

Thursday Prayers 20th June 2024

Ely Cathedral

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Welcome to everyone joining us today. Whether you are worshipping in Ely Cathedral, joining us on Zoom, or from a long way away.

Wherever we are it is good that we are together in our worship.

I am Maureen and it is my turn and privilege to lead us today.

Our theme for today is "Trusting in Christ".

If we can start our service by saying together the Mothers` Union Prayer.

Loving Lord, we thank you for your love so freely given to us all.

We pray for families around the world.

Bless the work of the Mothers` Union as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life.

Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship, and in love and service, reach out as your hands across the world.

In Jesus` name. Amen.

The reading is from the Gospel according to St. Mark Chapter 4. Verses 26-34.(NIV)

²⁶ He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. ²⁷ Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. ²⁸ All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. ²⁹ As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come." ³⁰ Again he said, "What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? ³¹ It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. ³² Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade." ³³ With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. ³⁴ He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.

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Reading these verses it is all about growing, could we liken it to our church life? Seeds being planted in the ground, flourishing and bearing fruit. Farmers

will be able to tell us more about crops, but the idea of us learning and growing with Jesus is there.-Small beginnings, in the hope that they will grow and flourish, over time. So where have the seeds of our church life come from? Did we start with our parents taking us to church and becoming part of Sunday worship? Did our friends encourage us?

I have a reflection to tell, by kind permission of Father Gary Evans from the Parish Church, St. Ives, Ely Diocese. Close your eyes to help you imagine the story, told at an Advent service 2023. I keep reading it, it makes you think, even though we are all at different stages in our prayers.

Reflection

My teenage years were spent on Merseyside, if we wanted to attend the Youth Club on a Sunday evening, going to Evensong, before the getting together in the church hall, was a must! That journey led my sister and I and our Youth Club family into confirmation.-----small beginnings, leading to greater things—flourishing?

The older you become, the more you hope to learn about our Saviour. Yes, you pray, ask him questions, you hope there will be answers. Yes there may be answers, not always what you were hoping for, and not always immediately. In one parish I belonged to we had a church warden, who would pass you by, say “hello” and continue her conversation with Jesus, mainly about simple things-----and listening to her, I began to pray more, in an ordinary way-----but not aloud!

As individuals , we have heard God`s call to be here today, to listen to God speaking to us through Scripture, prayers and all we experience together and by each other. As we pray we need to think. Sometimes we pray and disengage our brains, waiting for God to land the solution on our lap. We need to wait for Jesus to answer but also to be on the look-out for how God might be communicating the answer to us. He uses our intellect. Think prayerfully through a situation, think about the words and what they mean. Think how you feel when you hear them.

Can we join together in Prayer:

Lord direct our thoughts and teach us to pray. Light up our hearts to worship you, in Spirit and in truth. Amen.

God of heaven, You send the gospel to the ends of the earth and your messengers to every nation. Send your Holy Spirit to transform us by the good news of everlasting life in Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Open our ears Lord and teach us to listen to you and to recognise your voice.
Amen.**

Please stand for our hymn.

**Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us,
You are one with us, Mary`s Son.
Cleansing our souls from all their sin,
Pouring your love and goodness in,
Jesus, our love for you we sing,
Living Lord.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, now and every day
Teach us how to pray, Son of God.
You have commanded us to do
This in remembrance, Lord of you.
Into our lives your power breaks through,
Living Lord.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us,
Born as one of us, Mary`s Son.
Led out to die on Calvary,
Risen from death to set us free,
Living Lord Jesus, help us see
You are Lord.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, I would come to you,
Live my life for you, son of God.
All your commands I know are true,
Your many gifts will make me new,
Into my life your power breaks through,
Living Lord.**

Let us pray together.

**Dear God, please be with me this day. I`m not sure what I need to do. It
sometimes feels so difficult. Help me to see your will in my life.**

**Open our ears Lord and teach us to listen to you and to recognise your voice,
amid everything that surrounds us.**

Intercessions.

Before we start, let us have a few moments of silence.

For June 20th in the prayer diary:

We link hands in fellowship with our family across the world. Together may we be inspired with faith for the present and envisioned for the future. May god unite us in worship; build us in service, as together we seek to share his love.

And we pray for Rejaf in South Sudan, Military Episcopate in Kenya. Doko and Owo in Nigeria, Chelmsford in England and Jamaica & Cayman Islands.

We pray for the worldwide work of the Mothers` Union:

Our Worldwide President, Sheran Harper.

All who work in Mary Sumner House.

Our Worldwide links in Lusaka, Shyogwe, Sokoto and Ikka, and Karimnager.

And our Diocese links : Kigali and Vellore.

Lord, we remember

Our Diocesan President, Trustees and Task Group Leaders and the Province of Canterbury.

We pray for our own parishes, our families and friends.

All who are unwell and in need of our prayers.

The countries around the world who are suffering, with conflict, oppression and anywhere where there are people living in fear or poverty.

Together we can say the Thursday prayer.

Heavenly Father, you have called us apart to share in a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer. Take our prayers we humbly ask, fill them with your love and power and use them in the cause of your glorious kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

And together we pray

Loving Father, our faith is in you. We trust our plans for a future where we will thrive in showing love to those we seek to share. Saviour Christ our faith is in you: we trust in your plans for a future where we will be filled with power and guided in every truth. We place our future in your hands. May we continue to enrich family life for future generations. Amen.

We shall finish with

The Grace.