

Holy Trinity SWF  
28<sup>th</sup> February 2021  
2<sup>nd</sup> Lent Year B

**Lord,**

**You promise to be with us, you call us to be for you.**

**We come to worship you:**

**we want to praise your name.**

**Help us to be ready to follow, wherever you lead us  
and to give you praise, this day and every day.**

**We pray in Jesus' name. Amen** (*CtRCL vol 3 Jarvis & Pickard*)

**Hymn**                      **StF 530** To be in your presence (x2)

<https://youtu.be/typ7cueKdT4>

**Prayer of Adoration-**

**Everlasting God, you hold all things in your hands:  
time, space, and all creation.**

**We realize how small we are,  
and yet we rejoice that through your Spirit  
we are enabled to respond to your goodness.**

**The wonder of your suffering love,  
revealed to us in your Son Jesus Christ,  
is almost too much for us to bear,  
and beyond our expression in word or thought.**

**Accept, we pray, the unspoken adoration  
that comes from our thankful hearts;  
for the sake of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen** (*CtL vol 3 Dixon*)

The groups of Bible readings set by the church for Sundays in Lent offer two areas for meditation. One is looking at ourselves, our life and relationship with God. The other is to follow the events leading to the cross.

Unfortunately, these are often only snippets not the whole passage or context.

Today – for example we are asked to consider the second half of Psalm 22.

Now, any Jewish child would immediately know how this Psalm starts. (We don't tend to learn Psalms by heart these days – pity) If you open your hymn books to StF 804 or Bible you will find “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me”

This gives us a different angle from reading the end of the Psalm – “All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord.”

Now the Psalms were written to be prayed, sometimes shouted, but most often sung. We are now going to hear the beginning of this Psalm sung for us by the Psalm Project...

Psalm 22 –the Psalm Project (StF 804) <https://youtu.be/UaJ-moljATU>

Prayer Confession –

**Loving Father, we are so readily tempted,  
so fearful, so prone to lose our courage.  
Sometimes we take the easy way out,  
allowing evil to triumph,  
shrinking from action,  
because we do not hold firmly to our true beliefs.  
We complain about our own suffering,  
which is as nothing  
in comparison with that of your Son, our Saviour.**

**Forgive us, Father,  
That it is our own waywardness,  
that prevents us from recognising you in every part of our lives.  
Forgive us that we too often expect to find all the answers  
or to see the way ahead.**

**May we be more ready to learn from our Lord Jesus Christ  
the way of trust in your fatherly care. Amen** (*CtL vol 3 Dixon*)

As with the Psalm, we are going to explore slightly more than the set reading from the Gospel today. I believe it helps to give a clearer focus for the account written by Mark and also helps us grasp the context or setting.

**Read** Mark 8: 22-26

There are a number of interesting points to this healing. First, the blind man (we don't know his name) is not asking for the healing or "touch" himself. My sister, who is blind, has often been asked if she would like to be able to see again. Her answer is no (!) She says that she doesn't want to see what she looks like now – the last time she could use a mirror was when she was in her early twenties and she likes to think she still looks the same.

The man is led out of the village and it appears to take 2 touches to fully effect the healing. At the first touch the blindness is replaced with Blurred awareness of movement, no clarity or identification. Then at the second touch, focus comes and all is clear. Then he is sent home with orders to avoid the village.

**Hymn** **StF 652** Lord we come to ask your healing

<https://youtu.be/GbbcjEsiwb8>

**Read:** Mark 8: 27-30

These verses are often called the pivot or "tipping point" of Mark's Gospel.

The 8 chapters up to here have detailed Jesus Ministry and Mission, but from now to the missing ending of Chapter 16, it is all about the Journey to the cross. Caesaria Philippi was an interesting "town" – the site of a monument to the god Pan ( one of the ancient gods who came to earth in physical form) the collection of villages was renamed in honour of Caesar (a man who declared himself a god). Here, outside the village, Jesus asks the disciples "Who do people say I am?"

It needs the second prompt from Jesus to focus Peter's mind. And when the clarity of recognition comes, he (and they) were ordered not to tell anyone.

Hymn                      StF 691 What shall our greeting be?

<https://youtu.be/fk7o6JANhj4>

Read:                      Mark 8: 31-38

So now we come to the set reading – having (finally!) managed to “open the eyes” of the disciples to recognise that he was not “a tree, walking” in other words a blurred copy of one of the prophets doing something that a prophet would not normally do. Jesus openly tells them of his coming suffering and death. Like the blind man, Peter is forced to see not only Jesus with clarity but also himself. He has to realise, as we all do when we give our lives to Jesus, that from the moment we say “Jesus is Lord” our lives will never be the same again.

The cost of being a disciple is to stand up and be counted. To not be afraid or ashamed. But also to be willing to hold the pain – our own pain, in living this human life, but also the pain of others. Peter cannot bear the thought of the suffering Jesus will go through and seeks to stop it from happening.

My own experience at my ‘conversion’ was similar – The next week after I had made my statement of faith, the televisions showed (for the first time in this country, I think) pictures of starving children in Biafra. And I said to God – “I can’t do this, Let me go – it hurts too much to see my brothers and sisters suffering. Before I could just switch off but now I can’t”. And God said to me – “*I will not ever let you go. If you switch off to them – you switch off to me.*”

Hymn                      StF 272 From heaven you came

<https://youtu.be/E4963QPHAIM>

**Prayers for others** – in a time of quiet we lift to God all those known to us in any kind of need or sorrow.

From our cries of despair and pain we follow the shape of worship that is modelled in our Psalm (22).

Our troubled souls can be moved to praise God when we trust that he cares for us, loves us and will lift us up and hold us.

**Hymn** StF 635 – [https://youtu.be/vmn\\_HngqBsU](https://youtu.be/vmn_HngqBsU)  
(leaning on the everlasting arms/my troubled soul)

A Traditional Blessing:

**When the first light of sun – Bless you.**

**When the long day is done – Bless you.**

**In your smiles and your tears – Bless you.**

**Through each day of your years – Bless you.**