

## **Service for Caversham Park United Reformed Church Sunday 8 October 2023, for the feast of Saint Francis**

Welcome to all of you, here in Caversham Park School, and watching online.

Let us first light our candles, to represent the presence of Jesus Christ among us, and to pray for anything we need to share with one another.

As you probably know, Margaret and I are Franciscans; we are life-long members of the Third Order, Society of Saint Francis. On Wednesday the Church celebrated the life of Saint Francis, and that is the theme today.

During the sermon, I plan to show some pictures, mostly taken from the book accompanying an exhibition this summer in the National Gallery – here's the cover.

This order of service is rather different from what you are used to. It is based on Morning Worship from *The Daily Office SSF, © The European Province of the Society of Saint Francis 2010, and reproduced with permission..* This is the kind of service that the Brothers and Sisters of the First Order used in their houses on Wednesday. Some parts of it are spoken together, and some of those are used daily, so they become very familiar to people who follow them regularly.

### **THE PREPARATION**

O Lord, open our lips;  
**and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Blessed are you, Sovereign God of all, to you be glory and praise for ever! In your tender compassion, the dawn from on high is breaking upon us to dispel the lingering shadows of night. As we look for your coming among us this day, open our eyes to behold your presence and strengthen our hands to do your will, that the world may rejoice and give your praise, Father, Son and Holy Spirit:  
**Blessed be God for ever.**

Christ, the pure and lowly in heart.  
**O come, let us worship.**

THE OPENING CANTICLE: TE DEUM LAUDAMUS in the form of "We praise, we worship thee, O God" (Rejoice and Sing 755)

We praise, we worship thee, O God, thy sovereign power we sound abroad: all nations bow before thy throne, and thee the eternal Father own. Loud alleluias to thy name angels and seraphim proclaim: the heavens and all the powers on high with rapture constantly do cry, 'O holy, holy, holy Lord! Thou God of hosts, by all adored, earth and the heavens are full of thee, thy light, thy power, thy majesty.' Apostles join the glorious throng and swell the loud immortal song: prophets enraptured hear the sound and spread the alleluias round.

Victorious martyrs join their praise and shout the omnipotence of grace, while all thy Church through all the earth acknowledge and extol thy worth. Glory to thee, O God most high!

Father, we praise thy majesty, the Son, the Spirit, we adore: one Godhead, blest for evermore.

OPENING PRAYER

The night has passed and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind:  
*(Silence may be kept.)*

**As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love for you, now and for ever. Amen.**

THE WORD OF GOD

PSALM 19

The heavens are telling the glory of God and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

**One day pours out its song to another and one night unfolds knowledge to another.**

They have neither speech nor language and their voices are not heard.

**Yet their sound has gone out into all lands and their words to the end of the world.**

In them has he set a tabernacle for the sun, that comes forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber and rejoices as a champion to run his course.

**It goes forth from the end of the heavens and runs to the very end again, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.**

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure and gives wisdom to the simple.

**The statutes of the Lord are right and rejoice the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure and gives light to the eyes.**

The fear of the Lord is clean and endures for ever; the judgements of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

**More to be desired are they than gold, more than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, dripping from the honeycomb.**

By them also is your servant taught and in keeping them there is great reward.

**Who can tell how often they offend? O cleanse me from my secret faults!**

Keep your servant also from presumptuous sins lest they get dominion over me; so shall I be undefiled and innocent of great offence.

**Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer. Glory to God, Source of all being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever, Amen.**

PSALM 148

Alleluia. Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights.

**Praise him, all you his angels, praise him, all his host.**

Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you stars of light.

**Praise him, heaven of heavens, and you waters above the heavens.**

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created.

**He made them fast for ever and ever; he gave them a law which shall not pass away.**

Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps;  
**Fire and hail, snow and mist, tempestuous wind, fulfilling his word;**

Mountains and all hills trees and all cedars;  
**Wild beasts and all cattle, creeping things and birds on the wing;**

Kings of the earth and all peoples; princes and all rulers of the world;  
**Young men and women, old and young together; let them praise the name of the Lord.**

For his name only is exalted, his splendour above earth and heaven.  
**He has raised up the horn of his people and praise for all his faithful servants, the children of Israel, a people who are near him. Glory to God, Source of all being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever, Amen.**

FIRST READING      Isaiah 52:7-end

SECOND CANTICLE    A SONG IN PRAISE OF THE WORKS OF GOD (33)

**Ascribe majesty to the name of the Most High; let all creation give thanks with praise. Listen to me, my faithful children, and blossom like a rose growing by a stream of water. Send out fragrance like incense and sing a hymn of praise, bless our God for all creation. Ascribe majesty to the name of the Most High, give thanks with praise, with songs on your lips and with harps. All your works are good, O God, and whatever you command will be done. Glory to God, Source of all being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever, Amen.**

**Ascribe majesty to the name of the Most High; let all creation give thanks with praise.**

SECOND READING    Luke 12:22-34

HYMN All creatures of our God and King (Rejoice and Sing 39 – all 7 verses please)

SERMON

RESPONSORY

Now it is time to awake out of sleep,  
**for the night is far spent and the day is at hand.**

Now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed,  
**for the night is now spent.**

Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light,  
**for the day is at hand.**

Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh,  
**for the night is far spent and the day is at hand.**

THE GOSPEL CANTICLE – BENEDICTUS

He was as the morning star, and as the sun shining on the temple of the Most High. Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, who has come to his people and set them free. He has raised up for us a mighty saviour, born of the house of his servant David. Through his holy prophets God promised of old to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all that hate us. To show mercy to our ancestors, and to remember his holy covenant. This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham, to set us free from the hands of our enemies. Free to worship him without fear, holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life. And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way. To give his people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of all their sins. In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us. To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace. Glory to God, Source of all being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and shall be for ever, Amen.

He was as the morning star, and as the sun shining on the temple of the Most High.

HYMN All I once held dear (Mission Praise 799)

#### THE PRAYERS

##### INTERCESSIONS

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

##### THE OFFERING

Lord, we give you thanks for all your gifts. Bless this money and all that it represents, and grant that it may be used for the glory of your Kingdom for the good of your Church and for the needs of those in want. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

##### THE COLLECT

O God, you ever delight to reveal yourself to the childlike and lowly of heart: grant that, following the example of the blessed Francis, we may count the wisdom of this world as foolishness and know only Jesus Christ and him crucified, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**Amen.**

##### THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**Our Father in heaven, ...**

HYMN Make me a channel of your peace (Mission Praise 456)

THE CONCLUSION

May our blessed Lady pray for us. May Saint Francis and Saint Clare pray for us. May all the saints of God pray for us. May the angels of God befriend us and watch around us to protect us.

**May the Lord Jesus give us his blessing of peace. Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**