

A Service of Holy Communion
On the Fourth Sunday of Easter
With a message from Archbishop John at the end.
3rd May 2020

Welcome & Greeting

Reader: This is the day that the Lord has made.

Response: **Let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

Reader: Alleluia, Christ is risen.

Response: **He is risen indeed, Alleluia!**

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden; Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hear what our Lord Jesus Christ says: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it. You shall love your neighbour as yourself On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets. Matthew 22: 37-39

Lord, have mercy on us, and write these your laws in our hearts.

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ, to save us from our sins, to intercede for us in heaven, and to bring us to eternal life.

Let us then confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace:

Silence

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned in thought and word and deed, and in what we have left undone. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.

For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us, that we may walk in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen.

The presiding minister pronounces the Absolution:

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy on you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High,

Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

The Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Easter

Almighty God,
whose Son Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life:
Raise us, who trust in him,
from the death of sin to the life of righteousness,
that we may seek those things which are above,
where he reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Epistle is written in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 2. Reading from verse 42.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and



fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hear the Gospel of Christ written in the Gospel according to John, the tenth chapter, beginning to read at the first verse.

All : Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ

‘Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.’ Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So again Jesus said to them, ‘Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

The Sermon : Michael

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Intercessions

Reader: Good Shepherd

Response: **Guide us and lead us.**

We close our prayers as we say together:

Help us to share in Christ's ministry of love and service to one another; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who in the unity of the Holy Spirit is one with you for ever. Amen.

The Peace

The risen Christ came and stood among His disciples and said, Peace be with you. Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. John 20 :19,20

The peace of the Lord be always with you,
Congregation: and also with you.

The Celebration of the Sacrament

Be present, be present, Lord Jesus Christ our risen high priest; make yourself known in the breaking of bread. Amen.

Wise and gracious God, you spread a table before us; nourish your people with the word of life, and the bread of heaven. Amen.

Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us therefore let us celebrate the feast.

The Lord is here. His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Father, Lord of all creation, we praise you for your goodness and your love. When we turned away you did not reject us. You came to meet us in your Son, welcomed us as your children and prepared a table where we might feast with you.

In Christ you shared our life that we might live in him and he in us.

He opened wide his arms upon the cross and, with love stronger than death,

he made the perfect sacrifice for sin.

Lord Jesus Christ, our redeemer, on the night before you died you came to table with your friends.

Taking bread, you gave thanks, broke it and gave it to them saying,

Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

Lord Jesus, we bless you: you are the bread of life.

At the end of supper you took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and said, Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you & for many for the forgiveness of sins; do this in remembrance of me.



Lord Jesus, we bless you: you are the true vine.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ: dying, you destroyed our death, rising, you restored our life;

Lord Jesus, come in glory. Holy Spirit, giver of life, come upon us now; may this bread and wine be to us the body and blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

As we eat and drink these holy gifts make us, who know our need of grace,

one in Christ, our risen Lord. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Blessed Trinity:

with your whole Church throughout the world we offer you this sacrifice of thanks and praise

and lift our voice to join the song of heaven, for ever praising you and saying:

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

Thanks be to you, our God, for your gift beyond words.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, so we pray

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

The presiding minister breaks the consecrated bread in preparation for the Communion

The bread which we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.

We being many are one body, for we all share in the one bread.

Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, who has taken away the sins of the world.

Happy are those who are called to his supper.

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

The body of Christ keep you in eternal life.

The blood of Christ keep you in eternal life.

Post-Communion Prayer on the Fourth Sunday of Easter

Merciful Father, you gave your Son Jesus Christ to be the good shepherd,

and in his love for us to lay down his life and rise again.

Keep us always under his protection, and give us grace to follow in his steps;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us with the spiritual food of the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Through him we offer you our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. **Amen.**

The Easter Blessing

Rejoice, for Christ is risen, he seeks us to rise with Him. In him is our hope, in life, in death and in all eternity. Today the risen Lord comes to us with his gift of peace. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Rector: Our worship has not ended - it has only just begun - for God is with us. In every moment of every day. Go then, and offer the worship he desires - to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with him every step along our way.

Congregation: **Amen.**

In your prayers this week please remember...

For our government here in Northern Ireland, the UK and beyond for openness and co-operation to share truths and seek safe ways forward together for the good of all.

We pray for the leaders of the church, in these anxious times, here in St Gall's in Carnalea and beyond. We pray for Archbishop John McDowell as he takes on to lead our church as Primate of All Ireland.



Give wisdom and vision to all who lead us.
Lord in your mercy - Hear our prayer

We pray for those we know who are working in the NHS at this time, we pray for them and for their families.

We pray for Sara and Emma, Kate, Stephanie, Catherine, Julie, Chris, Jackie, Rhiannon, Lydia, Fiona, David, Amanda, Anna, Maeve, Eleanor & Gail.



Lord, protect and guide them.
Lord in your mercy - Hear our prayer

We pray for those who are ill and for those who are recovering at this time.

We pray for Hylton, Ben, Ron, Jack, Rowena, Raymond, Ronnie, Mervyn, Irene, David, Billy & Rene.

We pray for all who are living with Covid-19. We pray for families who are caring for loved ones. We pray for medical staff on specialist wards.

Lord protect, strengthen and heal them.
Lord in your mercy - Hear our prayer

We pray for the community as we look towards relaxing restrictions . . .

For the lonely, frightened, anxious; those suffering from depression . . .

Those working in unsafe environments: in prisons, care homes, for those working without proper PPE

We pray for all who have lost loved ones. We pray for those who are mourning and lost in grief.

We pray for those we love who are with God.

We give thanks for all who have passed beyond death and rejoice in your kingdom, For all who have triumphed over sin and suffering and are now at peace.

Comfort all who mourn and give them strength and peace each day.

Lord in your mercy - Hear our prayer

A message from Archbishop John McDowell

Some words from the Archbishop of Armagh as he takes up his post.

“O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures for ever” (Psalm 118:1)

From my point of view at least, it could hardly have been more appropriate that Psalm 118 is set for today’s Morning Office. Many of its phrases are well known and a surprising number have found their way into our liturgies, ranging from the Marriage Service to the Liturgy of Committal. It describes itself as a Song of Victory, and there are undoubtedly martial overtones in some of the verses. But as I read it, the overwhelming impression that it leaves on my mind is as an expression of gratitude, dependence and optimism.

And those are the sentiments uppermost in my own mind and heart today as I take up the office of Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland.

Gratitude to God for calling me to ordained ministry and for the knowledge that his love and forgiveness are always moving ahead of me. Gratitude to my fellow bishops for their encouragement and support. Thankfulness to the hundreds of people from every corner of Ireland who have written, emailed, messaged or in some other way communicated their congratulations, good wishes and the assurance of their prayers. Since the day of my election on 11 March I have felt buoyed up by wave upon wave of goodwill – a silver surfer. I am hoping people will hold onto that goodwill even as I make my first mistakes.

Along with goodwill goes a strong sense of unworthiness and dependence. I almost said, “an overwhelming sense”, and so it would be were it not for the expressions of goodwill I have already mentioned.



And, like the psalmist, a sense of dependence on the dependability of God.

I am conscious too of the long line of very distinguished predecessors who have held the office of Primate of All Ireland, and whose scholarship, dedication and spirituality have been an inspiration to me. Most especially I would wish to mention my immediate predecessor, the Rt Rev'd Richard Clarke, from whom I learned so much and whose friendship I value enormously.

If that phrase, "John, by Divine Providence, Archbishop of Armagh" has an air of grandiloquence about it, it also has a promise that his making hand will always be on you and me and on the Church we serve, moulding the clay of our vocation to meet the needs of the day. And perhaps, in cases where the clay has hardened with age, to break it and start again.

But I also hold a great degree of optimism, because of the role which God, through the processes of history, has opened out for us – the Church of Ireland – to take in the years to come. In more normal times I would have had an enthronement sermon and a first Presidential Address at the General Synod to have shared some thoughts about our Church and the societies in which we live. You may be relieved to hear that I'm not going to roll them into one diatribe now; but I do want to say a couple of things to do with our distinctiveness and our role in Ireland today.

As a Church we have the potential to model (and in some instances to create) a witness of deep-seated unity that transcends political, social and generational categories. But we can only do so by being true to ourselves, so that we may more fully "become what we are". We need to become what Our Lord most certainly was. Someone who listened with supernatural patience. And I'm not necessarily talking about formal indaba type conferring, but simply in our own everyday encounters, both formal and informal.

There's a fair bit of truth in the observation that, in Ireland, we listen to others (especially to those with whom we differ) in order to gather ammunition for criticism. We do not listen to hear. Had the plans for the General Synod gone ahead we would have been presented, as a Church, with many opportunities to explain and to listen; to speak and to hear.

Some of those opportunities would have been, on the face of it, very ordinary. I am thinking here of the opportunity to consider the final pieces of legislation in relation to the amalgamation of the Dioceses of Limerick and Killaloe and Tuam, Killala and Achonry, where the General Synod made space for careful listening and a deepening of communion (koinonia) between those who would be most immediately affected by the transition. A period of true dialogue and listening (adroitly led by the two bishops concerned) and leading to the building of trust and to positive outcomes with warm feelings likely to germinate seeds for the future.

In this category I'm thinking also of the final stages of the Bill on Diocesan Representation on the General Synod. This was where a group of people from every diocese in Ireland listened patiently to the "whys and wherefores" of equitable (rather than strictly proportionate) representation. In so doing, they had to acknowledge that the voice of Jesus is at least as likely to be heard where we are numerically weak as in places where we are strong. To be both the Church of Christ and the Church of Ireland, we need to respect all its people and to sideline none. In such inclusion, we may become more truly ourselves by being an all-island church which incorporates the characteristics of all its regions proudly, rather than being seen as primarily a "Northern" or a "Southern" church.

It is appropriate to recall this seminal statement from the Lambeth Conference of 1948:

"The positive nature of the authority which binds the Anglican Communion together is...moral and spiritual, resting on the truth of the Gospel, and on a charity which is patient, and willing to defer to the common mind".

If a meeting of the General Synod had been possible this year, we would also have had some quite extraordinary opportunities to speak and to listen provided by the chances of history. Here I am thinking, first, of the fact that it was to be held in the venue of Croke Park. This would have offered an opportunity to acknowledge the role which the GAA plays in every corner of this island – surely the most remarkable and influential cultural and sporting organisation in Ireland today. Also perhaps it would have been appropriate in the setting of Croke Park,

and given the current Decade of Centenaries, to have reflected on the tragic loss of life which was occurring all over Ireland in 1920; to have listened and spoken about the acknowledgements needed and the lessons learned.

And, also historically significant: the dates of the General Synod were to have coincided with the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day. This would have provided the right sort of space to listen to some balanced words on both the end of that particular phase of the war against Fascism and on the rationale behind Neutrality in that time. As a Christian alternative to a rush to judgement, the Synod might have accommodated a 'listening to hear', rather than a listening to judge.

We are a Church that has traditionally cast its mission in the form of pastoral care. Of course that pastoral care needs to take the form not only of feeding and caring for the sheep but also of finding them. I know many parishes fulfill this role by being deeply involved in their local communities and contributing to the common good. And to be true to ourselves, ours must always be a pastoral evangelization: caring, patient, even perhaps quiet; drawing people to Jesus by the beauty of his person and the depth of his Sacrifice, not by the notion of a competition for souls.

And as we reflect on the Sacrifice of Christ, I want to pause for just a moment to notice and give heartfelt thanks for those people, especially those working in hospitals and care homes, who have put the saving of the lives of others above the protection of their own lives. Some have already paid the ultimate price for their bravery and their compassion. So, if you are reading this, perhaps you would now stop for a moment and say a 'thank you' for all they have done for us.

Almost exactly 100 years ago, another postponed Lambeth Conference took place. It had been due to meet in 1918 but had been deferred due to the Great War. One of the main themes the Conference considered was the relationships between Churches, many of which had worked closely together during the appalling suffering of the war years. As the Conference met, an exhausted Europe (still conscious in some sense of being "Christendom") was beginning to recover. The fatalities were infinitely greater and the period of suffering much longer, but the sense of dislocation which the whole world is experiencing at the minute due

to the Covid-19 emergency may be comparable to the trauma of the First World War. In some senses, it is even more destabilising.

Although the 1920 Lambeth Conference was unable to make much progress on the matter of formal church unity, it famously issued The Appeal to All Christian People. Rather than addressing itself to formal church structures, the appeal was made to the consciences of individual believers. It ended with these words, hinting at a different form of reconciliation:

“We do not ask that any one Communion should consent to be absorbed in another. We do ask that all should unite in a new and great endeavor: to recover and to manifest to the world the unity of the Body of Christ for which he prayed”.

We are now most certainly a post-Christendom, if never quite a post-Christian, society. Perhaps it is for us, a church of a northern majority but insisting on and valuing the voices of southern brothers and sisters in all the councils of our Church, to work towards a coherent understanding and a living-out of reconciliation. Perhaps it is time to allow us, with credibility, to be in our pastoral mission a living Appeal to All People, and to find in that reconciliation both the work of the Spirit and an enduring public good.

Reconciliation is one of the big words of the Gospel. In one sense it was completed with nothing left to do when Our Lord uttered the words, “It is finished”; and found those words vindicated on Easter Day. In another sense, reconciliation is always unfinished, with a need to begin anew every day. And this beginning involves acknowledging the prejudices and faults which have failed to make us One, as he and the Father are One, as a Church, let alone as Churches.

Reconciliation is the great work (of heart, of brain, and of practicalities) which is crying out for our commitment as children of “the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that Great Shepherd of the sheep”. Those who are the agents of reconciliation will always have some kind of destructive energy to absorb; they will always have something to bear that is not, strictly speaking, their own. Without wishing to be too dramatic, the scars of suffering are the tokens of peacemaking, at the very least peacemakers risk bearing the emotional scars of being ridiculed.

Just as Dietrich Bonhoeffer reminded European Christianity about the costliness of grace, those of us who talk about and plead the urgency of a deepened sense of reconciliation need to make no bones about the cost. And the price to be paid is in no small part the demonstration of the process itself.

Not long before the Second World War, the children's writer A A Milne wrote a book called *Peace with Honour*. By then a pacifist, he made a plea that was shared by many who did not agree with his political views:

“Tell us what to do, not what to think. We have done our thinking; we are all of one mind as to what we want – Peace; and now the problem in front of us is how to obtain it”.

And just in case anyone is smiling at the thought of the creator of Winnie the Pooh and Christopher Robin and Tigger having anything serious to tell the world about reconciliation and peace, we would do well to remember the simple pictorial language of the parables and to think about the child whom “Jesus set in the midst of them”.

Sometimes the most challenging and important questions are the most simple. We all want peace, how do we obtain it? If someone was to ask me that same question about Ireland, or about the world that will emerge from the profound insecurity caused by the coronavirus, I'm not sure I would have the answer.

A great sifting process is going on in the world at present. We are at the end of an epoch never mind an era. Old social systems and ways of life are being unmade and new systems and habits and attitudes will have to be brought together to replace them. On top of our historical and social divisions in Ireland, we are being caught in the down draught of a global wind. New animosities will evolve and old ones may survive.

How blessed we would be if we as a Church, amid such unprecedented times of flux, can show ourselves worthy of our calling as peacemakers and reconcilers – even if it is costly – because we rest in his steadfast love which “endures for ever”. Only then might we be able to stand and answer the plea that calls across generations, not least here in Ireland: “We want peace ... tell us what to do”.

+John Armagh
28 April 2020

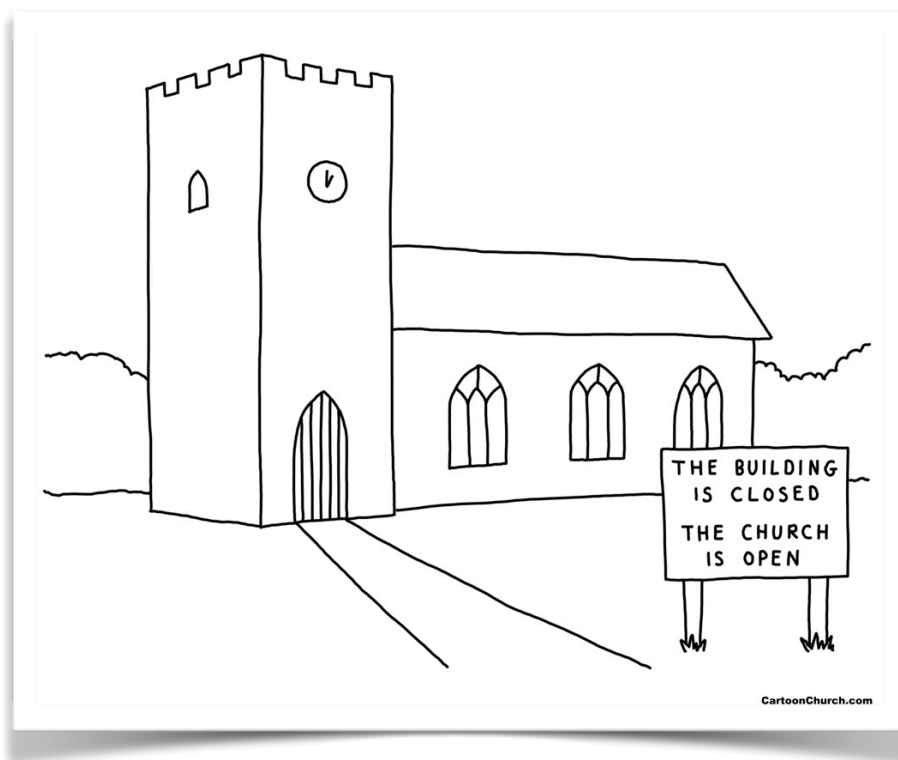
In other news.....

We had our first online Select Vestry meeting on Thursday night just past. We used the online platform Zoom. There is a picture. I'm saving that for another time. #Lockdownhaircuts

It was a great meeting. We know what we can't do. We need to ask - what can we do?

What does Church look like in the time of Covid-19? That is the question.

And for something completely different.



A cartoon by artist Dave Walker.

Please remember Storehouse when you're doing your big shop and drop a donation into the food bank collection basket on your way out. Tough times.

