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EASTER 6B

5th May 2024

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Gathering prayers

The Spirit of God says 'come'.

Jesus Christ, the bride of the church, says 'come'.

Let anyone who hears this say 'come'.

Let anyone who is thirsty, thirsty for the water of life, come.

Come, you are welcome,

The Spirit of God is in this place, in this time, calling to you.

Spend a few moments in stillness, preparing yourself to enter into a space of worship.

Amen.

Hymn:

439 STF - Abba Father - [YouTube](#)

You may now wish to say The Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar.

Reading: John 15:9-17 – [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the reading:

Love lifts us up where we belong.

All you need is love.

Love wins.

Today is an invitation into thinking about the role of love in your life. How are you responding to love's invitation?

In today's reading from John 15, Jesus offers profound insights on love, choice, and mission, creating a rich tapestry for your time of reflection. This passage invites you to delve into the depth of Jesus' command to love as God has loved us, a love characterised by sacrifice, choice, and purpose.

This message offers both a challenge and an inspiration as you seek to navigate your daily life.

Firstly, note the way Jesus emphasises that: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love." This instruction isn't simply an emotional statement; it's a call to abide—a decision and commitment to stay connected to the source of divine love.

This week, challenge yourself to reflect on how you choose to remain in Jesus' love. How does this choice influence your interactions and decisions? Consider the ways in which love can guide your actions more consciously, even—perhaps especially—when it's difficult.

Jesus also talks about the greatest form of love: laying down one's life for one's friends. While few may be called to make such an ultimate sacrifice, we are all called to live selflessly, putting the well-being of others before our own comfort. This week, inspire yourself by identifying opportunities to practice sacrificial love. It could be as simple as

giving up your time to help a neighbour, or it might involve speaking out against injustice, standing in solidarity with those who suffer. Ask yourself: In what ways can my actions reflect this profound form of love?

Significantly, Jesus elevates his followers from servants to friends, explaining that they have been chosen to bear fruit—fruit that will last. This transformation from servant to friend implies a relationship based on transparency, mutual respect, and shared mission. This week, take time to meditate on the nature of your 'friendship' with Jesus. How does this friendship empower you to act in the world? Reflect on your personal mission—how are you called to bear lasting fruit in your community and beyond?

Finally, Jesus links obedience to his commandments with complete joy. This connection might seem counterintuitive in a culture that often associates joy with freedom from constraints. Yet, Jesus suggests that true joy comes from living within the bounds of God's love and commands. This week, inspire yourself to find joy in this divine paradox. Where can obedience to divine principles of love and justice bring you unexpected happiness and fulfilment?

As you reflect on these themes, consider journaling your thoughts and reactions each day. Let this passage challenge and inspire you to live out a deep, abiding love that acts, chooses, sacrifices, and ultimately transforms.

Responding in prayer

God of all grace,

In the stillness, I bring all the concerns I have been reflecting on this week to you, in prayer. Lord, in your mercy, hear my prayer for places where people are affected by poverty, injustice, conflict and the greed of others.

May the seeds of justice germinate and righteousness begin to blossom and flourish,
So that all may know your abundant love.

[Silence]

God of all love,

In the stillness, I pray for the places I call home - my own town, city, village and community. I hold in my heart the places where isolation has left people suffering, poverty and homelessness impact people's chances of fulfilling their potential, dreams wither and die. Lord God, may your love flow afresh through these places, so that all may know your promise of fullness .

[Silence]

God of love,

Help me to be an answer to prayer this and every day.

Loving God, today I am ready to respond to you. I am here, listening, longing.
Come, Lord Jesus, by your Spirit,

Amen.

Responding in song

363 STF - My Jesus, my Saviour – [YouTube](#)

Blessing

Go and enter into the flow of love that is at work in the universe.

Go and discover that God is out there, moving, transforming, touching lives and all creation.

Go and discover the ways in which you are invited to join in with the dance of the divine.

May you go and encounter the Spirit of God, already at work. Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week Ahead

Monday 6th May

- Gracious God, I know you have plans for me- plans for me to be a part of your kingdom and an agent of love in the world.
- Today, show me how to respond to the invitations I might receive. Help me to be open to the opportunities to share your love.
- In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Tuesday 7th May

- God who is both good shepherd and almighty Creator,
God who is Father and Mother,
God who is Spirit and Christ,
Three in one,
Show me how to walk in your way. Amen.

Wednesday 8th May

- Go outdoors and find something natural: a stone, leaf, flower, or something else. Consider the ways God has made this thing and then reflect on how you too are wonderfully made by God. What does this mean to you?

Thursday 9th May

- On this day in 1974, the US judiciary opened a formal impeachment hearing against President Richard Nixon, amidst the Watergate scandal.
- Today, we pray for all in leadership: that they might resist the temptations of worldly power, and seek to use their positions and power to suit those they serve, rather than selfish ambitions. Pray for wisdom, and for grace

Friday 10th May

- Gracious God, show me how to love without borders or restrictions, how to radically live out your calling on my life and your challenge to all of us to live in the way of love.
- Show me how to be the kind of shepherd who would always go in search of the one most in need, how to reach out to the lost sheep in my life and community.
- Show me how to love as you love, O Christ.

Saturday 11th May

- Sit silently for ten minutes and let your mind wander. Offer any thoughts and feelings to God.