

The Catholic Church in Taunton

Concluding Rite

Canon John: Loving God, source of all goodness and strength, we have been blessed by the presence of St Therese of Lisieux who has shown us the way to you. May we, like the little flower, become a guide for others. From her we learn of the possibilities of serving you well. Help us to use the gifts that you have given us to better the lives of others. Make us a people of kindness, humility, justice, and patience. Give us compassion and respect for others. Make us proclaimers of your word in our community so that this world may become a better place for all. We ask this in the name of your son, Jesus Christ.

All: Amen

Canon John: Let us ask for God's blessing

May God the Father bless us,
May God the Son heal us,
May the Holy Spirit enlighten us and give us the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of right judgment and courage,
the spirit of knowledge and reverence,
and the angel of peace to watch over us and lead us at last,
by our Lord's gift, to the kingdom.

All: Amen

Closing Hymn

I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin
my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them.
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send?

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?



Departure Liturgy

Opening hymn

Longing for light we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

*Christ be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ be our light!
Shine in your church, gathered today.*

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone, has pow'r to save us.
Make us your living voice.

Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed.

Longing for shelter. Many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others
walls made of living stone.

Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
making your kingdom come.

Welcome and opening prayer

Canon John: Loving and gracious God, as we gather in prayer this morning, we thank you for your eternal love and for giving us this time to share and strengthen our faith. Like St Therese of Lisieux, we ask that you help us recognise that our most powerful gift to you and others is simply the love in our heart.

ALL: Loving and gracious God, we praise you and we thank you for all that you have done for us and for all that you have given to us. You have blessed each of our lives in many ways through the gifts of the Spirit.

We thank you especially for the life of St. Therese of Lisieux. During her short life she taught us about your great love for us and the importance of doing the ordinary things well. May her life continue to inspire us on our pilgrim way to your kingdom of love and peace.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Canon John: My brothers and sisters gathered here today, God is love and invites us to become a source of goodness and love for other people. We come before our Creator to seek forgiveness so that we may be reconciled with ourselves, with one another and with God.

Reader: Love stands at the heart of Christian life. St Therese realized the importance of love without which even the most brilliant deeds count as nothing. Creator God, you are love and we have heard your great commandment to love, forgive us the times we have failed to love fully our sisters and brothers with whom we travel this earthly pilgrimage.

ALL: Loving God, may your mercy shower upon us so that we may show mercy and compassion to other people and to all of creation

Reader: Jesus calls us to love God and our neighbours as ourselves. God wills for us to be fully alive, but grants us free will because love cannot be forced. St Therese abandoned herself to God, freely giving up her own will so as to grow in her desire to do God's will. Forgive us Lord, for the times when we have failed to choose to love you, your people and all of your creation.

ALL: Loving God, may your mercy shower upon us so that we may show mercy and compassion to other people and to all of creation

Reader: Humility means living with the truth. Whatever we have comes from God's goodness – that is a central truth. St Therese recognised this and did not fret about her status or people's opinion of her, but tried her best to do good on a small scale. Holy One, giver of all gifts, forgive us the times we have failed to appreciate that what we have comes from your love and for the times we have failed to follow the path to true humility.

ALL: Loving God, may your mercy shower upon us so that we may show mercy and compassion to other people and to all of creation

Reader: Loving God, St. Therese experienced each day as a gift from You, as a time for loving and through others. May we, too, see each new day as a single moment of saying yes to Your will in our lives.

All: God of hope and love, hear our prayer

Reader: Loving God, St. Therese offered to You her frailty and powerlessness. Help us to see in our weakness an opportunity for letting Your light and Your strength be all we need.

All: God of hope and love, hear our prayer

Reader: Loving God, You shepherded St. Therese with a gracious love and made her a tower of strength to people who had lost faith in You. Help us to be unafraid to pray with confidence for the many in our culture who do not believe they can be loved.

All: God of hope and love, hear our prayer

Reader: Loving God, St. Therese never doubted that her life had meaning. Help us to understand our possibilities for loving and blessing our children, our elderly parents, our neighbours in need, and for priests throughout the world.

All: God of hope and love, hear our prayer

Canon John: Loving God, you call us by name, as you did your servant St Therese, to live in your love. Hear our prayer for enlightenment and lead us along the road to your kingdom. We ask this in the name of Jesus your Son.

All: Amen

Canon John: Let us now all join together in a prayer of commitment.

All: Almighty God,
I give you my heart that you may love in and
through me all to whom I come in
contact with each and every day.
I dedicate myself to doing your will in all things and
to become an instrument through which you
might bring about peace and harmony to all your children
here on earth.

Amen.

Sung Response

*This is what Yahweh asks of you, only this:
that you act justly, that you love tenderly,
that you walk humbly with your God.*

“Do not let your hearts be troubled; trust in God now, and trust in me. I go to prepare a place for you, and I shall come again to take you home.”

“My children I am with you such a little while, and where I go now, you cannot come. A new commandment I give to you: as I have loved you, so love each other.”

Peace is the gift I leave with you, a peace the world can never give. If you keep my word my Father will love you, and we will come to you to make our home.

Canon John: God chooses each of us just as he chose St Therese and all the saints. When we listen and respond to God’s call, he helps and strengthens us through the Spirit. In faith, we ask God to listen as we pray:

Reader: Loving God, you blessed St. Therese with a capacity for a great love. Help us to believe in your unconditional love for each of us.

All: God of hope and love, hear our prayer

Reader: Loving God, you loved St. Therese’s complete trust in your care. Help us to rely on your providential care for us in each circumstance of our lives.

All: God of hope and love, hear our prayer

Reader: Loving God, you graced St. Therese with a capacity to see your hand in the ordinary routine of each day. Help us to be aware of your presence in the everyday events of our lives.

All: God of hope and love, hear our prayer

Reader: Loving God, you taught St. Therese how to find a direct way to you through the “little way” of humility and simplicity. Grant that we may never miss the grace there is in humble service to others in family and neighbourhood.

All: God of hope and love, hear our prayer

Reader: Loving God, you graced St. Therese with the gift of forgiving others even when she felt hurt and betrayed. Help us to be able to forgive others who have wounded us, especially...

All: God of hope and love, hear our prayer

Canon John: Loving God, you look into our hearts and see our willingness to be reconciled. Help us to become people who love and think of others before themselves. We ask this through Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

ALL: Amen

Sung Response

*We hold a treasure, not made of gold,
in earthen vessels, wealth untold;
one treasure only: the Lord, the Christ,
in earthen vessels.*

He has chosen the lowly, who are small in this world; in this weakness is glory, in Jesus, the Lord

Light has shone in our darkness;
God has shone in our heart,
with the light of the glory of Jesus, the Lord.

First Reading — 1 Corinthians 13

Be ambitious for the higher gifts. And I am going to show you a way that is better than any of them.

If I have all the eloquence of men or of angels, but speak without love, I am simply a gong booming or a cymbal clashing. If I have the gift of prophecy, understanding all the mysteries there are, and knowing everything, and if I have faith in all its fullness, to move mountains, but without love, then I am nothing at all. If I give away all that I possess, piece by piece, and if I even let them take my body to burn it, but am without love, it will do me no good whatever.

Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited; it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offence, and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people’s sins but delights in the truth; it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes.

Love does not come to an end. But if there are gifts of prophecy, the time will come when they must fail; or the gift of languages, it will not continue for ever; and knowledge – for this too, the time will come when it must fail. For our knowledge is imperfect, and our prophesying is imperfect; but once perfection comes, all imperfect things will disappear. When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, and think like a child, and argue like a child, but now I am a man, all childish ways are put behind me. Now we are seeing a dim reflection in a mirror; but then we shall be seeing face to face. The knowledge I have now is imperfect, but then I shall know as fully as I am known.

In short, there are three things that last: faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love.

This is the word of the Lord

ALL: Thanks be to God

Reader: A reflection from the autobiography of St Therese of the Child Jesus.

Since my longing for martyrdom was powerful and unsettling, I turned to the epistles of Saint Paul in the hope of finally finding an answer. By chance the twelfth and thirteenth chapters of the first epistle to the Corinthians caught my attention, and in the first section I read that not everyone can be an apostle, prophet or teacher, that the Church is composed of a variety of members, and that the eye cannot be the hand. Even with such an answer revealed before me, I was not satisfied and did not find peace. I persevered in the reading and did not let my mind wander until I found this encouraging theme:

“Set your desires on the greater gifts. And I will show you the way which surpasses all others.” For the Apostle insists that the greater gifts are nothing at all without love and that this same love is surely the best path leading directly to God. At length I had found peace of mind. Love appeared to me to be the hinge for my vocation. Indeed, I knew that the Church had a body composed of various members, but in this body the necessary and more noble member was not lacking; I knew that the Church had a heart and that such a heart appeared to be aflame with love. I knew that one love drove the members of the Church to action, that if this love were extinguished, the apostles would have proclaimed the Gospel no longer, the martyrs would have shed their blood no more. I saw and realized that love sets off the bounds of all vocations, that love is everything, that this same love embraces every time and every place. In one word, that love is everlasting.

Gospel Acclamation



Gospel Reading – John 13: 33-35; 14: 1:4

My little children,
I shall not be with you much longer.
You will look for me,
and where I am going, you cannot come.
I give you a new commandment:
love one another;
just as I have loved you,
you must also love one another.
By this love you have for one another,
everyone will know that you are my disciples.

Do not let your hearts be troubled.
Trust in God still, and trust in me.
There are many rooms in my Father's house;
if there were not, I should have told you.
I am going now to prepare a place for you,
and after I have gone and prepared you a place,
I shall return to take you with me;
so where I am
you may be too.

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Reader: An extract from one of St Therese's letters

During this last year, dear Mother, God has been very gracious to me in making me understand what is meant by charity. Well, of course, I did understand it before, but only in a very imperfect way; I hadn't got to the bottom of what Jesus meant when he said that the second commandment is like the first, "You shall love thy neighbour as thyself." I was making a special effort to love God better; and in doing that, it was borne in upon me that it was no use as long as my love simply expressed itself in words.

At the Last Supper Jesus makes it clearer still. He says--oh, so tenderly!-- "I have a new commandment to give you, that you are to love one another; that your love for one another is to be like that love I have borne you. The mark by which all men will know you for my disciples will be the love you bear one another." Well, how did Jesus love his disciples? And why did he love his disciples? You may be quite sure that their natural qualities did nothing to attract him. They were only poor sinners, so ignorant, their thoughts so earthbound; and yet Jesus calls them his friends, his brothers. He wants them to reign with him in his Father's kingdom; he is determined to win them admission, even if it means dying on a cross. Meditating on these words of Jesus, I began to see how imperfect my own love was; it was so obvious that I didn't love my sisters as God loves them. I realise, now, that perfect love means putting up with other people's shortcomings, feeling no surprise at their weaknesses, finding encouragement even in the slightest evidence of good qualities in them. But the point which came home to me most of all was that it was no good leaving charity locked up in the depths of your heart. "A lamp," Jesus says, "is not lighted to be put away under a bushel measure; it is put on the lamp-stand, to give light to all the people of the house." The lamp, I suppose, stands for charity; and the cheerful light it gives isn't meant simply for the people we are fond of; it is meant for everybody in the house, without exception.