

Trinity 13 Sunday 6th September

Opening Antiphon

Holy, holy, holy!
Lord God Almighty
Early in the morning
Our song shall rise to Thee
Holy, holy, holy!
Merciful and mighty
God in three persons
Blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy!
Lord God Almighty
All Thy works shall praise Thy name
In earth and sky and sea
Holy, holy, holy!
Merciful and mighty
God in three persons
Blessed Trinity

Oh God in three persons
Blessed Trinity!

Reginald Heber

Call to worship:

The Lord our God, the Almighty reigns
Let us rejoice and shout for joy, giving God the glory
Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

Prayer of Preparation

Loving God, we have come to worship you.

**Help us to pray to you in faith,
to sing your praise with gratitude,
and to listen to your word with eagerness;
through Christ our Lord. Amen**

Penitential Rite

We come to God as one from whom no secrets are hidden,
to ask for his forgiveness and peace.

**Most merciful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned
in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.
In your mercy
forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be;
that we may do justly,
love mercy,
and walk humbly with you, our God.
Amen.**

May the God of love and power
forgive *you* and free *you* from *your* sins,
heal and strengthen *you* by his Spirit,
and raise *you* to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Gloria for today

Let us give glory to the Father, Through the Son
In the Holy Spirit,

For God has made us his people, And calls us to sing his praises.

Blessed are you, Lord God:

Blessed are you for ever.

Holy is your name:

Blessed are you for ever.

Great is your mercy for your people:

Blessed are you for ever. Amen!

Collect

Almighty God, you search us and know us:
may we rely on you in strength
and rest on you in weakness,
now and in all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

1st Reading:

Romans 13:8-14 NIV **Love Fulfils the Law**

8 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. **9** The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not covet," and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbour as

yourself.” **10** Love does no harm to a neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.

11 And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

12 The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light. **13** Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. **14** Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Response:

**Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.**

**O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.**

**For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.**

Amen.

Prayer of St Francis Loyola Press

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, Alleluia.

Your words are Spirit Lord and they are life

You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia *Jn 6:63:68*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Matthew 18:15-20 NIV **Dealing With Sin in the Church**

15 “If your brother or sister[a] sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. **16** But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ **17** If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

18 “Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

19 “Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. **20** For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

In his letter to the Romans today Paul is observing that the old world, the ‘**present age**’, is rumbling on. . . . And most

people are automatically ordering their lives in accordance with the customs and habits they have learned and inherited.

Many are, in his analogy, engaging in things that belong to night time and darkness where they hide their shame - Night time is when people get drunk, go to wild parties and do all kinds of things they would be ashamed to do in broad daylight... And covetousness, jealousy, bad temper, anger, bitterness - which all too often show their faces in broad daylight sadly even among christians - likewise have no place among God's people.. . they are also all "the deeds of darkness" - and must stop now the dawn is here.

Paul's message is clear - it is time to wake up and notice that God's new age has begun, in Jesus the kingdom of God has dawned in our midst.

'Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ', he says, "Put on Christ". But what does that mean?

While the rest of the world still thinks it's night-time; we must get up and put on the 'armour of light'...

Some people - indeed some of you I know - regularly pray on the armour of God from Ephesians 6 which says:

Therefore put on the full armour of God. . . . "Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.”

And it is a really good prayer! But although the words may fall quite easily from the text and from our lips when we pray, they need to be accompanied by a resolute change of heart and mind and indeed of behaviour. To make this our prayer we need to have received, to know, the salvation of our God, to be standing in the grace of God, and to have learned and studied the scriptures...

But Paul here today is not only / or so much talking about putting on the armour of God, but more than that - he is talking about “putting on Christ”, conforming ourselves to *God’s ways and God’s character*.

Those who want to live in the light of day, in the kingdom of God, must be people who want to be like God; not trying to usurp his power and authority for that is his alone! - but adopting his customs and habit, his way of being... becoming people of light and of love.

To do this we must pray and study and find out who God really is - and what he is really like - so that we can emulate him, and by grace become like him!

Some Christians in their prayer each day make a conscious effort in prayer to ‘clothe themselves’ with the very character of Jesus.

Some do this by reading, slowly, a story from the **gospels**, and praying to become like the Jesus they meet there - going

on to pray as we did last week “In those we encounter may we meet you. And may those we serve experience in our care something of the loving care of Jesus himself.”

For other people it's a remembering... more than that a choosing to live in the grace of their **baptism:**

It is a favourite prayer of mine to ask God to renew in me the grace of my Baptism which is truly an amazing grace; being washed and made clean, made to belong to the family of God, a son or daughter and co-heir with Christ, filled with the Holy Spirit, freshly gifted and sent. By being immersed in the water of Baptism - effectively in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus - we are, in the eyes of God, “ransomed, healed, restored forgiven” because of Jesus. We are raised from the waters of Baptism into new life, with a new name, a new identity, gifts and desires written on our hearts by God and brought to life within us!

Some seek simply to “put on love” (Col 3:14) which of course, is the very nature of God.

We put on Christ when we put on love. The point of love, genuine Christian love, what the New Testament writers call *agapē*, is that it means copying the self-giving love of Jesus himself.

And of course, the one who loves will not commit adultery, or covet, or gossip, or slander, or lie, or steal, or murder - and so the one who loves God and loves his neighbour “has (as Paul began) fulfilled the law”.

But more than that - the one who has chosen and made steadfast love and faithfulness their way of being - is choosing to "Put on Christ" , to "tie the character of God around their neck; and write it on the tablet of their heart" (see Proverbs 3:3)

"Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ", "Put on Christ" "Put on Love"

If we do that - by His grace - we will not only be transformed ourselves, but the world too, will wake up and come to know the kingdom of God that has dawned in our midst...

Response.

**Holy Spirit, living breath of God,
Breathe new life into my willing soul.
Let the presence of the risen Lord,
Come renew my heart and make me whole.
Cause Your Word to come alive in me;
Give me faith for what I cannot see,
Give me passion for Your purity;
Holy Spirit, breathe new life in me. *Stuart Townend*
Amen.**

Our Declaration of Faith

Let us declare our faith in God.
**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

cf Ephesians 3

**Intercessions: Prepared and led for us by Stephen Lines from
St Michael's Shefford**

Through these prayers, we come with open hearts to express our concerns for our world, to you, our God of healing, compassion and grace.

Everlasting God, fire us with your Spirit to make us strong, gracious and wise in these challenging times.

- Strong enough to avoid being thin-skinned, but equally strong enough to challenge injustice.
- Gracious enough to avoid criticising others who challenge us; instead looking to empathise and helping them to find a way back.
- Wise enough to know that offence is taken, not given.

Empower us to reach out with your grace and love to those whose pain, despair and bitterness is destroying their lives and relationships,

Through your still small voice, grant us the gift of gentle guidance and nurturing to bring them with dignity back home to your love, their communities, their families and their friends.

Guard us all against self-righteousness and rules and limits which you would not own.

Help us to always keep your simple but beautiful rule of love at the forefront of every moment of our lives.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Creator God, increase in us love not only for the victims but also for the perpetrators of evil and violence in our world.

For all dictators and governments which run on corruption and fear we pray for a change of heart and attitude; an awakening to a better way of living, the courage to recognise and reject wrong principles, and the grace to admit and correct mistakes.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Teaching God: We pray for all young people whose academic lives have been disrupted by the pandemic. Even the lucky ones, who were fortunate enough to get a place at the University of their choice still have to grapple

with massively reduced social contact and almost exclusively online teaching.

We pray that they will still be able to learn and grow into the people that we need to guide, build and protect our futures.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Loving God, we pray for all offenders in prison, that on release they will get enough support to give them a genuine chance to start a new and positive life in their communities.

We pray for all who are vulnerable and unable to cope with the demands of life, We pray for timely, compassionate help for them.

And so we pray for, give thanks for, and celebrate those who have chosen to dedicate their lives to giving this help and support to the most vulnerable and voiceless members of our society. You love every one of them as much as you love us; how can we not do likewise?

We take a short break here so that you can pray personally for anyone that needs God's healing love...

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for all those who are researching and giving us practical, achievable ways of driving down the ever-present risks of the COVID pandemic. We also pray for those developing and testing potential vaccines and treatments.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Merciful God, we pray for those who have died alone, unmourned and unnoticed. We pray for those who have taken their own lives. We commend them to your merciful love.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Faithful God, thank you for helping us to pray in these difficult times; so much to ask for because of the fears we have in the Pandemic.

Many say "The world is ruined; it will never be the same again"

But if we store up our treasure in heaven as you advise, nothing has changed – we still have your unconditional love, forgiveness, and the gift of eternal life.

Deepen our loving so that as we pray through this coming week we may do it with your love in our hearts.

Merciful Father: **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Let's pray together the prayer that Jesus taught us.

**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 forever. Amen.**

Notices and Birthdays

The BLESSING and SENDING

**God of power,
may the boldness of your Spirit transform us,
may the gentleness of your Spirit lead us,
may the gifts of your Spirit equip us
to serve and worship you now and always. Amen.**
And the blessing.....

Go into the world
to walk in God's light,
to rejoice in God's love
and to reflect God's glory. **Amen.**

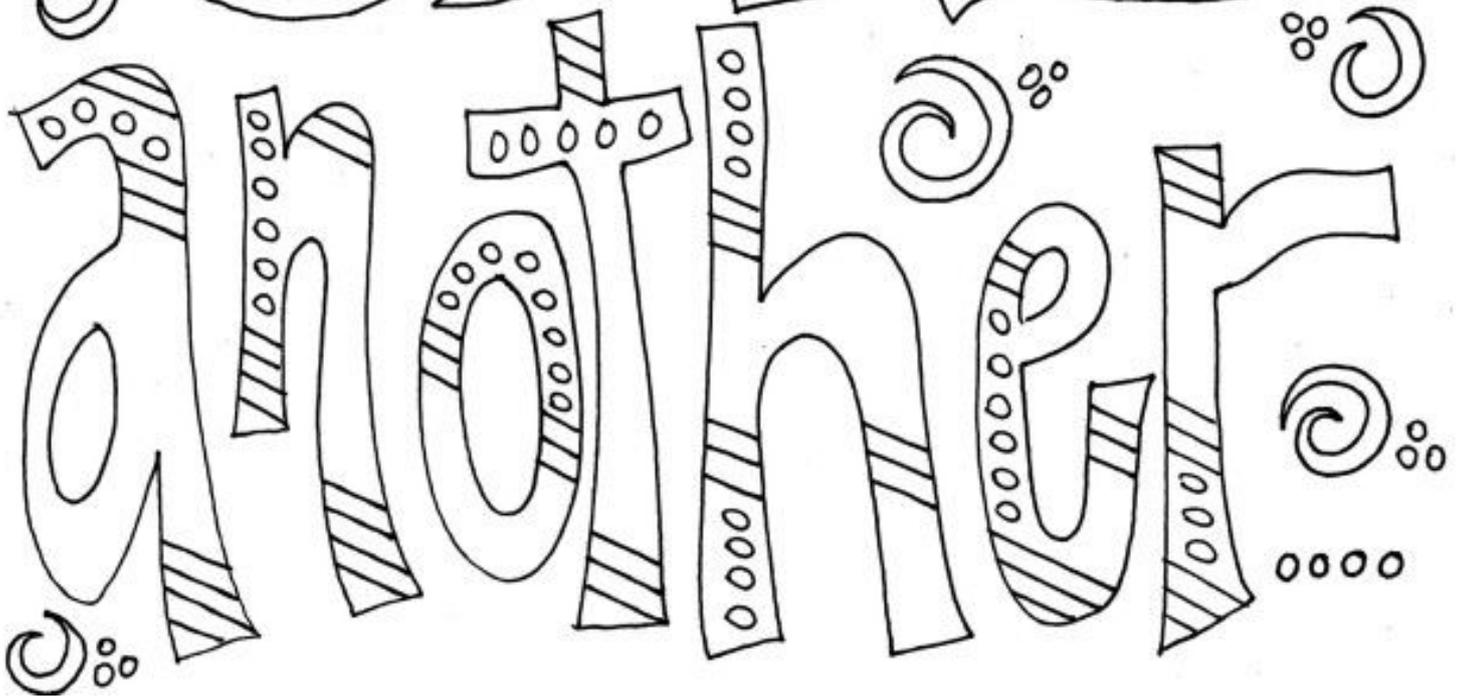
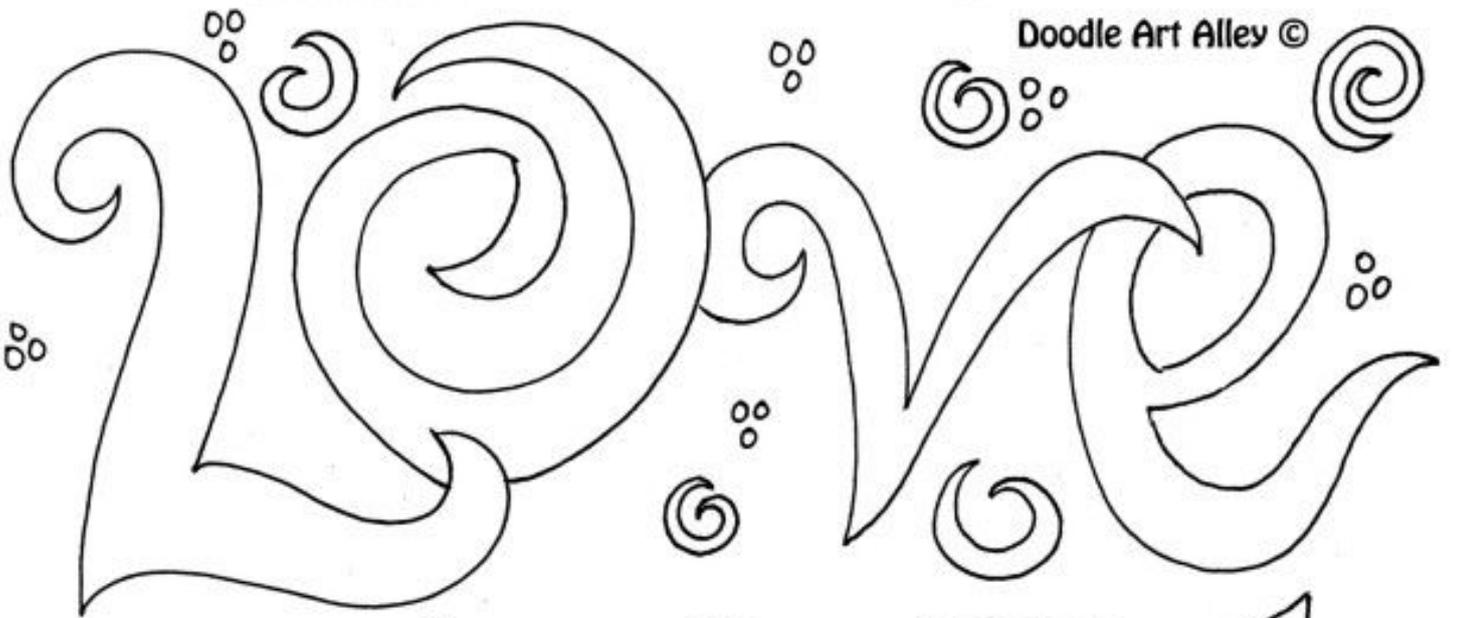
Final acclamation:

**Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
To His feet thy tribute bring.
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Who like me His praise should sing?
Praise Him, praise Him,
praise Him, praise Him,
Praise the everlasting King.**

**Angels help us to adore Him;
Ye behold Him face to face;**

**Sun and moon, bow down before Him,
Dwellers all in time and space.
Praise Him, praise Him,
praise Him, praise Him,
Praise with us the God of grace.** *Henry Lyte*

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Love One Another Word Maze

Find your way from the start of the maze and connect the words from the answer phrase in their correct order.

Love one another. John 15:17b HCSB

