

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**

✠ May the God of love and power
forgive *you* and free *you* from *your* sins,
heal and strengthen *you* by his Spirit,
and raise *you* to new life in Christ our Lord.

Amen.

THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS is said or sung and/or SONGS OF THANKSGIVING

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

🎵 **Hymn response:** Who is there like you

✠ **COLLECT**

Lord of creation,
whose glory is around and within us:
open our eyes to your wonders,
that we may serve you with reverence
and know your peace at our lives' end,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.



SCRIPTURE: NB Normally in **Vita Voce Services** there will only be one reading and the Gospel.

✠ **OLD TESTAMENT READING Exodus 17:1-7**

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. ²The people quarrelled with Moses, and said, 'Give us water to drink.' Moses said to them, 'Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?' ³But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, 'Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?' ⁴So Moses cried out to the LORD, 'What shall I do with this

people? They are almost ready to stone me.’ ⁵The LORD said to Moses, ‘Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. ⁶I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.’ Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. ⁷He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarrelled and tested the LORD, saying, ‘Is the LORD among us or not?’

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

☒ **NEW TESTAMENT READING** **Philippians 2:1-13**

¹If you have **any encouragement from being united with Christ**, if **any comfort from his love**, if **any fellowship with the Spirit**, if **any tenderness and compassion**, ²**then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose**. ³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, **but in humility consider others better than yourselves**. ⁴Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind (*or your attitudes should be*) be in you that was in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, ⁸ he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. ¹² Therefore, **my beloved**, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling**; ¹³**for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure**.

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

☒ **GOSPEL HYMN** In my life Lord be glorified

☒ Jesus is the Lamb of God **who takes away the sins of the world**.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St ... , *Glory to you O Lord*

☒ **GOSPEL** **Matthew 21:23-32**

²³**Jesus entered the temple courts**, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. **"By what authority are you doing these things?"** they asked. "And who gave you this authority?" ²⁴**Jesus replied**, "I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. ²⁵John's baptism--where did it come from? ²⁷**So they answered Jesus**,

"We don't know." **Then he said**, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. **28**"**What do you think? There was a man who had two sons.** He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.' **29**" 'I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. **30**"Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go. **31**"**Which of the two did what his father wanted?" "The first," they answered. Jesus said to them**, "I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. **32**For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

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



Sermon Counterpoints

*May the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts
be pleasing to you O Lord our Saviour*

INTRODUCTION

Last week we were thinking about **Grumbling and Thankfulness**. In our Old Testament reading the people of Israel are still grumbling ... will it never stop?? Surely they knew Moses and Aaron are doing their best. Those called by God need encouragement and poor Moses and Aaron often wanted to give up. However, today I want to highlight something from each of our readings which is a counterpoint to this. Last week's counterpoint was Thanksgiving.

✘ Counterpoints

✘ PSALM 78.1-4 Think of the Next Generation

A counterpoint from the Psalms is to think of the next generation. The Psalm says **we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD**, - what do our children hear? Complaints about the church and about other Christians? Negative comments about services or a desire to discover what God is saying to us each time we are at church. If we are overly church focussed we may have a lot to complain about .. but if our focus is on Christ we can always talk positively. This is not to say we should not be realistic about the church, rather it is to say that there is something – or someone – greater!

I have never been able to accept the premise that we leave it to our children to decide when they grow up. We teach our children about all sorts of dangers and aim to encourage them into all sorts of values. Of course, children have to make decisions for themselves - that is why we have confirmation. Confirmation, though is not the beginning of a process – that comes with baptism – it is the beginning of the next step.

I believe the Gospel is too important to not feature as a major – and I would say – **THE** major part of the growth and development of the next generation.

✘ **OLD TESTAMENT READING Exodus 17:1-7 Prayer strengthens us**

A counterpoint from the Exodus reading is prayer. Moses is despairing – he says in v4 *What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.* What does Moses do? He goes to God in prayer and presents the problem to him. He recognises that only in God can he find strength.

Part of the role of any church leader is to go to God and cry out to him. I take at least one day a month in prayer to ensure that it is in God's strength I go. In a session on bullying of ministers in our area of the London Diocese, over 90% said they had experienced bullying. As Bishop Robert has made very clear, this ought not to be. How can we present an alternative to the world if we do not act differently from them. I am so thankful for the streets and parks of Barcelona – places to walk, talk and reason with God. Nothing happens in this church without a lot of prayer – from me and from many others. The counterpoint to grumbling is prayer.

✘ **NEW TESTAMENT READING Philippians 2:1-13 Be Christocentric**

A counterpoint from the Philippians reading is Christ – I all this as being Christocentric – centred on Christ. The Philippians reading says ⁵*Let the same mind (or your attitudes should be) be in you that was in Christ Jesus.* Paul says: ¹²*Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.* It is Christ's good pleasure we should be focussed on. We cannot please all the people all the time ... our focus is to be on pleasing Christ. Christ can prevent us both from being a grumbler and complainer and someone who listens overmuch to grumbling and complaining.

✘ **GOSPEL Matthew 21:23-32 Obedient Action**

A counterpoint from the Gospel reading is Obedient Action. The Father asked the sons to do something, the one son said yes and didn't whilst the other said no – and did! Obedient action was praised ... Our Lord gives some very strong words to self-righteous chief priests and elders: *Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you.*

✦ Sincere people act! We all have different personalities ... but the one to be praised is the one who acts – and doesn't just speak about it.

✦ I believe Jesus would say to us ... are you thankful in your heart for all the good things in your life? Does your thankfulness result in doing? All doing should arise out of your listening to the Father. Who sets our expectations? Is it voices inside us from our past? Is it those around us pressurising us? Is it the Father as we listen to him –

directly in Scripture and prayer, and indirectly through his people – and particularly in this case, we have to weigh up as to what we believe is of God and what is not.

Therefore, 4 counterpoints to grumbling and complaining:

- ✘ **PSALM 78.1-4 Think of the Next Generation**
- ✘ **OLD TESTAMENT READING Exodus 17:1-7 Prayer strengthens us**
- ✘ **NEW TESTAMENT READING Philippians 2:1-13 Be Christocentric**
- ✘ **GOSPEL Matthew 21:23-32 Obedient Action**

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

THE APOSTLES' CREED –

(If you are able, please stand)

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.

(Please sit)

PRAYERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

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

At the end:

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

Minister Almighty and everlasting God,
the comfort of the sad, the strength of those who suffer:
hear the prayers of your children who cry out of any trouble,
and to every distressed soul grant mercy, relief and refreshment,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

✘ **INTRODUCTION TO THE PEACE**

✘ Peace to you from God who is our Father.
Peace from Jesus Christ who is our peace.
Peace from the Holy Spirit who gives us life.

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*

🕊️ **OFFERTORY HYMN** Father hear the prayer we offer

✠ **RECEIVING BREAD AND WINE**

✠ With this bread that we bring
we shall remember Jesus.
With this wine that we bring
we shall remember Jesus.

Bread for his body,
wine for his blood,
gifts from God to his table we bring.

Blessed be God for ever.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER G – *The great prayer of praise and thanksgiving.*

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

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.**

Blessed are you, Lord God, our light and our salvation;

to you be glory and praise for ever.

From the beginning you have created all things
and all your works echo the silent music of your praise.

In the fullness of time you made us in your image, the crown of all creation.

You give us breath and speech, that with angels and archangels
and all the powers of heaven we may find a voice to sing your praise:

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.]

How wonderful the work of your hands, O Lord.

As a mother tenderly gathers her children,
you embraced a people as your own.

When they turned away and rebelled your love remained steadfast.

From them you raised up Jesus our Saviour,

born of Mary, to be the living bread,
in whom all our hungers are satisfied.

He offered his life for sinners,

and with a love stronger than death he opened wide his arms on the cross.

On the night before he died, he came to supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he gave you thanks.
He broke it and gave it to them, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

At the end of supper, taking the cup of wine,
he gave you thanks, and said:
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.

An acclamations is used

Great is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died:

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

Father, we plead with confidence his sacrifice
made once for all upon the cross;
we remember his dying and rising in glory,
and we rejoice that he intercedes for us at your right hand.

Pour out your Holy Spirit
as we bring before you these gifts of your creation;
may they be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.
As we eat and drink these holy things in your presence,
form us in the likeness of Christ,
and build us into a living temple to your glory.

Bring us at the last with all the saints
to the vision of that eternal splendour
for which you have created us;
through Jesus Christ, our Lord,
by whom, with whom, and in whom,
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.

The Agnus Dei may be said or sung

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, grant us peace.

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 heart 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.**

The body of Christ broken for you; the blood of Christ shed for you

✠ POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Almighty God,
you have taught us through your Son
that love is the fulfilling of the law:
grant that we may love you with our whole heart
and our neighbours as ourselves;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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.

FINAL HYMN

My Jesus My Saviour

Closing

✠ Draw your Church together, O God,
into one great company of disciples,

together following our Lord Jesus Christ
into every walk of life,
together serving him in his mission to the world,
and together witnessing to his love
on every continent and island.

Amen.

Blessing

✠ The love of the Lord Jesus draw *you*,
the power of the Lord Jesus strengthen *you*,
the joy of the Lord Jesus fill *you*;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among *you* and remain with *you* always.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

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