

The Stratfield Mortimer Benefice of

St Saviour
Mortimer West End

St Mary and St John
Stratfield Mortimer

St John the Baptist
Padworth

St Mary's Church of England School

St John's Church of England School

Diocese of Oxford



The Vine
John 15: 1-8.

The Parish Eucharist for The Fifth Sunday of Easter Sunday 2nd May 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

Online at zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6931233940>

Prayer thoughts: As Jesus gathered with his disciples on the night before his crucifixion he tried to prepare them for their life on the other side of his death and resurrection. That's the context for today's Gospel passage, which is part of what is sometimes called 'the farewell discourse.' Those first disciples must have wondered where they would 'be' afterwards and what would become of them? Jesus told them that they should continue to 'abide' or 'be' with him. The kind of 'abiding' that Jesus was speaking about was far more than hanging out or sharing a place somewhere; it is deeply relational. Jesus was saying that he would continue to 'abide' or 'stay' or 'live' both in God and in and with those who followed him and they should 'abide' or 'stay' or 'live' in and with him.

Yet, just how could Jesus and the disciples 'abide' together after the crucifixion? To answer that question Jesus used a beautiful organic image where God is the vine grower, Jesus is the vine, and his disciples are the branches. Clearly, Jesus' message is that when people abide/live in him and follow in his way then they also live in God and God lives in them. The image would have been familiar to those first hearers because in the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) God is portrayed as tending the vine which is his 'chosen people' - the people of Israel. So, here the Gospel message is that Jesus is the true vine which God cultivates and that those who wish to follow him should make sure they are part of that vine which is the 'new' universal people of God - 'abiding in Christ' - in order that they may receive his life-giving sustenance and bear fruit.

It might be tempting to stop there and rest in the beauty of that imagery and 'abide' happily ever after. But one of the things that those first disciples had learned during their journeying with Jesus was that he 'abided' or 'stayed' or 'dwelt' in all kinds of places and among all kinds of people, especially among those in need, and that he healed the sick and fed the hungry. The disciples came to understand that this meant that those who are part of Christ's life and work - who are sustained by the vine which is Christ - are going to be like him in bearing fruit, serving and making a difference for the well-being of others.

Jesus also recalled for his followers - as every gardener knows - that branches must be cut back from time to time if they are to produce the richest fruit. This last point may be hard to accept at times, but it is an important reminder for disciples who, like Jesus, would themselves face hardships, sacrifices and even death.

After Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection his disciples - then and now - would remember the many places in which he stayed and the people with whom he stayed, and his invitation to 'abide' in and with him. The message is that if we are to be his true disciples then we must learn to carry on his mission by serving others and bearing fruit, even in the face of struggle and failure, and that this is how we come to know that the risen one remains and continues to live in us and we live in him. God bless.

The Parish Eucharist for the Fifth Sunday of Easter 2021

The present rules and guidelines about attendance, singing & speaking in churches will be followed carefully. This Sunday only the priest, the musicians and the zoom operator can be at St John's church building.

HYMN

**Ye choirs of new Jerusalem,
your sweetest notes employ,
the Paschal victory to hymn
in strains of holy joy.**

**While joyful thus his praise we sing,
his mercy we implore,
into his palace bright to bring,
and keep us evermore.**

THE GATHERING

Priest In the name of God - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All Amen.

The priest may introduce the Eucharist.

THE GREETING

The greeting proclaims the presence of the Lord with us. The Penitential Rite, the Gloria and the Opening Prayer follow. The purpose of these preliminary rites is to help the people, gathered for the celebration of the Eucharist, to join with each other as a worshipping community, and to prepare to listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist - the Great Thanksgiving.

All The Lord be with you
And also with you.

All Alleluia. Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

We call to mind our sins to repent of them / turn from them and to ask forgiveness of God and each other.

The Invitation to Confession.

My dear sisters and brothers, as we come together as God's family to celebrate the Easter mysteries, let us ask with confidence the Father's forgiveness for our sins, for he is full of gentleness and compassion.

A pause for silent reflection follows.

Priest Lord Jesus, you raise us to new life.

All Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

All Lord Jesus, you forgive us our sins.
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

All Lord Jesus, you feed us with the living bread.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

The Absolution

All + Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you your sins, and bring you to everlasting life.
Amen.

THE GLORIA

**Glory to God, glory to God,
Glory to the Father!
Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to the Father!
To God be glory forever!
To God be glory forever!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!**

**Glory to God, glory to God,
Glory to Christ Jesus!
Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to Christ Jesus!
To God be glory forever!
To God be glory forever!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!**

**Glory to God, glory to God,
Glory to the Spirit!
Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to the Spirit!
To God be glory forever!
To God be glory forever!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!
Alleluia, Amen!**

THE COLLECT

Priest Let us pray that the risen Christ will raise us up and renew our lives and our world.

Together we spend a few moments in silence, realising, and giving thanks, that we are in the presence of God our Father to whom we make our prayers. The priest 'collects' our prayerful thoughts this Eastertide 2021.

Priest Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: grant that, as by your grace going before us you put into our minds good desires, so by your continual help we may bring them to good effect; through Jesus Christ our risen Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Liturgy of the Word consists of readings from the scriptures; a sermon/homily, which expounds the readings; the Profession of Faith, which is the Creed of God's people; and the Prayer of the Faithful or General Intercessions in which the people of God intercede for all humankind and all creation.

In the Liturgy of the Word God speaks to us of redemption and salvation and nourishes us with his 'word.' We are not only listening to past history. The God who speaks to Israel and to the early Church speaks to us today through the power of the Holy Spirit working within us as we listen to him and as he reveals the pattern for our lives. 'The word of God is something alive and active: it cuts like any double edged sword but more finely...it can judge the secret emotions and thoughts'(The Letter to the Hebrews 4:12).

THE FIRST READING - THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 9: 26 - 31. - Read by Gwen Adshead

Reader A reading from The Acts of the Apostles.

When Saul got to Jerusalem he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him: they could not believe that he was really a disciple. Barnabas, however, took charge of him, introduced him to the apostles, and explained how the Lord had appeared to Saul and spoken to him on his journey, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. Saul now started to go round with them in Jerusalem, preaching fearlessly in the name of the Lord. But after he had spoken to the Hellenists, and argued with them, they became determined to kill him. When the brothers knew, they took him to Caesarea, and sent him off from there to Tarsus.

The churches throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria were now left in peace, building themselves up, living in the fear of the Lord, and filled with the consolation of the Holy Spirit.

At the end of the reading:

Reader This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Now we hear the Gospel (the Good News) and acknowledge that we are his people and called to be part of his mission to the world inasmuch as we share his message and his life with faith, hope and love.

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Remain in me as I remain in you, says the Lord.

John 15:4a, 5b

Whoever remains in me will bear much fruit.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

THE GOSPEL READING - ST JOHN'S GOSPEL 15: 1 - 8.

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

All He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

The Lord be with you.

All And also with you .

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

All Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser.

Every branch in me that bears no fruit he cuts away,

and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes to make it bear even more.

Make your home in me, as I make mine in you.

As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself,

but must remain part of the vine,

neither can you unless you remain in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches.

Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty;

for cut off from me you can do nothing.

Anyone who does not remain in me is like a branch that has been thrown away - he withers;

these branches are collected and thrown on the fire, and they are burnt.

If you remain in me and my words remain in you,

you may ask for what you want and it will be done for you.

It is to the glory of my Father that you should bear much fruit, and then you will be my disciples.'

At the end of the Gospel

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

THE SERMON

We are a Eucharistic community in word and sacrament. Through the readings God has spoken to his people of his redeeming love and of the nourishment which his Spirit gives. Our priest now reflects with us on the readings of the day relating them to our Eucharistic celebration and to our ordinary life.

After the sermon there is a short period of silent reflection.

THE PROFESSION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH - THE CREED

We make the profession of faith in response to the word of God written in the Gospels and spoken in the sermon. We testify that God is our Father who gives us new life through his Son and who calls us together in the power of his Spirit to be a Eucharistic people, a 'thanksgiving people', a living community of his abiding self-giving love.

All We believe and trust in God the Father who made the world.

We believe and trust in his Son, Jesus Christ, who redeemed the world.

We believe and trust in the Holy Spirit who gives life to the people of God. Amen

THE PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL OR GENERAL INTERCESSION

We are invited to pray for the needs of the Church's mission and for all people. Through baptism we have been made one with Christ, our great high priest, and we share in his intercessions before the Father for the needs of his Church and of all people. Our intercessions flow from our listening to the Gospel and sermon by which we have been made more aware of our Christian commitment.

This Prayer of the Faithful, or General Intercession, is announced and consists of a series of intercessions; we pray for the universal Church and its mission and for our bishop and for our benefice - our parishes and our two Church schools; for the world, for our Queen and country, for our local communities, families and friends; for the sick and suffering and for all in pain; for the departed. And in communion with Mary, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist and all the Saints of God we entrust one another and all people and all creation to God's saving love.

Priest: In the power of the Holy Spirit and in union with the Risen Christ, let us pray to the Father.

The deacon or minister continues:

Heavenly Father, we praise you for the resurrection. Shed the light of the Risen Christ on all the world and give grace to us to live to share the Gospel. We pray your blessing on Justin our Archbishop, Steven our Bishop, Olivia our area Bishop, and the mission and ministry of your Church in this benefice - our parishes and our schools of St Mary's and St John's.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, bless and guide Elizabeth our Queen. Give grace to our Government, to our Parliament and to our District and Village Councils and to all in authority that they may govern with justice, wisdom and compassion and seek the common good.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, bless our families and friends and all our relationships. May our love and care for one another witness to the love of the Risen Christ.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we pray to you for all who suffer in body, mind or spirit...

May the love of the Risen Christ bring them comfort and the hope of the resurrection give them peace.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we remember before you all who have gone before us...

We pray, in the hope of the resurrection, that we may be united for ever in the joy of heaven.

Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we rejoice in the communion of the Blessed Mother, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist and all the Saints, and we commend all creation to your unfailing love.

Priest Merciful Father

All Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, Our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

At the Last Supper Christ 'took some bread and when he had given thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying "This is my body which will be given for you; do this in remembrance of me". He did the same with the cup...' (Luke 22:19-20). The Church, joyfully obedient to the Lord's command, celebrates the Eucharist taking care that our 'liturgy' corresponds to the words and actions of Christ: 1) Taking bread and wine - we take our own gifts to the Altar, such as our time and talents and our money for the poor and for ministry. 2) Giving thanks (the meaning of the word Eucharist) - in the Eucharistic Prayer the priest, in the name of us all, says the great hymn of our thanksgiving to God for the whole work of salvation, in which the offerings become the Body and Blood of Christ. 3) The breaking of the one bread is a sign of the unity of the faithful - a sign of the unity which comes through sharing in Christ. 4) And in Holy Communion we receive Christ. In this way, Sunday by Sunday and day by day, the Church tries to carry out what the Lord asked his disciples to do in remembrance of him.

THE PEACE

We acknowledge and give thanks for our unity with one another in Jesus Christ our Lord, which his death and resurrection have brought to us. He is the peace between us. The sign of peace echoes Christ's own resurrection greeting to his disciples. Before we share in the same bread we express our love for one another in Christ and pray for peace and unity (cf Luke 1.78,79).

Priest The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said, 'Peace be with you'.

Then were they glad when they saw the Lord.

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

All He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All And also with you.

THE PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR

The peoples' gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar. The offerings of money is made and promised to support the wider ministry and work of the Church. Taking the Gifts: We give thanks to God for the gifts in the following words.

Priest **BREAD**

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

WINE

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become for us the cup of salvation.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

OUR TIME, TALENTS AND TREASURE/MONEY

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have the gifts of our time, talents and money to offer. May our offerings of our gifts be a sincere sign of our gratitude and our dedication to your service.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

The priest prays quietly: Lord God, we ask you to receive us and be pleased with the sacrifice we offer you with humble, contrite and thankful hearts. The priest washes hands as an expression of the desire for inward purification, praying quietly: Lord, wash away my iniquity; cleanse me from my sin.

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Priest Pray my brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the Almighty Father.

All **May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his Church.**

Priest Amen.

Lord God, by this holy exchange of gifts you share with us your divine life.

Grant that everything we do may be directed by the knowledge of your grace and by truth.

All **Amen.**

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Eucharistic Prayer is the centre and high point of the whole Christian celebration. This great prayer of praise and thanksgiving proclaims the wonderful works of God and through it we join ourselves with Christ in praise and thanksgiving to God the Father and in offering ourselves to him in union with Christ's self-offering on the cross. We express our share in the prayer, which is said by the priest on behalf of all the people, by listening inwardly and joining in the acclamations (joyful shouts or songs) and the Sanctus (the Holy, Holy, Holy which concludes the preface), the memorial acclamation and the great 'Amen' which concludes our Eucharistic Prayer.

Priest The Lord be with you.

All **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

All **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

The Preface praises God for his mighty acts:

It is truly right and just, our duty, our joy and our salvation always and everywhere to give you thanks, holy Father, almighty and eternal God. From sunrise to sunset the day is holy, for Christ has risen from the tomb and scattered the darkness of death with light that will not fade. Thus the risen Lord walks with your gathered people, unfolds for us your word, and makes himself known in the breaking of the bread. And though night will overtake this day you summon us to live in endless light, the never-ceasing sabbath of the Lord.

Therefore, with choirs of angels and with all the heavenly host, we proclaim your glory and join their unending song of praise:

All **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.**

We pray to the Father for the sending down of the Holy Spirit and recall the Lord's Supper.

Priest Lord God, you are most holy, enthroned in splendour and light, yet in the coming of your Son Jesus Christ you reveal to us the power of your love made perfect in human frailty and weakness. Embracing our humanity, Jesus showed us the way of salvation; loving us he gave himself to death for us; dying for his own, he set us free from the bonds of fear and pride and sin, that we might rise and reign with him in glory. As we recall the one, perfect sacrifice of our redemption, Father, by your life-giving Holy Spirit may these gifts of your creation be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

On the night he gave himself up for us all he 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 we proclaim the death that he suffered on the cross, we celebrate his resurrection, his bursting forth from the dark of the tomb, we rejoice that he reigns at your right hand on high and we long for his coming in glory. Form us into the likeness of Christ Jesus and make us a perfect offering of love in your sight. Look with favour on all your people and in your mercy hear the cries of the broken-hearted. Bless the earth, heal the sick, let the oppressed and downtrodden go free and fill your Church with grace and courage and power from on high to do your loving will. Gather your people from the ends of the earth to feast with the Blessed Mother Mary, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist and all your Saints at the table in your kingdom, where the new creation is brought to perfection in the love of Jesus Christ our Lord; by whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever.

All Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

The communion rite lays strong emphasis on peace, unity and our prayer for forgiveness. We come together to the Lord's table in accordance with the Lord's command, 'Take, eat... take, drink', as a community bound together by the love of God manifest in Christ. We can all be confident in Christ's mercy as we respond to his call to come to his table. Our communal recitation of the Lord's Prayer - the prayer he taught us - prepares us for Holy Communion with our Lord.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Priest Let us pray with confidence to the Father in the words our Saviour gave us:

All **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.**

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The priest takes the host and breaks it over the cup, praying quietly: 'May this mingling of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it.' 'Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread' (1 Corinthians 10:17) Christ's gesture of breaking bread with his disciples at the Last Supper gave the Eucharist the name of the 'breaking of bread.'. This gesture signifies that we who share one bread and one cup are made one. The breaking of the Eucharistic bread becomes a sign of unity and charity as the one bread is distributed to the family of God's people.

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

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

The priest prepares quietly for Holy Communion. We may all join quietly in this prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, by the will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit your death brought life to the world. By your holy body and blood free me from all my sins and from every evil. Keep me faithful to your teaching, and never let me be parted from you.

PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

Priest Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. *cf. John 1: 29*
Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

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

The sign of communion is more complete when given under both 'kinds' since then the sign of the eucharistic meal appears more clearly. However, we live in exceptional times when communion can only be given in one 'kind' when we can come to church.

The priest takes the host, raises it a little and shows it saying: The Body of Christ. And the same with the cup saying: The Blood of Christ. When receiving Holy Communion the response and assent to Christ is:

+ **Amen.**

HYMN DURING HOLY COMMUNION

**A new commandment I give unto you:
that you love one another as I have loved you,
that you love one another as I have loved you.
By this shall all know that you are my disciples:
if you have love one for another.
By this shall all know that you are my disciples:
if you have love one for another.**

**A new commandment I give unto you:
that you love one another as I have loved you,
that you love one another as I have loved you.
I am the true vine, my Father is the gard'ner.
Abide in me: I will be with you.
I am the true vine, my Father is the gard'ner.
Abide in me: I will be with you.**

After Holy Communion we may keep a further period of silence.

PRAYER AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

Priest Let us pray

The priest invites us all to pray that the Holy Eucharist will have its effect in transforming our lives and bring us all to God's kingdom. We pray together silently for a while before the Post Communion prayer.

Priest Eternal God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life:
grant us to walk in his way,
to rejoice in his truth,
and to share his risen life;
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

THE NOTICES FOR THE COMMUNITY ARE GIVEN.

THE CONCLUDING RITE

Priest Alleluia. Christ is risen.

All **He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

The Lord be with you.

All **and also with you.**

THE BLESSING

Priest God, the Father, by whose love Christ was raised from the dead, open to you the way of everlasting life.

All **Amen.**

God the Son, who in conquering death has won a glorious victory, give you joy as you share the Easter faith.

All **Amen.**

God the Holy Spirit, whom the risen Lord breathed into his disciples, empower you for God's service and fill you with Christ's peace.

All **Amen.**

+ And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.

All Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

HYMN

**Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of Heav'n to earth come down;
Fix in us thy humble dwelling;
All thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.**

**Finish, then, Thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in Heav'n we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.**

