

ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND ANGLICAN CHURCH

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Sunday, February 28, 2021 Lent 2

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2021

Lent 2 Morning Prayer

10:00 a.m.

THE GATHERING OF THE COMMUNITY

Officiant: Lord, open our lips,

People: And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Officiant: O God, make speed to save us.

People: O Lord, make haste to help us. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: O come, let us worship.

VENITE

PSALM 95.1-7

Come, let us sing to the Lord;

People: let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving

People: and raise a loud shout to him with psalms.

For the Lord is a great God,

People: and a great king above all gods.

In his hand are the caverns of the earth,

People: and the heights of the hills are his also.

The sea is his for he made it,

People: and his hands have moulded the dry land.

Come, let us bow down, and bend the knee,

People: and kneel before the Lord our maker.

For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.

People: Oh, that today you would hearken to his voice!

THE PSALMS

Psalm 22:23-31

You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him; stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!

For he did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted; he did not hide his face from me but heard when I cried to him.

From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear him.

The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the LORD. May your hearts live forever!

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him.

For dominion belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations.

To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, and I shall live for him.

Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now and will be for ever.

People: Amen

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

A READING FROM GENESIS 17:1-7, 15-16

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous." Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, "As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations.

No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you.

God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her."

The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

A READING FROM ROMANS 4:13-25

For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all

of us, as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations") --in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So numerous shall your descendants be." He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore, his faith "was reckoned to him as righteousness." Now the words, "it was reckoned to him," were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

The word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO MARK 8:31-38

People: Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it."

For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

People: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

SERMON

Listening to our call

Our primary calling in life – within the context of each of us as a unique individual with particular abilities, gifts, personalities, life experience - is to be human. As humans we are created to live in community; to be stewards who take care of ourselves, of others and for creation; to act as moral beings; to live in relationship with the very ground and sustainer of our being, God; to live lives filled with re-creation - meaningful, creative and a rewarding life of achievement – and rest or Sabbath.

But as much as we are called to these things, we have this nacky ability to live destructively in terms of how we relate to ourselves, others and all of creation; to fail to act morally; to live meaningless, non-creative and unrewarding lives which are dominated by “work” and bereft of rest. In a sense that is what all the rest of the

Bible from Genesis 3 onwards is all about – God’s mission to restore us our original sense of calling or vocation to be human.

It is ultimately within this unfolding mission of God – to restore us to our full humanity - that we find our call as a follower of Jesus. We do so because it rests on our intention to follow Christ and to find our calling in him. But how is that call to be expressed?

There are three times in Mark’s Gospel when Jesus confronts his disciples with who he really is and in this account he asks them, “Who do people say that I am?” Of course the disciples give a range of answers that are doing the rounds in local discussion, but Peter hits the nail on the head when he says, “You are the Christ!”

Jesus then follows this profound statement of Peter’s with a window into what was to follow - then he is to suffer, to be rejected by those in authority, and ultimately to be killed and find hope in the resurrection. Irrespective of the resurrection bit, Peter is simply horrified and as a clear act of allegiance he draws Jesus aside to rebuke him. Now while Peter meant good, it is clear that he is unable to grasp the intentionality in what Jesus is doing or appreciate the purpose that Jesus has in mind.

It is now that Jesus moves the conversation from the small group (his disciples) and the intimate (Peter) to that of the public (crowd) and says, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” In essence Jesus was saying to Peter and to us, “If you want to follow me then you need to embrace my vocation and calling, and that calling involves living sacrificially. It involves giving up your-all for God’s over-all purpose and intention of restoring humanity for the purpose for which it was created.”

The problem for many of us is that vocation has been reduced to finding things that we find fulfilling or which – if we are really noble – we do for the benefit of others (like nursing or teaching). In a sense, we have reduced vocation to that single element or a reduced version of that for which God created us: to live out our own sense of who we are and – if we are fortunate – because we care. In contrast, Jesus’ call on us speaks of denying ourselves, embracing suffering and sacrifice and following in his footsteps and mission. Ironically, in it is doing this that we find all of those other elements of vocation fulfilled!

It is only once we recognize this supremely over-arching call to follow Christ in this sacrificial way that all of the other elements of our Christian call fall into place: our call to belong to the church; our call to serve as ministers together; our call to engage with the world around us; our call to move out of our comfort zone; our call to gather with other believers; our call to withdraw into solitude with God, and ultimately in how our particular vocation is expressed in practicalities of what we actually do with our lives and the roles we take on.

You see, like Peter, we often put the cart before the horse. To give Peter his credit, he was more than willing to give of himself in dealing with the injustices of his day and working for the establishment of a new political order and – some of us might agree – this is a noble calling. But, as noble and necessary as it was, it failed to recognize God’s over-all intention and mission to restore all of humanity to the fullness which God created us.

Of course, the flip side to all of this, says Jesus, is that those who are willing to sacrifice all in following him are set to gain everything. And those who desire to hang onto the little fragments of value, meaning and memory that they have are set to lose it.

The more I think about vocation and calling, the more I recognize that for those of us who follow Jesus, it is not a matter of what we do or how much we achieve, but rather the extent to which we offer ourselves in sacrifice to simply follow Jesus. That for us, calling and vocation is measured by a different means when we start with that one single presupposition.

People: Amen

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH - THE APOSTLES' CREED

All: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

INTERCESSIONS AND THANKSGIVINGS

LITANY #14 LENT

(With confidence and trust let us pray to the Lord, saying, "Lord, have mercy.")

For the one holy catholic and apostolic Church throughout the world, we pray to you, Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

For the mission of the Church, that in faithful witness it may preach the gospel to the ends of the earth, we pray to you, Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

For those preparing for baptism and for their teachers and sponsors, we pray to you, Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

For peace in the world, that a spirit of respect and reconciliation may grow among nations and peoples, we pray to you, Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

For the poor, the persecuted, the sick, and all who suffer; for refugees, prisoners, and all in danger; that they may be relieved and protected, we pray to you, Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

For all whom we have injured or offended, we pray to you, Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

For grace to amend our lives and to further the reign of God, we pray to you, Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

THE COLLECT

Almighty God, whose Son was revealed in majesty before he suffered death upon the cross, give us faith to perceive his glory, that being strengthened by his grace we may be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

People: Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Officiant: And now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

People: 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. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

NOTICES

BLESSING:

The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make his face shine on us and be gracious to us. The Lord look upon us with favour and grant us peace.

People: **Amen.**

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Assisting Father Simon Bell today:

Officiant/Preacher: Fr. Simon

Video: David Paradis

This morning in our worship we remember in our prayers those of our family and friends who have immediate needs and concerns:

Tanya North; Amy McDuff May; Brenda & Brian; Mark & Winnie; Derek; Theresa & Pete; Jaxon Croft; Ron & Jane Lewis; Staff and Residence at Roberta Place; Michelle & Ian Sinclair; Sean; Brian W.; Kevin H.; Diane M.; Bill Snow; Deborah Hall; Owen; Sophia L; Marianne S.; Amanda Stewart; Kathryn; Kadeem Broomes; Anna Sellers; Marty

The names below are people in need of ongoing prayers for various reasons so we ask you to please continue to pray for them and their continuing need of God's healing touch and grace:

Cecilia Mowat; Brenda Jessem; Jen Galicinski; Sheri Scott; Arlene; Joan Gough; Lorraine W; Stephanie; Fr. Murray; Amy P. & Family; Marg Abbott; Livia & Neil Purcell; Jordan; Margie Mills; Eunice Merrett; Jean Wallace; Nancy Dodds; Lee & Jeannie Martin; Bill & Cathy Gray; Wendy Goodyer; Michelle & Ian Sinclair; Donna Wilson; Garn Mennell; Margaret & Gordon Kennedy; Paul & Rose McIntyre; Jim Tomkins; Do Saunders; Jefferson Jr.; June Osolin; Martin & Stephen Bertelsen; Tanya Wade-Vargas.

In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer we pray for:

The Iglesia Anglicana de la Region Central de America

In the Toronto Diocesan Cycle of Prayer we pray for:

Bishop Jenny Andison