

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



AN 'EL SALVADOR CROSS'.

There are El Salvador crosses in the classrooms of the Mortimer schools.

The Parish Eucharist for The First Sunday of Lent 21st February 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

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

Prayer Thought: The Gospel message is that as Jesus found strength to be faithful to his heavenly Father's loving will and to his vocation to bring the Gospel to the world, so too we are promised grace and strength to resist temptation to selfishness that we may be true to God, to our vocations, to others and to ourselves. God bless.

The brightly coloured cross above is one of many 'El Salvador crosses' painted by Chavarria Ayala from El Salvador. It brings a message of hope from one of the most conflict-ridden countries in our world. Ayala explains he wanted to show how God works in our world: 'God's hands are holding the world meaning that the Lord created everything; there is the vine because Jesus tells us 'I am the vine and you are the branches'; the people depicted on the cross are being called to the table of Jesus' banquet and everyone is happy because God wants us to be happy, just as all loving parents want their children to be happy; there are three white doves on the cross, because, he says, 'I have always believed the Holy Spirit is with every person, even in the most difficult moments of one's life'. Also, the dove was considered a sign of protest against injustice.

Ayala speaks of the pivotal role the Christian Church played during the civil war and says the Church still has work to do on the rocky road to peace and justice because reconciliation has not taken place in El Salvador and the youth especially are in deep need of guidance and hope.

Ayala also speaks of how there is no State programme for people with disabilities and how involving disabled people in his workshop making crosses has become doubly significant because it provides livelihoods.

The Parish Eucharist

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

HYMN

**Forty days and forty nights
Thou wast fasting in the wild;
Forty days and forty nights
Tempted, and yet undefiled.**

**Keep, oh keep us, Saviour dear,
Ever constant by thy side;
That with thee we may appear
At the eternal Eastertide.**

THE GATHERING AND 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.

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

The Lord be with you
All And also with you.

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*

Priest My dear brothers and sisters, let us come to the Lord, who is full of compassion,
and acknowledge our transgressions in penitence and in faith, hope and love.

A pause for silent reflection follows.

All Lord God, we have sinned against you and against our neighbour;
we are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us and restore us to the joy of your salvation,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE NINE-FOLD KYRIE

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

The Absolution

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

THE COLLECT

Our priest invites us to pray.

Priest Let us pray.

Together we spend a few moments in reverent silence realising that we are in the presence of God our Father to whom we make our prayers. The priest 'collects' our prayerful thoughts into theme of this Christmas Day celebration in the Opening Prayer, which is either sung or said.

Priest Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness,
and was tempted as we are, yet without sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience
to your Spirit; and, as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save;
through Jesus Christ your Son our 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. 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 of his plan 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 – 1 Peter 3: 18 - 22. Read by Peter Tanner

Reader A reading from The First Letter of St Peter.

Christ himself, innocent though he was, died once for sins, died for the guilty, to lead us to God. In the body he was put to death, in the spirit he was raised to life, and, in the spirit, he went to preach to the spirits in prison. Now it was long ago, when Noah was still building that ark which saved only a small group of eight people 'by water', and when God was still waiting patiently, that these spirits refused to believe. That water is a type of the baptism which saves you now, and which is not the washing off of physical dirt but a pledge made to God from a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has entered heaven and is at God's right hand, now that he has made the angels and Dominations and Powers his subjects.

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

All **Praise to you O Christ, King of eternal glory!**
Harden not your hearts today,
but listen to the voice of the Lord.
All **Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory!**

THE GOSPEL READING - MARK 1: 12 - 15.

The Lord be with you.
All **And also with you .**
Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.
All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness and he remained there for forty days, and was tempted by Satan. He was with the wild beasts, and the angels looked after him.

After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. 'The time has come' he said 'and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.'

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 and healing 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 love and care.

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 and 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, our two Church schools; for the world, for our Queen and country, for our local communities and families; for the sick and all in pain, for all who are working on the front line at this time of Covid 19; and for the departed. And in communion with Blessed Mary, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist and all the Saints of God we entrust one another and all people to God's saving love.

Priest With confidence and trust, let us pray to the Father for the Church and for the world and let us thank God for his goodness.

The deacon or leader continues.

For the Church, that the Church may be faithful to its mission in bearing witness to the love of Christ and in preaching Christ's Gospel to the ends of the earth; for Justin our Archbishop; for Steven our bishop; for Olivia our area bishop; for our benefice, our federated schools - St Mary's and St John's,..., let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

For Elizabeth our Queen, the Government, our District and Village Councils and all in authority, that they may direct us in the ways of justice and peace,..., let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

For peace in the world that a spirit of respect and reconciliation may grow among all peoples,..., let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

For those considering their next step in faith, for those preparing for baptism and confirmation, for those reflecting on new ministry in the way of Christ and for their teachers and sponsors, let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

For the poor, for the persecuted, for refugees, for all in danger, for those who mourn, for the sick and for all who suffer..., let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

For those who have died recently..., that they may know the light, joy and peace of the resurrection, let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

For grace to amend our lives and that this Lent may be a springtime for our life in Christ, let us pray to the Father

Lord of compassion, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

In communion with all those who have walked in the way of holiness, Mary, John the Evangelist, John the Baptist and all the saints, let us pray to the Father.

Lord of compassion, in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

Priest God our Father, in your love and goodness you have taught us to draw close to you in prayer, fasting and generosity; accept our Lenten discipline and when we fall by our weakness raise us up by your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All 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 carefully to the words and actions of Christ: 1) Taking bread and wine in The Preparation of the Gifts we take our gifts to the Altar. Gifts or money for the poor and the Church's ministry to the poor are also presented. 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. 4) And in the giving of Holy Communion we receive the Body and Blood of Christ as the Apostles did from his hands. In this way Sunday by Sunday and day by day the Church carries out in loving obedience to his command 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 and pray for peace and unity cf Luke 1.78,79.

Priest *Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us access to his grace. Romans 5.1,2*

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 ministry and work of the Church.

Taking the Gifts: The priest gives 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

We are all invited to draw near in prayer:

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.

Father, may the light of your eternal Word, and the sacrament of our Lord and Saviour transform us into the likeness of Christ.

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 right and good to give you thanks and praise, almighty God and everlasting Father, through Jesus Christ your Son.
For in these forty days you lead us into the desert of repentance that through a pilgrimage of prayer and discipline we may grow in grace and learn to be your people once again. Through fasting, prayer and acts of service you bring us back to your generous heart. Through study of your holy word you open our eyes to your presence in the world and free our hands to welcome others into the radiant splendour of your love.
As we prepare to celebrate the Easter feast with joyful hearts we bless you for your mercy and join with saints and angels for ever praising you and singing:

The Acclamation

**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 We thank you, loving Father, because when we turned away you sent to us your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. He gave his life for us upon the cross. He shows us the way to live.
Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine may be for us Christ's body and his blood. On the night before he died, when darkness had fallen, Jesus took bread. He gave thanks, broke it, and shared it with his disciples, saying:

‘This is my body, given for you. Do this to remember me.’

After they had eaten he took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and shared it with his disciples, saying:

‘This is my blood, poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this to remember me.’

So, Father, with this bread and this cup we celebrate his love, his death, his risen life.
As you feed us with these gifts, send your Holy Spirit upon us and change us more and more to be like Jesus Christ our Saviour.
Help us, Father, to love one another, as we look forward to that day when suffering is ended and all creation is gathered in your loving arms.
And now with Mary, the Blessed Mother of our Lord, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist, and all your saints, we give you glory, through Jesus Christ and in the strength of your Holy Spirit, today and for ever.

All Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

The communion rite of the Church 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 love. We are 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 entire Eucharist the name of the 'breaking of bread'. This gesture signifies that we who share one bread and one cup are made one. Through the breaking of the host the Eucharist is seen more clearly as a sign of unity and charity since the one bread is being distributed among the members of one family of God.

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, for the time being, communion can only be given in one kind for those who can come to church. Whilst others join faithfully online. Please God, may we all soon be able to come together again to receive Holy Communion under both kinds at the Lord's table. 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

**Blest are the pure in heart,
for they shall see our God;
the secret of the Lord is theirs,
their soul is Christ's abode.**

**The Lord who left the heavens
our life and peace to bring,
to dwell in lowliness with men,
their pattern and their king.**

**Still to the lowly soul
he doth himself impart
and for his dwelling and his throne
chooseth the pure in heart.**

**Lord, we thy presence seek;
may ours this blessing be:
give us a pure and lowly heart,
a temple meet for thee.**

*The vessels are cleansed and put away. You may wish to join with the priest who prays quietly:
Lord, may these gifts give me purity of heart. May they bring me healing and strength, now and ever. Amen
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 to God's kingdom. All pray together silently for a while before the Post Communion prayer.

Priest Lord God, you have renewed us with the living bread from heaven;
by it you nourish our faith, increase our hope, and strengthen our love:
teach us always to hunger for the true and living bread, and enable us to live by your word;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

THE NOTICES FOR THE COMMUNITY ARE GIVEN.

THE CONCLUDING RITE

Priest The Lord be with you.

All and also with you.

THE BLESSING

Priest Christ give you grace to grow in holiness,
to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him;
+ 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 peace to love and serve the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN

**There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in his justice which is more than liberty.
There is no place where earth's sorrows are more felt than up in heaven:
there is no place where earth's failings have such kindly judgement given.**

**For the love of God is broader than the scope of human mind;
and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.
If our love were but more simple, we should take him at his word;
and our lives would find assurance in the promise of the Lord.**

