

# Parish of Central Exeter

Night Prayer

13th Sunday after Trinity 6 September 2020

Welcome everyone.

## Behind Closed Doors



*We start this evening with a bell ringing from the Valaam monastery, Russia, calling us to worship. This leads to a group of monks there singing Agni Parthene, an ancient hymn to Mary in church-slavonic.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7wPXz-Qes>

*The liturgy for our service this evening is taken from 'Liturgies from Lindisfarne' by Ray Simpson.*

### Opening prayer

Spirit of the Risen Christ,  
as lamps light up the evening,  
shine into our hearts  
and kindle in us the fire of your love.

*If you wish to light a candle, do it now and say: 'The light of Christ has come into the world.'*

We give you thanks that you led our forebears in the faith  
through a cloud by day and a fire by night.  
We give you thanks, kindly light,  
that the torch of faith was brought to this land,  
and that you ever lead your people on.  
Light up our dark hearts by the light of your Christ;  
may his Word illumine our way,  
for you pour forth loving kindness  
upon your creation,  
Source and Saviour and radiant Spirit.

May the light of lights come into my dark heart;  
may the Spirit's wisdom come to me  
from my Saviour.

May the peace of God be mine this night,  
the peace of the Son be mine this night,  
the peace of the Father be mine this night,  
the peace of all peace be mine this night,  
each morning and evening of my life.



## Confession and forgiveness

You might like to hear

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H3v9unphfi0>

*Miserere mei Domine* (A setting by Allegri of Psalm 51.)

*For many people this is a sublime piece of music, and it is hard to realise it is a penitential prayer.*

*Sung here by the Tenebrae Choir in the church of St Bartholomew the Great, London.*

I have copied the opening and some later lines (in English) as our prayer of confession.

Have mercy upon me, O God: after Thy great goodness.

According to the multitude of Thy mercies, do away mine offences.

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness: and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my faults: and my sin is ever before me.

For Thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it Thee:

but Thou delightest not in burnt-offerings.

The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit:

a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt Thou not despise.

### **Psalm 103: 8,10-12**

The Lord is compassionate and gracious,  
slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.

He has not dealt with us according to our sins,  
nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

For as high as the heavens are above the earth,  
so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him.

As far as the east is from the west,  
so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

### **Reading. Matthew 6: 5-8, Picture and Comment**

#### **Close the door when you pray.**

<sup>5</sup>“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. <sup>6</sup>But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. <sup>7</sup>And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. <sup>8</sup>Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.



'Interior' by Vilhelm Hammershøi  
1899, National Gallery, London.

*'When you pray, go into your room,  
close the door....'*

### **Reflection on the painting**

by Rev Nicholas Holtham, St Martin's in the Fields, London.  
*(in The Art of Worship, published by the National Gallery)*

The room is compact, the doors closed, and the woman's back is turned to us so we cannot see her face or what she holds in her hands. The picture represents her private life; the woman's pose is out of keeping with our society obsessed with transparency and lives lived in public.

The desire to find spiritual direction has led to the growth in the number of people taking time out to make retreats to religious communities or places of prayer and solitude. There are two parts to this process: finding the way, and acting on it. The latter part is generally harder.

Eternal Light, shine in our hearts;  
Eternal goodness, deliver us from Evil;  
Eternal Power, be our support;  
Eternal Wisdom, scatter the darkness of our ignorance;  
Eternal Pity, have mercy upon us;  
That with all our heart and mind and soul and strength  
We may seek your face  
And be brought by your infinite mercy to your holy presence,  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen  
*(Alcuin of York c735 – 804)*

Our reading from Matthew continues with:

<sup>9</sup>“This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,

<sup>10</sup> your kingdom come,  
your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> Give us today our daily bread.

<sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

<sup>13</sup> And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one.’

Here we have a version of the Lord’s prayer sung as an orthodox chant.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhNk0j2H-Zs>

### **Intercessions**

Into your hands, O Lord,  
We place our families, our neighbours,  
Our brothers and sisters in Christ,  
And all whom we have met or talked to today....

Enfold them in your will.

Into your hands O Lord,  
We place all who are victims of prejudice,  
Oppression or neglect;  
The unwanted, the frail....

May everyone be cherished throughout their life.

Into your hands, O Lord,  
We place all who are restless, sick,  
Or prey to the powers of evil....

Keep them in your peace.

Into your hands, O Lord,  
We place these members of our community  
And others in our hearts....

Watch over them and over us this night.



## Closing

I make the sign of the cross of Christ.  
My Christ, my Shield, my Encircler;  
each day, each night, in light, in dark,  
my Treasure, my dear One.

The almighty and merciful Three encircle us,  
that awake we may watch with Christ,  
and asleep we may rest in peace.

## Blessing

*The blessing and our closing music is John Rutter's setting of Deep Peace, sung here by Kathryn Jenkins.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H46Bh3Z3ZsE>

Deep peace of the running wave to you  
Deep peace of the flowing air to you  
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you  
Deep peace of the shining stars to you  
Deep peace of the gentle night to you  
Moon and stars pour their healing light on you  
Deep peace of Christ  
Of Christ the light of the world to you  
Deep peace of Christ to you



*'Deep peace of the flowing air to you'*  
*Jana Skarecky 2013*  
*She is a contemporary Canadian composer and visual artist*  
<http://www.janaskarecky.com/artist/artwork/2013-to-present>