

The FIFTH SUNDAY of EASTER, 2020
MOTHERS' DAY
Virtual Grace

Organ Prelude - *"The Call"* - (Come my Way, my Truth my Life)
from *5 Mystical Songs* by R. Vaughan Williams (in *Hymnal 1982*, as #487)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Hello and welcome again to "Virtual Grace" - on this Mothers' Day -
from Grace Episcopal Church in Honesdale, PA.
I'm Fr. Ed, the rector of our parish.
When things settle down and we're able to travel again,
we hope you might visit us in person.

Remember, if you are in any pastoral need at all, call me, 24/7.
No matter the virus, I am ready to come to your spiritual aid.
And if you are able, make your contributions - your offerings of sacrifice -
to the continued ministries of Grace Church.

Come now, and let us bless the Lord.

In the name of God the Creator, ☩ God the Sustainer, God who Sanctifies. Amen.

CONFESSION

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor:

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
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 delight in your will, and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.

May Almighty God in mercy receive our confession of sorrow and of faith, strengthen us in all goodness, ☩ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, keep us in eternal life. Amen.

Join with me, as you are able, in offering praise in The Glory to God.

CANTICLE -

Glory to God

BCP p.356

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his 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.

COLLECT

The Book of Common Prayer, 1979, p. 225

Let us pray:

Almighty God, to truly know you is everlasting life: Show us that your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, that we may steadfastly follow his steps in the way that leads to eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ your Son our Savior, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

A reading from the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to St. John:

John 14: 1-6

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do

not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life.

The Word of God.

MEDITATION

*In the midst of life we are in death;
of whom may we seek for succour, but of thee, O Lord...
Yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty,
O holy and most merciful Saviour,
deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death.*

This is a chant from the 14th century sung to ask God for aid in times of public peril.
And from the first Book of Common Prayer in 1549

it has been included in the service of Committal at the grave,
except in Rite Two, the contemporary version in the 1979 BCP.

A quick teaching moment:

The R-2 texts in our 79 Prayer Book celebrate Baptism to new life here
and the joy of the Resurrection there.

But the older forms sometimes - I say 'sometimes' - make more sense.

While the newer texts affirm our hope and joy in Christ even in death,

the older texts remind us who serve at the Altar that you people are mourning.

At a funeral, no matter how much we try to celebrate our beloved's life,

it *is* a time of grieving, and many cannot make it through the memories shared.

We are in the midst of death these days.

Watching the tolls of the bells of the dying each week, each day,

With this pandemic, we are hit hard by the mortal frailty we share.

What you may not know is that this reading today from St. John's Gospel
has traditionally been the Scripture proclaimed at funerals.

“In our Father's house are many mansions, and I go to prepare a place for you -
for you George, for you Mary, for you Jill, for you
Jesus tells all gathered that he is going to prepare,
has already prepared, a resting-place for *you!*”

I tell our Youth, that Confirmation is like calling the hotel,
to make sure the reservation you made three months ago -
“Oh, shoot - did I make that reservation?!?”

“Phew! You mean I'm all set?

Here's my credit card numb...

Oh. The cost is already paid!?

Great. Thanks.”

Baptism, that is.

When Christ adopts us as his own, I tell the kids,
the reservation is made for us and paid for -
with Christ's own death and Resurrection.

But we are required to Confirm our reservation.

It does nothing if we don't drive to the hotel resort and check in.

The room in our name goes empty - empty for eternity.

In the midst of life, we are in death.

Yet with our living faith in Christ, we turn it around and say with confidence, that,
“in the midst of death there is life.”

Jesus insists upon us that He is the Way,
His way is Truth,
and in that Truth is Life.

Just last Sunday, Jesus tells us crazy sheep
that he has come that we might have life -
life in fullness.

John 10:10

So even with death tolls ringing around us,
we know that there is more to it.

Death is not the end.

Life is only the beginning.

Let me close with this prayer from the 17th century poet/priest George Herbert,
the hymn heard as the Prelude today

(In the script of this service offered on our website,

there is a link to baritone Carl Frank singing Vaughan Williams' setting.)

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life:
Such a Way, as gives us breath:
Such a Truth, as ends all strife:
Such a Life, as killeth death.

Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength:
Such a Light, as shows a feast:
Such a Feast, as mends in length:
Such a Strength, as makes his guest.

Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart:
Such a Joy, as none can move:
Such a Love, as none can part:
Such a Heart, as joyes in love.

George Herbert, 1633 from *The Temple*

AMEN.

The CREED

Let us now profess our communal faith in the words of our Baptismal Covenant with the Apostles' Creed, saying:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection ☩ of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS

BCP Form II, adapted

I ask your prayers for God's people throughout the world; for Justin the Archbishop of Canterbury, Michael our Presiding Bishop and Kevin our Bishop; for the Diocesan staff; and for all ministers and people. I ask your prayers for this parish family, and for all who are isolated from their community of faith. Good Shepherd, hear our prayer.

I ask your prayers for those who govern and hold authority in the nations; that they may be led to govern with equity and justice to benefit the entire human family. Inspire them to discover new ways of overcoming divisions and mistrust. We pray for Donald, the President of the United States, the Congress, Thomas our Governor, and Sarah, mayor of our Borough. Good Shepherd, hear our prayer.

I ask your prayers for the poor, for those who are on furlough or have lost their jobs; for the sick, especially Russ and Margaret; the hungry; the oppressed, and anxious; and those in prison, especially Justin and Mitchell. I ask your prayers for those anticipating death. Good Shepherd, hear our prayer.

I ask your prayers for the departed, especially _____; those who have died by violent acts, and those who have succumbed to the complications of COVID-19, especially Jean. Good Shepherd, hear our prayer.

I ask your thanksgiving for families with whom we live and love; thanksgivings for first responders, health-care workers and all who offer of themselves for the betterment of others. Good Shepherd, hear our prayer.

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy. Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Risen Lord. Amen.

from the Archbishop of Canterbury

Let us now pray together in the words which Christ himself taught us, saying:

Our Father...

MOTHERS' DAY BLESSING

Gracious God, source of all love and being;
from you our life springs forth.
You give us life and nurture us;
you call us by name
and spread your wings of love around us.

You taught all mothers how to magnify you
as Mary sang her song of praise;
You showed us the watchfulness and worry
as children wander from the family
and make us search after them.
You showed us how to follow after them,
when others are unsure of the paths they choose.
You gave us tears to shed as we watch children die
and hearts of joy as they rise again.

Bless now, dear God, all our mothers, with us and gone before.
Make their love a reflection of your love.
Give them laughter, patience, endurance,
and the strength to abide through tears.
And finally bring them to the eternal joys where with Mary
they will wear jeweled crowns of blessedness.

In the Name of God: Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer.
Amen.

BLESSING

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant: make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight; through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Hebrews 13: 20-21

And the blessing of God Almighty, who has Created us, ☩ God Almighty who has Redeemed us, and God the Almighty who continually Sanctifies us, be upon you and remain with you for ever. Amen.

Organ Postlude -

“*Ave Maria*”

Bach-Gounod

10 May 2020
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a video of baritone Carl Frank singing “The Call” by Ralph Vaughan Williams at:

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=the+call+george+herbert&docid=608032030109270424&mid=834E6B2E12E2CE9DAC6B834E6B2E12E2CE9DAC6B&view=detail&FORM=VIRE>