

St George's Barcelona Virtual Church
Sunday 22nd March, 4th Sunday after Lent

Preparation – The Lord welcomes us

🎵 **SONG OF WELCOME** 🎵

How wonderful, how glorious (*listen to on YouTube*)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vcRak7BdMg>

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

I as Chaplain welcome you to St George's Barcelona and Andorra Virtual Church Service. Thank you to all of you who responded so positively to last week's service. May this one also be a blessing to you. Today in the United Kingdom this is celebrated as Mothering Sunday. We as an international church celebrate Spanish Mother's Day on Sunday May 3rd. As I said last week, those of you who have birthdays during this period will have a grand celebration on return.

🎵 **SONG FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL** 🎵

Whether you're one or whether you're two

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLbGU6ZbuBQ>

We come together in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

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

Faithful one, whose word is life: come with saving power to free our praise, inspire our prayer and shape our lives for the kingdom of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SAYING SORRY

✠ St Paul says 'Be imitators of God; love as Christ loved; do not grieve the Holy Spirit;	put away all anger and bitterness, all slander and malice.' So let us confess our sins to God who forgives us in Christ.
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a time of silence is kept and then:

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you and against our neighbour in thought and word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us, forgive us all that is past and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen.

ABSOLUTION *is pronounced and all respond:*

✠ May almighty God,
who sent his Son into the world to save sinners,
bring *you* his pardon and peace, now and for ever
Amen

THE COLLECT

A period of silent prayer is introduced with the words "Let us pray". The collect is said, and all respond:

✠ Merciful Lord, you know our struggle to serve you:
when sin spoils our lives and overshadows our hearts,
come to our aid and turn us back to you again;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Word – The Lord teaches us

READINGS

✘ **THE PSALM FOR THE DAY is PSALM 23**

A psalm of David.

¹The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,

³ he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

⁴Even though I walk through the darkest valley,^[a]

I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

⁶Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen

✘ **The Old Testament Reading 1 Samuel 16:1-13**

Samuel anoints David

16 The LORD said to Samuel, 'How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.' ² But Samuel said, 'How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me.' The LORD said, 'Take a heifer with you and say, "I have come to sacrifice to the LORD." ³ Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate.' ⁴ Samuel did what the LORD said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, 'Do you come in peace?' ⁵ Samuel replied, 'Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.' Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice. ⁶ When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, 'Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD.' ⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.' ⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, 'The LORD has not chosen this one either.' ⁹ Jesse then made Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, 'Nor has the LORD chosen this one.' ¹⁰ Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, 'The LORD has not chosen these.' ¹¹ So he asked Jesse, 'Are these all the sons you have?' 'There is still the youngest,' Jesse answered. 'He is tending the sheep.' Samuel said, 'Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.' ¹² So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the LORD said, 'Rise and anoint him; this is the one.' ¹³ So Samuel took the horn of

oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah.

This is the Word of the Lord, Thanks be to God

♪ **SONG** ♪ *to prepare for the story of our Lord* **Lord I come, I confess (I need you)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gS9eOnxHP-w>

✕ **THE GOSPEL John 9**

Hear the Gospel of the Lord according to St John, *Glory to you O Lord*

Jesus heals a man born blind

9 As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' ³ 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus, 'but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. ⁴ As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. ⁵ While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' ⁶ After saying this, he spat on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. ⁷ 'Go,' he told him, 'wash in the Pool of Siloam' (this word means 'Sent'). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. ⁸ His neighbours and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, 'Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?' ⁹ Some claimed that he was. Others said, 'No, he only looks like him.' But he himself insisted, 'I am the man.' ¹⁰ 'How then were your eyes opened?' they asked. ¹¹ He replied, 'The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see.' ¹² 'Where is this man?' they asked him. 'I don't know,' he said. The Pharisees investigate the healing ¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. ¹⁴ Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. ¹⁵ Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. 'He put mud on my eyes,' the man replied, 'and I washed, and now I see.' ¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.' But others asked, 'How can a sinner perform such signs?' So they were divided. ¹⁷ Then they turned again to the blind man, 'What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened.' The man replied, 'He is a prophet.' ¹⁸ They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. ¹⁹ 'Is this your son?' they asked. 'Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?' ²⁰ 'We know he is our son,' the parents answered, 'and we know he was born blind. ²¹ But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself.' ²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ That was why his parents said, 'He is of age; ask him.' ²⁴ A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. 'Give glory to God by telling the truth,' they said. 'We know this man is a sinner.' ²⁵ He replied, 'Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I

do know. I was blind but now I see!’ ²⁶ Then they asked him, ‘What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?’ ²⁷ He answered, ‘I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?’ ²⁸ Then they hurled insults at him and said, ‘You are this fellow’s disciple! We are disciples of Moses!’ ²⁹ We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don’t even know where he comes from.’ ³⁰ The man answered, ‘Now that is remarkable! You don’t know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will. ³² Nobody has ever heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.’ ³⁴ To this they replied, ‘You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!’ And they threw him out.

Spiritual blindness

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and when he found him, he said, ‘Do you believe in the Son of Man?’ ³⁶ ‘Who is he, sir?’ the man asked. ‘Tell me so that I may believe in him.’ ³⁷ Jesus said, ‘You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.’ ³⁸ Then the man said, ‘Lord, I believe,’ and he worshipped him. ³⁹ Jesus said, ^[a] ‘For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.’ ⁴⁰ Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, ‘What? Are we blind too?’ ⁴¹ Jesus said, ‘If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.’

This is the Gospel of our Lord, Praise you O Christ

SERMON

Like us, you may have some old technology, which perhaps doesn't have the memory to carry new programs, Instead of throwing them away, they can be a great assistance. We have two old tablets. One we use to mark the monastic hours of prayer. It plays music of our choice at 9, 12, 3, 6 and 9 so that our day can be interrupted for 30 seconds to remind us that we have to focus on God. The other one I keep in the kitchen and use it to listen to Scripture when I am working there – I should be honest and say that Debbie normally does all the cooking, I do the drinks and tidying up! Incidentally it is Debbie’s birthday and we are half a world apart, do remember her and pray that she may be able to return home from Australia soon.

On Thursday morning as I was doing some work in the kitchen I was listening to the book of Numbers. It was the story of the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire that led the people of Israel through the desert. it talks about how the sometimes the cloud was over them for as short time as overnight and at other times it was there for longer.

It struck me that we have the cloud over as just now and we are settled for a time. It's so easy to imagine that this cloud is as the clouds of rain and storm, of oppression and difficulty. However the cloud in the book of numbers was a cloud of God's presence. It was a cloud that was a promise that God was with them and the God was with them whether in their going or in their staying. I think this is exactly the picture of these days that we are experiencing and this brings us to our

readings for this Sunday. As I said last week, take time to read the readings slowly and why not use Psalm 23 as a daily prayer this week.

The first reading is: Psalm 23 A Psalm Of David The Shepherd Psalm

This reading presents some simple and key facts:

1. The Lord is a shepherd who leads us to nourishment, rest and restoration
2. He is with us – however dark the journey we are going through
3. He provides and he blesses in such a way that the blessings are overflowing – it is the overflowing of his love and grace
4. Therefore our experience will be of his goodness and his loving kindness.

The first reading should give us a sense of security, even in the darkest valley. We can trust the Lord. God is with us every day - through the Father our Creator and Protector, Jesus our Saviour and Master and the Holy Spirit our Guide and Enabler. What an awesome gift! Christ said, "*and lo, I am with you always, to the end of the world.*" This is no simple story of history, it has also to be a daily story of the Christian experience.

The second reading is 1 Samuel 16:1-13 The Choosing of David as King.

The message I want to share is simply this. Be careful of first impressions – they can be very superficial. God's choice was not unattractive humanly speaking but God is looking for qualities that go beyond the earthly ones: David is someone open to the Spirit of God. God is primarily interested in our hearts, not our achievements.

This second reading should make us cautious about how we interpret the events we are living through. There are all sorts of fictions and conspiracy theories around. Let us have the wisdom to take time to listen to God. When Samuel did that, he got the right man. When we do that we are more likely to have a sense of God's voice in the midst of what we are going through.

The Gospel reading is John 9:1-41. It is the healing of the man born blind.

There is a very simple progression in this story:

1. Jesus Heals
2. A Man is Blessed
3. The people like it, the Pharisees don't like it
4. The people don't have the courage to oppose them
5. The man testifies to what actually happened
6. He meets Jesus
7. His response in v38 is: **'Lord, I believe,' and he worshipped him.**

This Gospel reading reminds us that only through Jesus is everything made clear. He is the light of the world. The only solution I know to encountering difficult situations is to look to him and when we do, we will worship.

Some lessons to take with us:

- ✘ **We can have a sense of security, even in the darkest valley. We can trust the Lord.**
- ✘ **We should have the wisdom to take time to listen to God. When we do that we are more likely to have a sense of God's voice in the midst of what we are going through.**
- ✘ **It is only through Jesus that is everything made clear. He is the light of the world. Let us look to him and when we do, we will truly worship.**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen

In response to God's Word we join together in the **THE APOSTLES' CREED** –

This is what we believe.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, 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, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come 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.

A TIME OF PRAYER

♪ **O Lord, hear my prayer** ♪ *may be sung*

These responses may be used:

Lord, in your mercy **hear our prayer** or Lord, hear us **Lord, graciously hear us.**

Take time to pray for:

- The world,
- Our neighbourhoods,
- The wider church
- St George's Andorra and Barcelona

A Coronavirus Prayer from the USA

Jesus Christ, you traveled through towns and villages "curing every disease and illness." At your command, the sick were made well. Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of the coronavirus, that we may experience your healing love. Heal those who are sick with the virus. May they regain their strength and health through quality medical care. Heal us from our fear, which prevents nations from working together and neighbors from helping one another. Heal us from our pride, which can make us claim invulnerability to a disease that knows no borders.

A Coronavirus Prayer from the Church of England Website

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy. Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. *(Short Silence)* **Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer**

Merciful God, we commend into your hands those who have departed this life. You gave them breath and loved them through their journey of life. Receive them now at the end of that journey into your eternal presence and may they rest in everlasting peace. *(Short Silence)* **Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer**

Everlasting God, in so many ways you have taught us that you alone can be trusted, even when it might seem that you are far away from us. Help us to remember this fact and feel your loving presence as we go from this time of worship and return to our everyday lives walking obediently in the light of your truth in all that we do this and every day.

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

Holy Communion – The Lord feeds us

THE PEACE

✠ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,
since as members of one body you are called to peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you **and also with you.**

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

All may exchange a sign of peace

PREPARATION OF TABLE

🎵 **HYMN** 🎵 **The Lord's my Shepherd (Crimond)** - the gifts of the people may be gathered (*during this time our giving can be via the Website*)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=294nLmDSZKA>

God of all goodness and grace, receive the gifts we offer; and grant that our whole life may give you glory and praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER –

The great prayer of praise and thanksgiving.

The Lord is here.

His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, it is our duty and our joy,
at all times and in all places to give you thanks and praise,
holy Father, heavenly King, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

And now we give you thanks because each year you give us this joyful season
when we prepare to celebrate the paschal mystery with mind and heart renewed.
You give us a spirit of loving reverence for you and of willing service to our neighbour.
As we recall the saving acts that give new life in Christ,
you bring the image of your Son to perfection within our hearts.

Therefore with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name,
for ever praising you and *saying*:

Holy, holy, holy Lord

God of power and might,

heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest

[Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.]

Accept our praises, heavenly Father, through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,
and as we follow his example and obey his command, **grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit these gifts of bread and wine may be to us his body and his blood;**
who, in the same night that he was betrayed, took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: **Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.**

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them, saying:
Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Therefore, heavenly Father,
we remember his offering of himself made once for all upon the cross;
we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension;
we look for the coming of your kingdom,
and with this bread and this cup we make the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.

Great is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died: Christ is risen: Christ will come again.

Accept through him, our great high priest, this our sacrifice of thanks and praise,
and as we eat and drink these holy gifts in the presence of your divine majesty,
renew us by your Spirit, inspire us with your love
and unite us in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,
we worship you, Father almighty, in songs of everlasting praise:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power
be yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

THE COMMUNION

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

GIVING OF COMMUNION

Draw near with faith. Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you, and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world,
blessed are those who are called to his supper.

Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word, and I shall be healed.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord God, whose blessed Son our Saviour gave his back to the smiters
and did not hide his face from shame: give us grace to endure the sufferings of this present time
with sure confidence in the glory that shall be revealed; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Together we say:

**Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.**

The Dismissal – The Lord sends us out

BLESSING

✠ The Lord bless *you* and watch over *you*,
the Lord make his face shine upon *you*
and be gracious to *you*,
the Lord look kindly on *you*
and give *you* peace;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among *you* and remain with *you* always.

Amen

🎵 **HYMN** 🎵 **Light of the world** to send us out to serve Christ

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZc8fRRBXbM>

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

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