

Parish of Ribbleton

St. Mary Magdalene (SMM) The Ascension (ASC) -Longsands (LS)

Sunday 28th February

Lent 2

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

*Jesus said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves
and take up their cross and follow me."*

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

PRAYER FOR THE DAY

Almighty God,
by the prayer and discipline of Lent
may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings,
and by following in his Way come to share in his glory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen

FIRST READING (Genesis 9:17:1-7,15-16)

When Abram was 99 years old, the Lord appeared to him.

The Lord said,

"I am God All-Powerful.

Obey me and do what is right.

I will make an agreement between us.

I will make you the ancestor of many people."

Then Abram bowed face-down on the ground.

God said to him,

"I am making my agreement with you:

I will make you the father of many nations.

I am changing your name from Abram to Abraham.

This is because I am making you a father of many nations.

I will give you many descendants.

New nations will be born from you.

Kings will come from you.

And I will make an agreement between me and you and all your descendants from now on:

I will be your God and the God of all your descendants.

God said to Abraham,

"I will change the name of Sarai, your wife.

Her new name will be Sarah.

I will bless her.

I will give her a son, and you will be the father.

She will be the mother of many nations.

Kings of nations will come from her."

RESPONSORIAL PSALM (Psalm 22:23-24,26-28)

The response to the Psalm is:

You who fear the Lord, praise him!

Praise the Lord, you that fear him;
O seed of Jacob, glorify him;
stand in awe of him, O seed of Israel. **R/**

For he has not despised nor abhorred
the suffering of the poor;
neither has he hidden his face from them;
but when they cried to him he heard them. **R/**

The poor shall eat and be satisfied;
those who seek the Lord shall praise him;
their hearts shall live for ever. **R/**

All the ends of the earth
shall remember and turn to the Lord,
and all the families of the nations shall bow before him.
For the kingdom is the Lord's
and he rules over the nations. **R/**

SECOND READING (Romans 4:13-25)

Abraham and his descendants received the promise that they would get the whole world.

But Abraham did not receive that promise through the law.

He received it because he was right with God through his faith.

If people could receive what God promised by following the law, then faith is worthless.

And God's promise to Abraham is worthless, because the law can only bring God's anger.

But if there is no law, then there is nothing to disobey. So people receive God's promise by having faith.

This happens so that the promise can be a free gift.

And if the promise is a free gift, then all of Abraham's children can have that promise.

The promise is not only for those people that live under the law of Moses.

It is for anyone who lives with faith like Abraham.

He is the father of us all

As it is written in the Scriptures:

"I am making you a father of many nations."

This is true before God.

Abraham believed in God – the God who gives life to the dead and decides that things will happen that have not yet happened.

There was no hope that Abraham would have children. But Abraham believed God and continued hoping.

And that is why he became the father of many nations.

As God told him,

"Your descendants will also be too many to count."

Abraham was almost 100 years old, much past the age for having children.

Also, Sarah could not have children.

Abraham thought about all this.

But his faith in God did not become weak.

He never doubted that God would keep his promise.

Abraham never stopped believing.

He grew stronger in his faith and gave praise to God.

Abraham felt sure that God was able to do the thing that God promised.

So, "God accepted Abraham's faith, and that made him right with God."

Those words ("God accepted Abraham's faith") were written not only for Abraham.

They were written also for us. God will accept us also because we believe.

We believe in the One who raised Jesus our Lord from death.

Jesus was given to die for our sins.

And he was raised from death to make us right with God.

GOSPEL (Mark 8:31-38)

He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter.

"Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns." Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said:

"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.

For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.

What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?

Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?

If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels."



Sunday Reflection

Following Jesus

I expect you know the 'Footprints' story.

The speaker looks back over his life and sees footprints in the sand.

When he sees two pairs of footprints together, that's when Jesus is walking alongside him.

Sometimes there's just one set of footprints, and this worries the speaker.

'Where were you, Jesus?'

'When you see just one set of prints, my dear child, that's when I was carrying you.'

It's an inspiring thought, but maybe there's something missing.

What about the times when one set of prints is well ahead of the other set?

Isn't that when Jesus looks back over his shoulder and cries, 'Do try and keep up!'

When Jesus called his disciples, he didn't say, 'Come to me.'

His call was, 'Follow me!'

Jesus is continually moving, calling us forward, challenging us into new situations – and sometimes new dangers.

Of course, the going can get tough.

We need care, and comfort, and rest; and Jesus says,

'Come to me, those who are loaded down and don't know how to continue, and I will give you rest.'

He understands the hard times better than anyone.

But even then, his first call is: 'Follow!'

We have to move on with him.

So now, in this week's reading from Mark's Gospel, Jesus has been telling his disciples exactly what's going to happen to him in Jerusalem.

He's keeping nothing back of the arrest, suffering and death – or the Resurrection.

The disciples are deeply troubled, and Peter tries to turn Jesus back.

He gets a sharp rebuke from his master.

Not only does Jesus have to take this path, but he still expects his disciples to follow him, each carrying their own cross.

It's like the difference between a wedding and a marriage.

A wedding is a wonderful moment of commitment; but then the couple have to build a marriage.

That means renewing that commitment over and over again; and sometimes it's a tough and challenging thing to do.

Our commitment to follow Jesus is a moment of joy – it's great to feel loved and wanted - but that commitment needs renewing time and time again.

Sometimes, like in a marriage, that can be a tough course to take.

Lent is just one opportunity, coming around every year, to renew our vow to Jesus.

We do it together as his disciples.

Hear how he calls you forward to keep up with him, on the journey that's his and yours.

Love & prayers

Fr. Chris

Intercessions

Lord, in Abraham we see faith which holds fast to your promise. Grant us, your Church, the faith and courage to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Christ Jesus.

Bless all who lead and guide your people, among them our bishops, Julian, Jill and Philip. May they walk in the paths of faithfulness and service.

We ask your blessing on Fr Keith, Fr Chris, Linda and Captain David, and on our parish wardens, Ron and Jacqueline. Encourage and guide them through the coming months.

Comfort and encourage our brothers and sisters who face persecution and death because of their love for you: we hold before you the churches in Nigeria, Indonesia and South Sudan.

Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer

Lord, in Abraham we share a common heritage with people of different races, languages and creeds. Unite all your peoples in our common humanity. Watch over the nations and bless the families of the earth.

We give thanks for all who work to protect your creation and to bring peace and justice to your world.

We hold before you the leaders of the nations and those in power and authority under them. May they walk in the paths of integrity and mercy.

We pray for our own government and all who serve in local government. Grant them the wisdom and humility to serve our nation with compassion and equity.

Comfort and encourage your children who live in danger and poverty because of the greed and hatred that distorts our world. We hold before you the people of Syria, Yemen and Lebanon, and those who struggle to live in refugee camps and temporary accommodation. May we respond in love to their needs.

Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer

Lord, in Christ you call all people into your family. Give us the vision to shape our communities as places where all families can delight and flourish. Make us agents of your generosity and care.

We give thanks for our communities of family, friends, workmates and neighbours. May we nurture the young, care for the infirm and bring hope to all who struggle.

We ask your blessing on all who live or work in our parish, and on those who care for their needs and well-being, among them our medical and emergency services.

We hold before you our neighbours who are in need or difficulty. We pray especially for those who use the Community Pantry and foodbanks in our city.

Protect and encourage the staff of our schools as they prepare to return to full classrooms next week.

Keep our children safe as they meet again with friends and classmates.

Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer

Lord, in Christ you assure us of salvation. Give us the faith to turn to you in our hour of need. Bless us with your life-giving presence and make us agents of your wholeness and healing.

Bless those who work to bring healing and wholeness of body, mind or spirit to your people.

Hear our prayer for all who need your healing touch, and for those known to us or named on our prayer list. May their hearts be filled with the joy of your Spirit.

Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer

Lord, in Christ, who you raised from death, you call us to eternal life. Guide us in your Word of truth and life, and draw us with all your saints to stand before you in your glory.

Comfort and encourage those who are close to death and those who mourn.

We bring to you our prayers for those who have died -

– for those who have died this week in the ongoing conflicts and disasters of our world.

– for those known to us who have died recently and for those whose anniversary is about this time.

Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord, and let light perpetual shine upon them.

May they rest in peace and rise in glory

Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer

Lord, in Christ you give us, your children, the courage to call you Father. May our hearts always be alive with your Spirit.

Give us the grace to turn from the concerns of the world, to hear your Son's voice, and to respond to his call: 'Follow me!'

Trusting in your love for us, we bring the silent prayers of our hearts - for ourselves and those we love..

Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer

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

If you would like to sing:

O God our help in ages past

<https://youtu.be/ssr-Ga3Mz6Q>

#Amazing Grace

<https://youtu.be/zG3wOkWyYAA>

#Will you come and follow me

<https://youtu.be/zk6IUaIJ3sk>

#I have decided to follow Jesus

<https://youtu.be/5OWWqS1jnOw>

Our Community Pantry helps to support vulnerable families locally by providing healthy and nutritious food at low cost. Please support it.

It continues to open on Tuesdays 10am -12noon and is very busy.

Donations of food can be dropped off at the Ascension Church on Monday or Tuesday 9am - 1pm, or at SMM on Wednesday 10am -12noon.



Readings for Sunday 7th March

*Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 19:7-14;
1 Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2:13-22*

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