

# ORMOND UNITING CHURCH

Pentecost 11

8<sup>th</sup> August



Good Shepherd catacomb of Priscilla - Rome

# WORSHIP AT HOME

*We are thrown back into isolation from each other. Our resilience is certainly being tested. We are mostly over this. But COVID is not done with us. So, we have to draw on resources of resilience we thought we didn't have. As we still ourselves we can be mindful of each other and those we love who are finding this time difficult. We give ourselves into God's hands, trusting that his love is for us and that, as Jesus assures us, he sees and cares for us.*

*This time is an opportunity to be still, seeking to be aware of the presence of God within.*

*Carve out a time for this practice; prepare yourself, as you might for a usual Sunday morning and remember that there are others from the congregation gathering at the same time as you. There are also many from the church around the globe who are gathering to seek the presence of God as we are.*

*Prepare a space in the house; find a comfortable chair, light a candle, turn off distracting noises and close the door if that will help you to be still. This is something that does not need to be hurried.*

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.  
Lord, hear my voice!  
Let your ears be attentive  
to the voice of my supplications!

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,  
and in his word I hope;  
my soul waits for the Lord  
more than those who watch for the morning,  
more than those who watch for the morning.

Psalm 130

[Be still my soul](#) — sung by SATB a cappella

## Prayer

Almighty God,  
you sent your Holy Spirit  
to be the life and light of your church.  
Open our hearts to the riches of your grace,  
that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit  
in love, joy, and peace;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## Old Testament – 2 Samuel 18

*We have been following the exploits of King David in the past weeks. David's relationship with his many sons from his many wives is tumultuous. The relationship with his son Absalom has broken down; Absalom saw to the assassination of one of his brothers, to revenge the rape of their sister*

*Tamar. He has then sought to undermine his father's reign and usurp the throne. A battle between Absalom's and David's armies looms.*

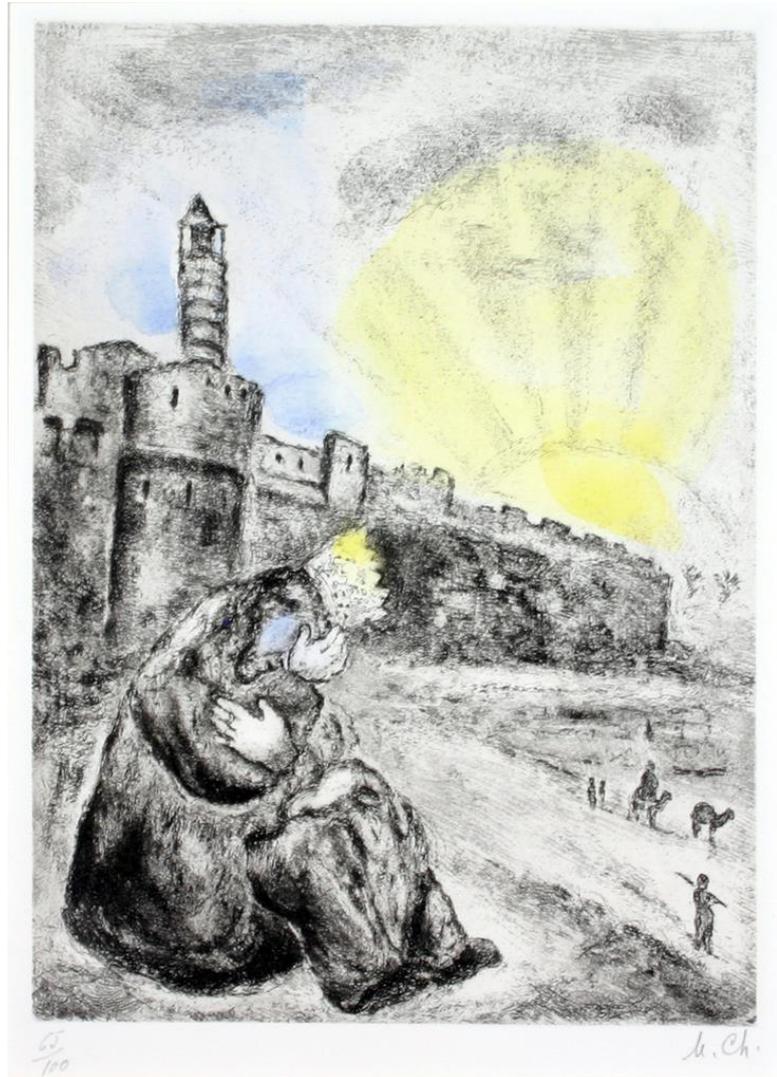
Then David mustered the men who were with him and set over them commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds. <sup>2</sup>And David divided the army into three groups: one-third under the command of Joab, one-third under the command of Abishai, and one-third under the command of Ittai. ... <sup>5</sup>The king gave orders to Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, 'Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom.'

<sup>6</sup> So the army went out into the field against Israel; and the battle was fought in the forest of Ephraim. Absalom's men were defeated there by the servants of David, and the slaughter there was great on that day, twenty thousand men. <sup>8</sup>The battle spread over the face of all the country; and the forest claimed more victims that day than the sword.

<sup>9</sup> Absalom happened to meet the servants of David. Absalom was riding on his mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great oak. His head caught fast in the oak, and he was left hanging between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him went on. <sup>10</sup>A man saw it, and told his commander Joab, 'I saw Absalom hanging in an oak.' <sup>11</sup>Joab said to the man who told him, 'What, you saw him! Why then did you not strike him there to the ground? I would have been glad to give you ten pieces of silver and a belt.'

<sup>12</sup>But the man said to Joab, 'Even if I felt in my hand the weight of a thousand pieces of silver, I would not raise my hand against the king's son; for in our hearing the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, saying: For my sake protect the young man Absalom! <sup>13</sup>On the other hand, if I had dealt treacherously against his life, then you yourself would have stood aloof.'

<sup>14</sup>Joab said, 'I will not waste time like this with you.' He took three spears in his hand, and thrust them into the heart of Absalom, while he was still alive in the oak. <sup>15</sup>And ten young men, Joab's armour-bearers, surrounded Absalom and struck him, and killed him.



David weeps for Absalom – Marc Chagall

16 Then Joab sounded the trumpet, and the troops came back from pursuing Israel, for Joab restrained the troops. <sup>17</sup>They took Absalom, threw him into a great pit in the forest, and raised over him a very great heap of stones.

24 Now David was sitting between the two gates of the city. The sentinel went up to the roof of the gate by the wall, and when he looked up, he saw a man running alone. <sup>25</sup>The sentinel shouted and told the king.

...

31 Then the messenger from the battlefield came and said, 'Good tidings for my lord the king! For the Lord has vindicated you this day, delivering you from the power of all who rose up against you.' <sup>32</sup>The king said to the Cushite messenger, 'Is it well with the young man Absalom?' The Cushite answered, 'May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise up to do you harm, be like that young man.'

33 The king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went, he said, 'O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would that I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!'

[Psalm 130](#) — a link to Kings College Cambridge setting of this psalm

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear my voice!

**Let your ears be attentive  
to the voice of my supplications!**

If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,

Lord, who could stand?

**But there is forgiveness with you,  
so that you may be revered.**

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,

and in his word I hope;

**my soul waits for the Lord  
more than those who watch for the morning,  
more than those who watch for the morning.**

O Israel, hope in the Lord!

For with the Lord there is steadfast love,  
and with him is great power to redeem.

**It is he who will redeem Israel  
from all its iniquities.**

## Ephesians 4. 25 – 5. 2

So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbours, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil. Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labour and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your

words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

## The Gospel according to John 6. 35, 41 - 51

Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven.' They were saying, 'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, "I have come down from heaven"?' Jesus answered them, 'Do not complain among yourselves. No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, "And they shall all be taught by God." Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.'



[I am the bread of life](#) — Notre Dame University Folk Choir

# Reflecting

This week in the Ormond Learning HUB course, Exploring the New Testament, we looked at the Gospel of John. One thing we found about this beautiful but complex gospel is that it operates at two levels, the temporal and the mystical, the mundane and the symbolic. Maybe nowhere more in the gospel than this passage is it necessary to read John as a mystical text.

We are invited to feed on Jesus in order to sustain the life of God within us. This is a call to be sustained by the mystery of the Eucharist; that, mysteriously, Christ is present in bread and wine and, as we give ourselves over to this mystery, we are sustained, nourished, equipped to be his people. While this call is more than 2000 years old its mystery traverses time and space to reach us with the life of God.

For this we can be deeply joyful.

In Mark's Gospel Jesus tells a parable about the sowing of the seed which sprouts and grows in secret, how, the farmer does not know. The kingdom is like this, says Jesus, hidden and yet growing until it yields its harvest of the life of God. Being nourished by Jesus, the Living Bread, in the same way sustains the life of God in us, enabling us to know we are children of the Loving Father.

## Prayer – prepared by David Baxter

*Remembering the dropping of the first atomic bomb on the 6 August, 1945*

God, you are the Father of all the families of the earth,  
and call the nations to live in peace and unity.  
We find it difficult to achieve such an aim.  
So often in our history,  
war and destruction are seen as an answer to the problems that we face.  
People are still battling against one another as we pray,  
leaving communities impoverished, living in fear.

Transfigure the lives and cities scarred by conflict by the revealing of your glory.  
We remember with sorrow the devastating destruction and death  
unleashed on upon the city of Hiroshima, and later upon the city of Nagasaki.  
We pray for the people of Japan, and we pray for all whose lives are disfigured by war.  
We pray for ourselves, the often-unwise stewards  
of the resources in our power.

May we play our part in bringing the message  
and the reality of peace and justice in our community and in the wider world.  
This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ,  
our light and our salvation.

**Amen.**

Our Father in Heaven ...

## SANCTUS – Fauré Requiem – sung by VOCES8

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of Power and might,  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.

## Blessing

May the peace of the Lord Christ be with you,  
Wherever he may send you.  
May he guide you through the wilderness,  
Protect you through the storm.  
May he bring you home rejoicing  
At the wonders he has shown you.  
May he bring you home rejoicing  
Once again into our doors.

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

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NEWS AND NOTICES