

**Hymn:**

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;  
To his feet thy tribute bring;  
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,  
who like me his praise should sing?  
Praise Him! Praise Him!  
Praise Him! Praise Him!  
Praise the everlasting King!

Praise him for his grace and favour  
to our fathers in distress;  
praise him still the same for ever,  
slow to chide, and swift to bless.  
Praise Him! Praise Him!  
Praise Him! Praise Him!  
Glorious in His faithfulness!

Father-like he tends and spares us;  
well our feeble frame he Knows;  
in his hands he gently bears us,  
rescues us from all our foes.  
Praise Him! Praise Him!  
Praise Him! Praise Him!  
Widely as His mercy goes!

Frail as summers flower we flourish,  
blows the wind and it is gone;  
but while mortals rise and perish,  
God endures, unchanging on.  
Praise Him! Praise Him!  
Praise Him! Praise Him!  
Praise the high eternal One!

Angels help us to adore him;  
ye behold him face to face;  
sun and moon, bow down before him,  
dwellers all in time and space.  
Praise Him! Praise Him!  
Praise Him! Praise Him!  
Praise with us the God of grace!

**Collect**

Almighty God, who called your Church to bear witness that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself: help us to proclaim the good news of your love, that all who hear it may be drawn to you; through him who was lifted up on the cross, and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

**A reading from the book of Deuteronomy**

Moses said: So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it but keep the commandments of the Lord your God with which I am charging you.

You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!' For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is whenever we call to him? And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today? But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**Responsorial Psalm**

**(Psalm 15)**

**R:/ Through the greatness of your mercy I will come into your house.**

Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle? Who may rest up on your holy hill? Whoever leads an uncorrupt life and does the thing that is right; **R:/**

Who speaks the truth from the heart and bears no deceit on the tongue; Who does no evil to a friend and pours no scorn on a neighbour; **R:/**

In whose sight the wicked are not esteemed, but who honours those who fear the Lord. Whoever has sworn to a neighbour and never goes back on that word; **R:/**

Who does not lend money in hope of gain, nor takes a bribe against the innocent; Whoever does these things shall never fall. **R:/**

**Second Reading**

**(James 1. 17-27)**

**A reading from the Letter of James**

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. In fulfilment of his own purpose, he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures. You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. Therefore, rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with

meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act – they will be blessed in their doing. If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

*The Gospel*

*(Mark 7.1-8,14-15, 21-23)*

**Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Give thanks to the risen Lord.**

**Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Give praise to his name.**

**Jesus is Lord of all the earth,  
he is the king of creation.**

**Alleluia! Alleluia!...**

The Lord be with you **And also with you**

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to Mark.

**Glory to you, O Lord!**

When the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them (for the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles). So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, 'Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?' He said to them, 'Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, "This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines." You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.'

Then he called the crowd again and said to them, 'Listen to me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.'

'For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander,

pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Spread the good news o'er all the earth,  
Jesus has died and risen.**

**Alleluia! Alleluia!...**

**The Homily**

**Rev Angela**

I am sure many of you read a Sunday newspaper and at times the Sunday tabloids thrive on catching a celebrity or politician doing something in private that they have condemned in public. Think about the chaos around public figures and the Covid restrictions. 'Hypocrite!' the headlines roar, and the story unfolds with smug satisfaction that someone has been caught out. It seems that there are many in our society willing to point the finger at the failings of others; sadly, some of those attitudes rear their heads in our churches too. Hypocrisy is what Jesus accused the Pharisees of – but is it the same thing? Is there a difference between what Jesus does and what the tabloids do, Sunday by Sunday?

In our gospel reading today Jesus challenges the Pharisees as they accuse Jesus' disciples of eating with unwashed hands - what greater significance this has for us this year after the hand washing that has been drilled in us throughout the pandemic. Jesus tells the Pharisees that it is what is inside the heart that is more important to the way we live. It's not what goes into a person's body that defiles a person but rather the words and the actions that come from inside. He accuses the Pharisees of honouring God with their lips but not with their words and action. In doing this Jesus holds up a mirror to the way they observe their faith and calls them hypocrites. Maybe they would have made the Sunday tabloid of Jesus' day.

If we held up a mirror to our faith what would the honest appearance be? The choices we make and the words we speak reflect what is important to us and what values we hold onto. This begs the question how do the choices we make reflect values we hold? And who or what influences our values? This helps us to think about what makes for a healthy and supportive community of faith and what we need to help us live as true disciples of Jesus.

Over the last five years in the Benefice or now the Ministry Area I have observed what makes for a supportive community of faith. I feel today like one of our Yr6 Leavers moving on to the next phase of their education. When we spoke to the Leavers in July, they were feeling excited about a new start but also apprehensive about the challenges ahead, they were sad and happy at the same time. Mixed emotions for Yr6 leavers as we sent them on their ways and mixed emotions for me today. It feels like I am finishing my primary school and moving to a place of more

responsibility, but one thing I know is that the East Vale will hold a special place in my heart, as our primary schools will be for the Leavers.

What I have learned is that the choices we make and the values we hold are very important. As disciples of Christ, we need to be able to love as he loves us, but before we can do that, we need to know that God loves us unconditionally. When we hold up that mirror to our faith, we need to show honesty, not try to be someone we are not and we don't need to be perfect, but we need to show our vulnerability in our actions. One thing that has struck me over the last few years is that we come as disciples of Jesus 'just as we are', each one of us is an individual with different skills and talents and God uses all of us for his service. What do we see when we hold up that mirror, are we more like the Pharisees picking fights about tradition or are we more like the disciples working with words and actions from the heart? Are we brave enough to reach out in mission to our communities or are we just happy where we are? All these questions help us to decipher the person we are as disciples of Christ in our time. Knowing Jesus and learning to live as his disciples should change us and inform the way we live with one another. We need to take time to learn from one another, to shape and support one another in our Christian values.

One of my mantras in life is that we learn something new every day and I have learned so much from my time in the East Vale and each one of you has become a part of my tapestry of life. I love that image of a tapestry with a beautiful picture on the visible side but threads of all different colours criss-crossing together on the back. All are needed to make the picture complete. Sometimes our paths have crossed for a long period of time, and I have begun to know people very well and other times just a brief encounter with someone has made a big difference to the overall picture. As all those encounters have criss-crossed together a beautiful picture has emerged, which I will never forget.

All those threads and encounters are not just part of my story but part of the bigger picture of the community of the East Vale. A place where everyone contributes and works hard in order to be a healthy and supportive community of faith. A community that reflects your values and choices in the words and actions that are taken. As Jesus said - it's not what goes into the body that defiles us but rather the words and actions that come from inside the heart. This is something to constantly reflect on as a community of faith develops.

#### **Hymn:**

**Just as I am, without one plea,  
but that thy blood was shed for me,  
and that thou bidst me come to thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come.**

**Just as I am, though tossed about  
with many a conflict, many a doubt,  
fightings within and fears without,  
O Lamb of God, I come.**

**Just as I am poor, wretched, blind;  
sight, riches, healing of the mind,  
yea, all I need, in thee to find,  
O Lamb of God, I come.**

**Just as I am, thou wilt receive,  
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve:  
because thy promise I believe,  
O Lamb of God, I come.**

**Just as I am, thy love unknown  
has broken ev'ry barrier down,  
now to be thine, yea, thine alone,  
O Lamb of God, I come.**

**Just as I am, of that free love  
the breadth, length, depth, and height to prove,  
here for a season, then above,  
O Lamb of God, I come.**

#### **The Intercessions**

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ let us pray to the Father.

We pray that the church may be maintained in true holiness, keeping right traditions, and not being constrained by human customs. We pray for June our Bishop and all who minister within the Diocese. In our cycle of prayers with Lagunda Parish, we pray for all schools in our communities as they return after school holidays. Give grace to all Christian people to worship not only with their lips but in their lives.  
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Guide all rulers and those in authority to govern with both justice and mercy, remembering especially, the nation of Afghanistan during this time of anxiety and unrest and the island of Haiti after the devastation. Bring all people to set aside the things that divide them and to embrace those which unite them in their shared humanity.  
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Cleanse us from evil thoughts and desires and from hostility to any whose ways are different from our own. We pray for harmony and mutual respect in the life of the communities to which we belong.  
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Have mercy on those who are ill in mind, body, or spirit. We pray particularly for those who are ill at home or in hospital, thinking particularly of.....

May your loving and healing touch be upon them in their time of need.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Receive the souls of the departed into the Kingdom where human strife has ended, and worship is made perfect. We remember the recently departed..., our own departed loved ones and all whose anniversary of death occurs at this time. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In a moment of silence, we offer our own prayers and petitions this day.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

**Merciful Father,  
accept these prayers  
for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

**Hymn:**

**Love divine, all loves excelling,  
joy of heav'n to earth come down;  
fix in us thy humble dwelling;  
all thy faithful mercies crown!  
Jesus, thou art all compassion,  
pure unbounded love thou art;  
visit us with thy salvation,  
enter every trembling heart.**

**Come, Almighty to deliver,  
let us all thy grace receive;  
suddenly return, and never,  
nevermore thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing,  
serve thee as thy hosts above,  
pray and praise thee without ceasing,  
glory in thy perfect love.**

**Finish, then, thy new creation;  
pure and spotless let us be;  
let us see thy great salvation  
perfectly restored in thee;  
changed from glory into glory,  
till in heav'n we take our place,  
till we cast our crowns before thee,  
lost in wonder, love, and praise.**

### **Prayers for the sick this week:**

Elizabeth Mortimer	Barbara Goodway
Kath Loughor	Colin Bailey
Eunice Wood	Terry Jones
Helen	Colin
John Quick	Joy Rees
Lorna and Geoffrey Powell	Doug Blake

### **Hymn Requests**

If you have any hymn requests for our Zoom worship, please send them to one of the clergy team.

### **Volunteer Administration Role**

There are now 29 Ministry Areas throughout the diocese. Each Ministry Area is being encouraged to look at how administration is undertaken. We are looking for a volunteer to help with administration tasks, initially focusing on the production of the pew notes. Whoever does this could work from home with computer and internet access. Anyone prepared to consider helping in this way should contact the clergy, Lay Chair or Churchwardens.

The clergy team continue to meet for morning prayer each day. Please send any prayer requests, for yourself, family, friends etc to one of the clergy team.

If you need any help or assistance, practically or spiritually in these difficult times please contact one of the team:

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