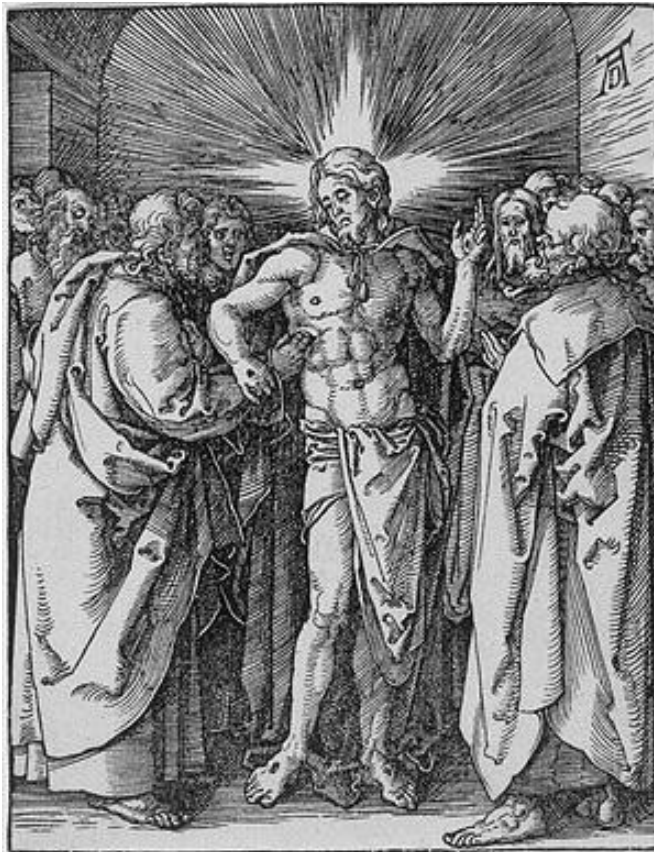




St Paul's Church, Knightsbridge  
The Diocese of London



The Sung Eucharist  
*Low Sunday*  
7<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at 11 a.m.

*Welcome to St Paul's Knightsbridge, part of the Diocese of London and a church of the worldwide Anglican Communion. If you are visiting us from another church, please make yourself known to the sidesmen or to one of the clergy after the service. Members of all Christian churches are welcome to share with us in this Eucharist – and those who do not wish to receive the Sacrament are invited to approach the altar at the time of Communion, to receive a blessing.*



*There is a loop system in the lower parts of the church for the benefit of the hearing-impaired. Hearing aid users should switch their devices to 'T'.*

*giftaid it*

*During the service a collection will be taken for the work of the church in this parish, throughout the Diocese of London and further afield. Please use the special envelopes at the end of each pew to maximise your giving through the 'Giftaid' scheme.*



*Members of the congregation are asked to ensure that mobile phones are switched off (or to silent) and are reminded that the taking of photographs or the making of audio or video recordings during services is prohibited.*

*Cover image:  
Doubting Thomas  
Albrecht Dürer (1471– 1528)*

# ORDER OF SERVICE

## The Introductory Rite

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*At 11 a.m. a bell is rung. The Servers and Sacred Ministers enter. All stand to sing:*

### THE ENTRANCE HYMN (486)

We have a gospel to proclaim,  
good news for men in all the earth,  
the gospel of a Saviour's name:  
we sing his glory, tell his worth.

Tell of his birth at Bethlehem,  
not in a royal house or hall,  
but in a stable dark and dim:  
the Word made flesh, a light for all.

Tell of his death at Calvary,  
hated by those he came to save,  
in lonely suffering on the cross:  
for all he loved, his life he gave.

Tell of that glorious Easter morn,  
empty the tomb, for he was free  
he broke the power of death and hell  
that we might share his victory.

Tell of his reign at God's right hand,  
by all creation glorified:  
he sends his Spirit on his Church,  
to live for him, the Lamb who died.

Now we rejoice to name him King:  
Jesus is Lord of all the earth.  
This gospel message we proclaim;  
we sing his glory, tell his worth.

*Edward Burns (b.1938)*

*Music: 'Fulda' by William Gardiner (fl.1815)*

## THE GREETING

*When all are in their places the Celebrant says:*

✠ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.  
**Amen.**

The Lord be with you  
**and with thy spirit.**

Alleluia, Christ is risen!  
**He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

## THE PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Almighty God,  
unto whom all hearts be open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hid:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love thee,  
and worthily magnify thy holy name;  
through Christ, our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## THE PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

*The Celebrant says:*

Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed for us.  
Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all malice and evil  
and confessing our sins with a sincere and true heart.

*All kneel.*

Jesus Christ, Risen Master and Triumphant Lord,  
we come to you in sorrow for our sins,  
and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.

We have lived by our own strength,  
and not by the power of your resurrection. *Silence is kept*

Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

We have lived by the light of our own eyes,  
as faithless and not believing. *Silence is kept*

Christ, have mercy.  
**Christ, have mercy.**

We have lived for this world alone,  
and doubted our home in your kingdom. *Silence is kept*

Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

*The Celebrant says:*

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

*All stand to sing*

## GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO



Glo - ry be to God on high, and in earth peace,  
good will to - wards men. We praise Thee;  
we bless Thee; we wor- ship Thee; we glo - ri - fy Thee.



We give thanks to Thee for thy great glo - ry,



O Lord God, hea - ven - ly King,



God the Fa - ther al - most



O Lord the on - ly be - got - ten Son, Je - sus Christ,



O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Fa - ther,



that ta - kest a - way the sins of the world,



have mer - cy up - on us.



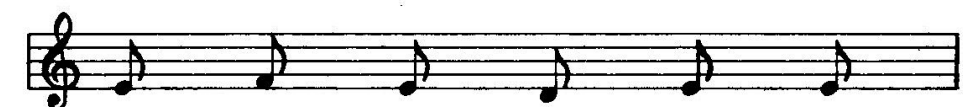
Thou that ta - kest a - way the sins of the world,



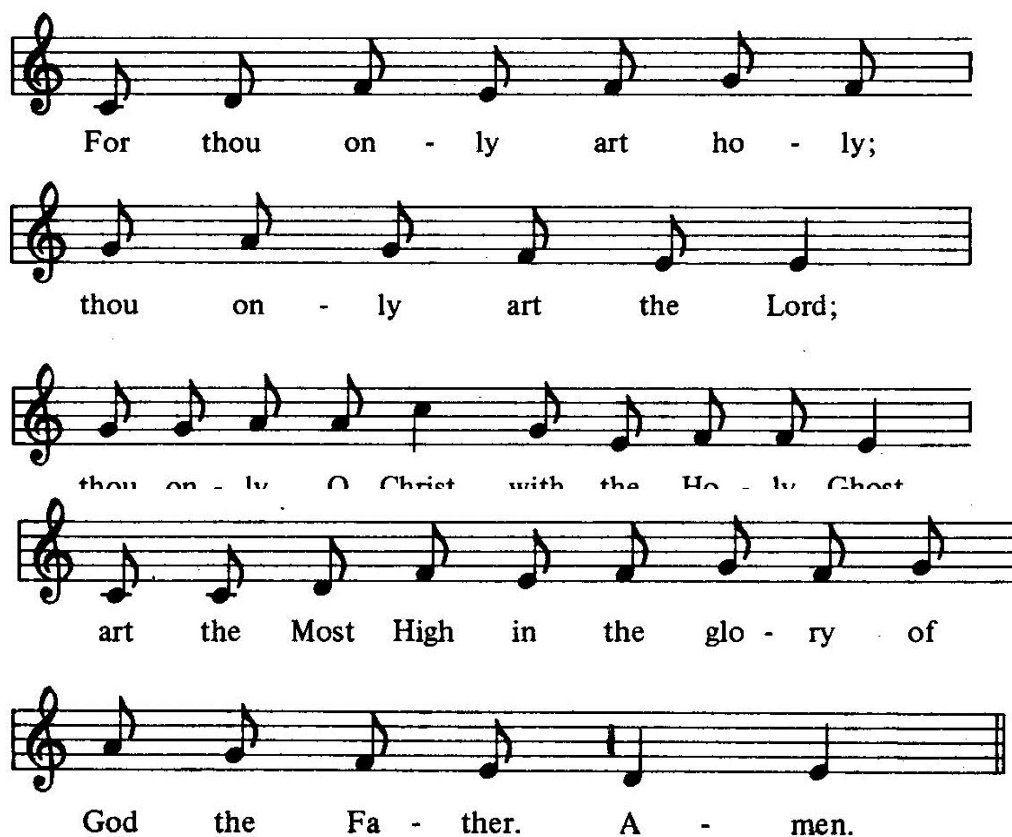
re - ceive our prayer.



Thou that sit - test at the right hand of God the Fa - ther,



have mer - cy up - on us.



*All remain standing.*

## THE COLLECT

*The Celebrant introduces a period of silent prayer:*

Let us pray.

*Thereafter, he sings:*

Almighty Father,  
who hast given thine only Son to die for our sins  
and to rise again for our justification:  
grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness  
that we may alway serve thee in pureness of living and truth;  
through the merits of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord,  
who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
**Amen.**

## THE FIRST READING

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles:

When they brought Peter and the apostles, they had them stand before the council. The high priest questioned them, saying, "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you are determined to bring this man's blood on us." But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than any human authority. The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Saviour that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him."

*The Acts of the Apostles 5:27-32*

*At the end:*

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## THE PSALMODY

*The Cantor sings:*

O praise God in his holiness :  
praise him in the firmament of his power.

Praise him in his noble acts :  
praise him according to his excellent greatness.

Praise him in the sound of the trumpet :  
praise him upon the lute and harp.

Praise him in the cymbals and dances :  
praise him upon the strings and pipe.

Praise him upon the well-tuned cymbals :  
praise him upon the loud cymbals.

Let every thing that hath breath : praise the Lord.

*Psalm 150*



## THE SECOND READING

A reading from the Book of Revelation

John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail. So it is to be. Amen. "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

*Revelation 1: 4-8*

*At the end:*

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*All stand.*

## THE GRADUAL HYMN (178)

Jesus Christ is risen today, *Alleluia!*  
our triumphant holy day, *Alleluia!*  
who did once upon the cross, *Alleluia!*  
suffer to redeem our loss. *Alleluia!*

Hymns of praise then let us sing, *Alleluia!*  
unto Christ, our heavenly king, *Alleluia!*  
who endured the cross and grave, *Alleluia!*  
sinners to redeem and save. *Alleluia!*

But the pains which he endured *Alleluia!*  
our salvation have procured; *Alleluia!*  
now above the sky he's king, *Alleluia!*  
where the angels ever sing. *Alleluia!*

*Anonymous; from Lyra Davidica (1708)*  
*Music: 'Easter Hymn' - anonymous*  
*from a melody in Lyra Davidica (1708)*

## THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

*The Cantor sings:*



**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

I am the First and the Last, says the Lord, and the Living One;  
I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

*All turn to face the Deacon.*

## THE GOSPEL READING

*The Deacon says:*

The Lord be with you

**And with thy spirit.**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ, according to John.

**Glory be to thee, O Lord.**

It was evening on the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.' Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus

is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

*John 20: 19-end*

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

## **THE SERMON**

The Reverend Prebendary Nick Mercer  
*Vicar General to the London College of Bishops  
and Honorary Assistant Priest*

*Silence is kept.*

## **THE CREED**

*All stand with the Celebrant, who says:* Let us make affirmation of our faith.

**I believe in one God, the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
and of all things visible and invisible:  
And in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only-begotten Son of God,  
begotten of his Father before all worlds,  
God of God, Light of light,  
very God of very God, begotten, not made,  
being of one substance with the Father,  
by whom all things were made;  
who for us men and for our salvation  
came down from heaven,  
and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost  
of the Virgin Mary, and was made man,  
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.  
He suffered and was buried,  
and the third day he rose again  
according to the Scriptures,  
and ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth on the right hand of the Father.  
And he shall come again with glory  
to judge both the quick and the dead:  
whose kingdom shall have no end.  
And I believe in the Holy Ghost,  
the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceedeth from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son together  
is worshipped and glorified,  
who spake by the prophets.**

**And I believe One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.  
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins.  
And I look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

*All remain standing.*

## **THE PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father.

*All kneel. Either of the following responses may be used:*

Lord in thy mercy                      or    Lord, hear us  
**hear our prayer                      Lord, graciously hear us.**

*For the departed, these words may be used:*

Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord  
**and let light perpetual shine upon them.**  
May they rest in peace  
**and rise in glory.**

*At the end, a brief period of silence is kept for personal prayer. All say:*

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

*All sit.*

## **THE NOTICES**

*All stand.*

## **THE PEACE**

*The Celebrant says:*

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said:  
'Peace be with you.'  
Then were they glad when they saw the Lord.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.  
**and with thy spirit.**

*The Deacon says:*

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

*All exchange a sign of peace with those standing close by.*

## THE OFFERTORY

*The gifts of the people are carried to the altar and presented. A collection is taken to support our work, ministry and charitable giving. Please use the Gift Aid envelopes provided, remembering to fill in all the details. The altar is prepared and the gifts of bread and wine, the altar, and the sanctuary party are censed.*

## THE COLLECTION HYMN (271)

Alleluia! sing to Jesus!  
his the sceptre, his the throne.  
Alleluia! his the triumph,  
his the victory alone.  
Hark! the songs of peaceful Sion  
thunder like a mighty flood.  
Jesus out of every nation  
has redeemed us by his blood.

Alleluia! not as orphans  
are we left in sorrow now;  
Alleluia! He is near us,  
faith believes, nor questions how;  
though the cloud from sight received him  
when the forty days were o'er  
shall our hearts forget his promise,  
'I am with you evermore?'

Alleluia! bread of angels,  
thou on earth our food, our stay;  
Alleluia! here the sinful  
flee to thee from day to day:  
intercessor, friend of sinners,  
earth's redeemer, plead for me,  
where the songs of all the sinless  
sweep across the crystal sea.

Alleluia! king eternal,  
thee the Lord of lords we own;  
Alleluia! born of Mary,  
earth thy footstool, heav'n thy throne:  
thou within the veil hast entered,  
robed in flesh our great high priest;  
thou on earth both priest and victim  
in the Eucharistic feast.

Words: W. Chatterton Dix (1837-1898)  
Music: 'Hyfrydol' by Richard Huw Pritchard (1811-1887).

## THE OFFERTORY ANTHEM

### The Lord Is My Shepherd (Psalm 23)

*Samuel Liddle (1868-1935)*

*sung by Michael Solomon Williams (tenor)*

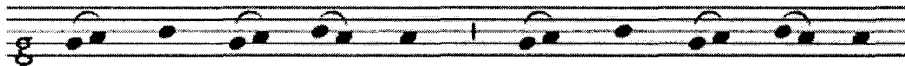
*When the Thurifer approaches, all stand to be censed.*

*After being censed, all remain standing for the Eucharistic Prayer.*

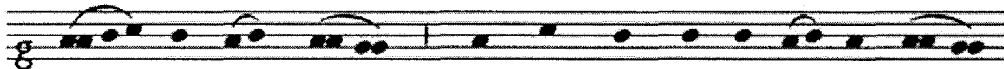
## THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

*The Celebrant sings:*

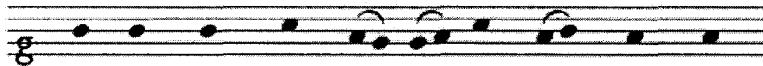
*All respond:*



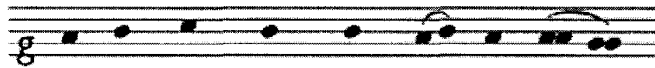
The Lord be with you *R.* and with thy spi-rit.



Lift up your hearts. *R.* We lift them up un-to the Lord.



Let us give thanks un - to the Lord our God.



*R.* It is meet and right so to do.

It is very meet, right and our bounden duty,  
that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto thee,  
O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ,  
thine only Son, our Lord. For he is thy living Word; through him thou hast  
created all things from the beginning, and fashioned us in thine own  
image. Through him thou didst redeem us from the slavery of sin,  
giving him to be born of a woman, to die upon the cross, and to rise again  
for us. Through him thou hast made us a people for thine own possession,  
exalting him to thy right hand on high, and sending forth through him thy  
holy and life-giving Spirit.

But chiefly are we bound to praise thee because thou didst raise him  
gloriously from the dead. For he is the true paschal lamb who was offered  
for us, and has taken away the sin of the world.

By his death he has destroyed death,  
and by his rising to life again he has restored to us everlasting life.

Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee and saying:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Hosts,



hea - ven and earth are full of thy glo - ry.



Glo - ry be to Thee O Lord most high.



Bles-sed is he that co-meth in the name of the Lord.



Ho - san - na in the high - est.

*The prayer continues:*

Accept our praises, heavenly Father,  
through thy Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ,  
and as we follow his example and obey his command,  
grant that by the power of thy Holy Spirit  
these gifts of bread and wine may be unto us his body and his blood;  
who, in the same night that he was betrayed, took bread;  
and when he had given thanks to thee,  
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:

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

Likewise after supper he took the cup;  
and when he had given thanks to thee, he gave it to them, saying:

Drink ye all of this; for this is my blood of the new covenant,  
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me.

Wherefore, O Lord and heavenly Father,  
 we remember his offering of himself  
 made once for all upon the cross;  
 we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension;  
 we look for the coming of his kingdom  
 and with this bread and this cup  
 we make the memorial of Christ, thy Son, our Lord.

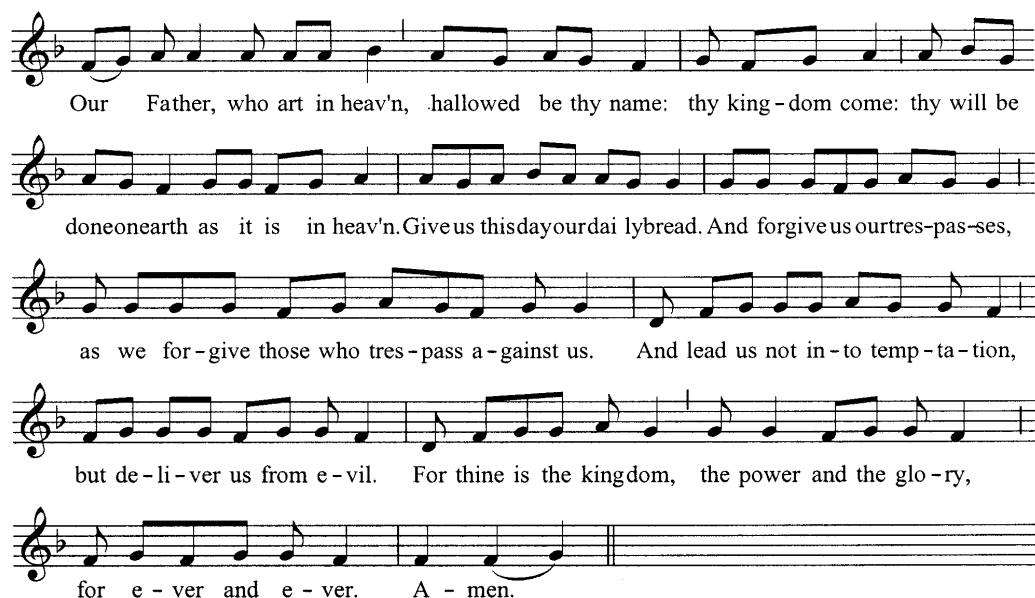
Accept through him, our great high priest,  
 this our sacrifice of thanks and praise,  
 and as we eat and drink these holy gifts  
 in the presence of thy divine majesty,  
 renew us by thy Holy Spirit, inspire us with thy love,  
 and unite us in the body of thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,  
 by whom, and with whom, and in whom,  
 in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
 all honour and glory be unto thee,  
 O Father almighty, world without end.  
**Amen.**

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

*All kneel. The Celebrant sings:*

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us.

*All sing:*



Our Father, who art in heav'n, hallowed be thy name: thy king-dom come: thy will be  
 done on earth as it is in heav'n. Give us this day our dai ly bread. And forgive us our tres-pas-ses,  
 as we for-give those who tres-pass a- gainst us. And lead us not in-to temp-ta-tion,  
 but de-li-ver us from e-vil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glo-ry,  
 for e-ver and e-ver. A-men.

## THE FRACTION

*The Celebrant breaks the consecrated bread, saying:*

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.  
**Though we are many, we are one body,**  
**because we all share in one bread.**



## THE GIVING OF HOLY COMMUNION

*By way of invitation to receive the Sacrament the Celebrant says:*

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

**Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof,  
but speak the word only and my soul shall be healed.**

*The Sacred Ministers and Servers receive the Holy Communion, followed by the people, beginning with those seated at the front of the Nave.*

*All who normally do so in their own Church are invited to receive the Sacrament.*

*Those who do not wish to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion are invited to approach the altar to receive a blessing, carrying this booklet in their hands as an indication to the Priest.*

### AGNUS DEI



## COMMUNION ANTHEM

**Komm, Jesu, Komm (BWV61)**

*J.S. Bach (1685-1750)*

## PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION

*The Celebrant introduces a period of silent prayer.*

Let us pray.

*All kneel.*

Lord God our Father,  
who, through our Saviour, Jesus Christ,  
hast assured us of eternal life and in baptism made us one with him:  
deliver us from the death of sin and raise us to new life in thy love,  
in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.  
**Amen.**

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

*All stand.*

## THE CONCLUDING HYMN (413)

Now thank we all our God,  
with heart and hands and voices,  
who wondrous things hath done,  
in whom his world rejoices;  
who from our mother's arms  
hath blessed us on our way  
with countless gifts of love,  
and still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God  
through all our life be near us,  
with ever joyful hearts  
and blessed peace to cheer us;  
and keep us in his grace,  
and guide us when perplexed,  
and free us from all ills  
in this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God  
the Father now be given,  
the Son, and him who reigns,  
with them in highest heaven,  
the One eternal God,  
whom earth and heaven adore;  
for thus it was, is now,  
and shall be evermore.

*German, Martin Rinkart (1586-1649) Tr. Catherine Winkworth (1827-78)  
Music: 'Nun Danket'; from Johann Crüger (fl.1647), Praxis Pietatis Melica*

*All remain standing.*

---

## The Concluding Rite

### THE BLESSING & THE DISMISSAL

*The Celebrant says:*

The Lord be with you **and with thy spirit.**

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,  
that great shepherd of the sheep,  
through the blood of the eternal covenant  
make you perfect in every good work to do his will,  
working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.  
**Amen.**

*The Deacon says:*

Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia. Alleluia!  
**Thanks be to God. Alleluia. Alleluia!**

*All remain standing as the Servers and Sacred Ministers depart.*

### ORGAN VOLUNTARY



### *Acts 5:27-32*

This book is the sequel to the gospel according to Luke. Beginning with Jesus' ascension, Luke tells the story of the beginnings of the church. By no means a comprehensive history, it does however describe the spread of the church from Jerusalem to all of Palestine, and as far as Greece. The episodes he reports show how Christianity arose out of Judaism. He shows us something of the struggles the church underwent in accepting Gentiles as members. The Holy Spirit guides and strengthens the church as it spreads through much of the Roman Empire.

Peter and John have been arrested by the religious authorities for teaching and proclaiming that "in Jesus there is resurrection of the dead" (4:2). The Sanhedrin has ordered them "not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus" (4:18). So popular are they with the people that the Sanhedrin does not punish them. But later the growth in believers leads the high priest to take further action; he and the Sadducees see the disciples doing what they cannot do, i.e. healing the sick. This time, all the apostles are imprisoned; however, a divine messenger sets them free (v. 19). They go right back to preaching – in the outer court of the Temple (v. 21). The temple police bring them to appear before the council.

Now the high priest imputes that the apostles place the blame for Jesus' death on the religious authorities ("you are determined ...", v. 28). Led by Peter, they insist that they must obey God's will rather than the Sanhedrin's orders (v. 29). They explain in Jewish terms: the "God of our ancestors" (v. 30) is the God of Israel (and of Christians): he has "raised" Jesus from the dead. The Law prescribed that a person guilty of a capital offence be hanged "on a tree"; Peter interprets cross as being the Roman equivalent to the Jewish tree. Moses was "Leader and Saviour" (v. 31) of Israel, under God; Jesus is much more so: he goes before us; now with the Father, he continues to rescue us from sin and death. Jesus' message was first to "Israel". Both the apostles and the "Holy Spirit" (v. 32), given to the faithful, are "witnesses" to Christ's actions.

The council members are so enraged that they want to kill Peter, but a famous liberal rabbi, Gamaliel, cautions them: "if this ... is of human origin, it will fail" (v. 38); but if it is from God, they "will not be able to overthrow them" (v. 39) and they will be working against God. Peter and John are flogged for their earlier offence. Despite being ordered not to preach the Good News, the apostles continue to do so, both in the Temple and in homes.

### *Revelation 1: 4-8*

This is the last book of the Bible and is in a way a summary of the whole of the Bible. It is an apocalypse, a vision which foretells the future and presents an understanding of the past. It tells of the struggle between good and evil, and the ultimate victory of Christ. Writing in symbolic language, its author urges Christians to keep faith in a period of persecution. It is hard to understand because we do not know the meaning of the symbols (e.g. animals) it uses.

John begins and ends this book as a letter. Literally, it is "to the seven churches that are in Asia" (v. 4a), Asia being a Roman province in western Asia Minor, but "seven" symbolizes totality, so John may speak to all churches in the province, or to all everywhere. The salutation combines both Greek ("grace") and Hebrew

("peace") forms, and is from God, here described as being throughout time, meaning eternal. The salutation is also from "the seven spirits": perhaps meaning the Spirit of God (in Isaiah 11:2, the Spirit operates in seven ways) or the seven angels (Michael, Raphael, etc) closest to God ("before his throne", v. 4) in contemporary Jewish thinking. Further, it is "from Jesus Christ" (v. 5), who is:

"the faithful witness": he revealed the Father perfectly in his earthly life, and crowned this by the sacrifice of his life;

"firstborn of the dead": in his resurrection, he inaugurated a new era; and

"ruler ...": being now exalted, he has power over all creation.

Vv. 5b-6 praise God:

Christ loves us continually and, by his death, he has freed us from sins; and

he has marked us as God's, and has made us all "priests", mediators between God and the rest of humanity.

"Amen", a Hebrew word, means It is sure and trustworthy! or so be it!: it is both valid and binding. (In 3:14, Christ is called "the Amen".) V. 7 combines two Old Testament prophetic sayings to predict the return of Christ at the end of the age. Those who put him to death and all unbelievers "will wail" for showing hostility to Christ and his Church: they will be condemned when Jesus comes us as judge. V. 8 tells us that, from A to Z, God is sovereign over all events of human history; his power is supreme ("Almighty").

### ***John 20:19-31***

John is the fourth gospel. Its author makes no attempt to give a chronological account of the life of Jesus (which the other gospels do, to a degree), but rather "...these things are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name." John includes what he calls signs, stories of miracles, to help in this process.

Early on Easter Day, Mary Magdalene has discovered that Jesus' body is missing from the tomb; the stone door is open, so it looks as though someone has stolen it (v. 1). She has seen a man standing near the tomb. When he speaks to her, she recognizes him as Jesus. She has told the disciples: "I have seen the Lord" (v. 18).

Later the same day, Jesus joins the disciples, gathered behind locked doors. He shows them that he is the one who was crucified (v. 20). Jesus confers on "the disciples" (not including Thomas, but perhaps a group larger than the ten) "peace" (vv. 19, 21) and "the Holy Spirit" (v. 22). As God "breathed" life into Adam, the proto-human, so Jesus now breathes the new, spiritual, life of recreated humanity into his followers. Aided by the Spirit, they continue Jesus' judicial role in the world, forgiving the sins of the faithful and holding others blameworthy ("retain", v. 23) for their actions. Thomas is expected to believe without having seen, but he demands: show me the evidence! (v. 25)

The next Sunday, the community gathers again (v. 26). Upon seeing, Thomas makes the most complete affirmation of faith of anyone in the gospel (v. 29). Henceforth the faith of all Christians in all ages will rest on the testimony of the first believers. Vv. 30-31 tell us John's purpose in writing the book. His eyewitness account is intended to help us, who were not witnesses of Jesus' life, death, resurrection and ascension to "come to believe" and thus "have life in his name", eternal life.



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For further information about the life of St Paul's, please contact:

The Parish Office, 32A Wilton Place, London SW1X 8SH

020 7201 9999

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