves.ⁱⁱ

People of little faith whom he loves, whom he comes toward to rescue, to grab them from the swallowing waves.

This picture is more real to the understanding of his incarnation.

Therefore, he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect ... Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested. (Hebrews 2:17-18)

Let us pray,

Dear God, encourage us, strengthen us, embolden us, and bless us with the promise that you will never let us go. In Jesus' name, Amen.

INTERCESSIONS BY RICHARD BROOKS

Liberating God, we raise our voice with thanksgiving and praise for the presence of your spirit that continually works among saints and sinners, bringing into being the hope of your love and justice for all creation. Amen.

We pray for the world battling to overcome its threats and its seeming impoverishment in the face of such dangers. Holy One, in our hands, we hold our dreams. Cradled in our palms are the visions we each have for something powerful and good. Curled within our fingers are our hopes for how our dreams can be part of your Good Dream. Bless and make it so, we pray.
Living God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Be with us as we endure the challenges of struggle and hardship, knowing that the arc of every faithful story bends toward healing and wholeness. Help us to open our imaginations to the great possibilities of transformation held in your Great Dream of humanity on this abundant planet.
Living God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Accompany us as we struggle to hold tight to the vessel of salvation. When the waves of hatred threaten, help us to open our eyes and hearts with love to your dream of compassion. When the waves of scarcity crash in, help us to open our hands in generous love, remembering your dreams of abundance. When the waves of greed and materialism press in, help us to live simply and with courage, embodying your dream of grace.
Living God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for your holy catholic church. We pray that we may envisage and understand what you would have us do in our lives in our various environments, and among those with whom we share our lives. We pray that leaders, theologians, clergy and people, will carry the Good News of your Son into every setting.
Living God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Loving and merciful God, we pray for all who are lonely, or sad, or distressed, or desperate, or sick, or dying, and we pray for all who care for them. By your grace, grant them peace. We pray for courage and wisdom, that we may respond to the needs of others in the name of Jesus.
Living God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Loving and merciful God, you lead us into the joys of everlasting life. We draw strength and wisdom from the saints of every age and we remember all whose anniversary is at this time. We remember with deep affection the life of Elizabeth Allin Roylance and her lively ministry in this place. Help us, that we too may come to live with you for ever.
Living God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord who taught us to pray:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.

PLEASE RESUME THE VIDEO FOR HOLY COMMUNION

GREETING OF PEACE

We are the body of Christ.
His Spirit is with us.
The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation.
Through your goodness we have these gifts to share.
Accept and use our offerings for your glory
and for the service of your kingdom.
Blessed be God for ever.

HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord be with you,
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts;
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We offer you praise, dear God, and hearts lifted high,
for in the communion of your love
Christ comes close to us
and we come close to Christ.
Therefore with the whole realm of nature around us,
with earth, sea and sky, we sing to you.
with all the saints before and beside us, we sing to you.
we join in the song of your unending greatness.

Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is our brother Jesus,
who walks with us the road of our world's suffering,
and who is known to us in the breaking of bread.
On the night of his arrest Jesus took bread and having blessed it he broke the bread and gave it to
his disciples, saying, This is my body, given to you.
In the same way he took wine and having given thanks for it he poured it out and gave the cup to
his disciples, saying, This cup is the new relationship with God,
sealed with my blood. Take this and share it. I shall drink wine with you next in the coming
Kingdom of God.

Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.

Hear us, O Christ, and breathe your Spirit upon us and upon this bread and wine.
May they become for us your body, vibrant with your life, healing, renewing and making us whole.
And as the bread and wine which we now eat and drink are changed into us, may we be changed
again into you, bone of your bone, flesh of your flesh, loving and caring in the world.

**Blessing and honour and glory and power,
are yours forever and ever. Amen**

THE BREAKING AND SHARING OF THE BREAD AND WINE

**We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.
We who are many are one body,
for we all share in the one bread.**

AFTER COMMUNION

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

**Living God,
in this holy meal you fill us with new hope.
May the power of your love,
which we have known in word and sacrament,
continue your saving work among us,
give us courage for our pilgrimage,
and bring us to the joys you promise.**

**Father,
You sent your Son to bring us truth
and your Spirit to make us holy;
open our hearts to exalt you,
open our lives to reveal you,
our one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

BLESSING

**On our hearts and on our houses,
The blessing of God.
In our coming and our going,
The peace of God.
In our life and our believing,
The love of God.
At our end and new beginning,
Be arms of God to welcome us and bring us home. Amen.**

DISMISSAL

**Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.**

Liturgy from © The Iona Community from The Iona Abbey Worship Book, Wild Goose Publications, 2001
Offertory Prayer from A Prayer Book for Australia © Broughton Publishing 1995

ⁱ Richard W. Swanson; Provoking the Gospel of Matthew (Pilgrim Press, 2007) p.194

ⁱⁱ Ibid p.196