

Fifth Sunday in Lent

29 March 2020 *Morning Prayer, Second Order*
A Prayer Book for Australia

[Video] Leader & Preacher: Bp Richard Condie
Reader: Dean Richard Humphrey, Prayers: Raelene Weissel

Gathering in God's name

The Minister reads one or more of these or other suitable sentences of Scripture.

Through Christ let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God,
the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

Hebrews 13.15

Worthy is the Lamb who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honour and glory and praise!

Revelation 5.12

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts,
who was, and is, and is to come!

Revelation 4.8

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
By his great mercy we have been born anew
to a living hope
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

1 Peter 1.3

Open our lips, O Lord,
and we shall declare your praise.
This is the day that the Lord has made,
we will rejoice and be glad in it.

The Minister

Friends in Christ,
we come together to meet with God,
and to take our part in the building up of his Church.
We will lift up our hearts in thanks and praise,
hear from God's holy word,
and pray for this world, and for ourselves.

The Bible tells us to approach God confidently,
through our Lord Jesus Christ.
As we do so, we must confess our sins,
seeking forgiveness through God's boundless
goodness and mercy.

One or more of these or other suitable sentences of Scripture may be read.

God now commands all people everywhere to repent, for he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed, Jesus Christ the Lord.

Acts 17.30–31

I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him,
'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you;
I am no more worthy to be called your son'.

Luke 15.18–19

To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness,
though we have rebelled against him,
and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God
by following his laws which he set before us.

Daniel 9.9–10

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves,
and the truth is not in us.
But if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just,
and will forgive our sins
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1.8–9

Silence may be kept

The Minister continues

So let us draw near to God with sincerity and confidence, and pray together,

**God of all mercy,
we humbly admit that we need your help.
We have wandered from your way.
We have sinned in thought, word and deed,
and have failed to do what is right.
You alone can save us.
Have mercy on us,
wipe out our sins and teach us to forgive others.
Bring forth in us the fruit of your Spirit
that we may live the new life to your glory.
This we ask in the name of Jesus our Saviour. Amen.**

The Minister stands and declares God's forgiveness.

God desires that none should perish,
but that all should turn to Christ, and live.
In response to his call we acknowledge our sins.
God pardons those who humbly repent, and truly believe the gospel.
Therefore we have peace with God, through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The minister may read one of these sentences of Scripture.

If anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the perfect offering for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 2.1–2

In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the perfect offering for our sins.

1 John 4.10

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8.38–39

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

His steadfast love endures for ever!

Grace and peace be with you

and also with you.

Come, let us sing to the Lord,

shout to the rock of our salvation.

Serve the Lord with gladness,

come before his face with songs of joy.

The Ministry of the Word

The Minister says

Heavenly Father,

give us wisdom and understanding.

As we listen to your Word,

may we know you better,

love you more,

and learn to please you in all we do;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Old Testament Reading: Psalm 121

- ¹ I lift up my eyes to the hills:
but where shall I find help?
- ² My help comes from the Lord:
who has made heaven and earth.
- ³ He will not suffer your foot to stumble:
and he who watches over you will not sleep.
- ⁴ Be sure he who has charge of Israel:
will neither slumber nor sleep.
- ⁵ The Lord himself is your keeper:
the Lord is your defence upon your right hand;
- ⁶ The sun shall not strike you by day:
nor shall the moon by night.
- ⁷ The Lord will defend you from all evil:
it is he who will guard your life.
- ⁸ The Lord will defend your going out and your coming in:
from this time forward for evermore.

New Testament Reading: Luke 18:31-43

Then he took the twelve aside and said to them, 'See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets will be accomplished. ³²For he will be handed over to the Gentiles; and he will be mocked and insulted and spat upon. ³³After they have flogged him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise again.' ³⁴But they understood nothing about all these things; in fact, what he said was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.

³⁵ As he approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. ³⁶When he heard a crowd going by, he asked what was happening. ³⁷They told him, 'Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.' ³⁸Then he shouted, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' ³⁹Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet; but he shouted even more loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' ⁴⁰Jesus stood still and ordered the man to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, ⁴¹'What do you want me to do for you?' He said, 'Lord, let me see again.' ⁴²Jesus said to him, 'Receive your sight; your faith has saved you.' ⁴³Immediately he regained his sight and followed him, glorifying God; and all the people, when they saw it, praised God.

Hear the word of the Lord,
thanks be to God.

The Sermon (Printed at the end of the service sheet)

The Apostles' Creed

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father;
from there he will come 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.**

The Ministry of Prayer

The Minister says

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us join together in the prayer which Jesus gave 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.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

The Minister continues

Be exalted, Lord, above the heavens,
let your glory cover the earth.
Keep our nation under your care,
and guide us in justice and truth.
Let your way be known on earth,
your saving power among all nations.
Send out your light and your truth,
that we may tell of your saving works.
Have mercy on the poor and oppressed.
Hear the cry of those in need.
Hear our prayers, O Lord,
for we put our trust in you.

The Collect of the Day

Life-giving God, your Son came into the world to free us all from sin and death: breathe upon us with the power of your Spirit, that we may be raised to new life in Christ, and serve you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Prayers

A Minister

Let your requests be made known unto God.
In everything give thanks.

*O LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is Your name in all the earth! Psalm 8:1*

Thank you for being our God - our Creator, our rock and Redeemer.
Thank you for the mountains and the sea, sunshine and rain.
Lord, we thank you for your goodness and your love that endures forever.

Almighty God, we come before you today to pray for the swift and effective containment of the coronavirus across the globe.

We pray for governments to act with wisdom and compassion and for the equitable distribution of the earth's resources. We pray for all who are working on a vaccine and treatments, that solutions will be found and the virus will be defeated. We give you thanks and pray for all who care for the sick - especially for hospitals, medical + nursing staff during this time.

Merciful God, we pray for the healing of the sick and suffering, for the comfort of all who mourn and for the protection of the vulnerable.

At this time of great change, we pray for our society as it faces the many challenges of unemployment, homelessness and isolation. We especially pray for an end to violence and selfishness and a commitment to kindness, patience and love.

Lord, we pray for the Church and Christians around the globe, that we may we find ways to be your salt and light during this time.

We pray for the Diocese of Tasmania, for Bishop Richard, all those in pastoral leadership and for our parishes - may we be a Church for Tasmania, making disciples of Jesus.

We pray for the days and weeks ahead in our lives: for work situations; for changes to schedules; for families and students as they adjust to new ways of learning and living together; for those who are lonely, isolated or anxious; and for those who have no home or safe place.

We pray for your comfort and strength, for your protection and provision for all who are in need. Help us to build strong connections and to encourage one another, even though we are apart. We pray that you will help us to find creative ways to be a blessing to our communities.

Our hearts are full Lord, and sometimes we find it hard to express our thoughts and feelings, but we thank you that you know us, you love us and you hear all our prayers, even when we cannot find the words.

Thank you for your goodness, your enduring love and the hope we have in you. We ask all these things in the precious name of Jesus Christ our Lord, **Amen.**

A Minister continues

Faithful God,
you have promised to hear the prayers
of all who ask in Jesus' name.
In your mercy, accept our prayers.
Give us what we have asked in faith,
according to your will;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord, you have given us grace to agree in these our prayers, and you have promised that when two or three ask together in your name you will grant their requests. Fulfil now, Lord, our desires and prayers as may be best for us. Grant us, in this life, knowledge of your truth and in the age to come, life eternal. **Amen.**

The Sending Out of God's People

One of the following, or a similar prayer, is said.

Eternal God and Father,

**by whose power we are created,
and by whose love we are redeemed:
Guide and strengthen us by your Spirit,
that we may give ourselves to your service,
and live this day in love to one another
and to you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Or

Lord Jesus Christ,

**send us out with confidence in your word
to tell the world of your saving acts,
and bring glory to your name. Amen.**

The minister says one of the following

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all. **Amen.**

Or

May the Lord bless you and keep you;
May the Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious to you.
May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,
and give you peace. **Amen.**

The minister says

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord:
In the name of Christ. Amen.

Hymns:

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven

AHB 68 Author: Henry Francis Lyte

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

Praise him for his grace and favour
To our fathers in distress;
Praise him still the same as ever,
Slow to chide, and swift to bless:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Glorious in his faithfulness.

Father-like, he tends and spares us,
Well our feeble frame he knows;
In his hands he gently bears us,
Rescues us from all our foes:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Widely as his mercy flows.

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:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Praise with us the God of Grace Alleluia! Alleluia!
Glorious in his faithfulness.

The Lord's My Shepherd

Author: Francis Rous

The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want;
he makes me down to lie
in pastures green; he leadeth me
the quiet waters by.

My soul he doth restore again,
and me to walk doth make
within the paths of righteousness,
e'en for his own name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through death's dark vale,
yet will I fear none ill,
for thou art with me; and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.

My table thou hast furnished
in presence of my foes;
my head thou dost with oil anoint,
and my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life
shall surely follow me;
and in God's house forevermore
my dwelling place shall be.

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Psalm 121 – Kept! –

The Rt Revd Dr Richard Condie – Bishop of Tasmania –
March 29, 2020

It has been another surreal week, as we have seen more and more closures and the shut down of many activities. I said to my son this week, that I felt like I was living in a movie script. There is a great sense of unreality to it all. Pictures on the TV, of the busiest cities in the world, ground to a halt. The queues of newly unemployed people outside Centrelink and a mixture of stories of heartache and difficulty, and intense kindness.

The dominant themes of the week for me are grief and fear. I have been so tired, and I think it is carrying both of

these things in myself and in others. Grief about the relentless change, and the losses of all that we hold dear, not to

mention jobs and livelihoods and the like. And fear about what the future might bring. Fears about illness and death, fears about the unknown future, fears about the economy, fears about employment, fears about living and

working at home for a long period with no obvious end.

So when that happens, I want to ask:

Where do you go for help? vv 1-2

Psalm 121 is a pilgrim Psalm, one of the Psalms of Ascent, used by the people of Israel as they went up to Jerusalem to the feasts in the temple.

Imagine the scene, wandering through the desert wilderness perhaps on the way up from the Jordan Valley, or down from the northern country or up from the Negev – the desert in the south. The pilgrims are walking along trudging through the hot and dusty land and they would have been filled with all kinds of feelings. So they sang these songs. Pss 120-134 are the songs of ascent

And we can especially identify with our Psalm this morning. In v 1 – they sing – I lift up my eyes to the hills, from where will my help come?

You can almost see it in your minds eyes trudging through a hot dusty valley looking up at the mountains all around towering over you, perhaps feeling a bit afraid and wondering where help was going to come from. There is a sense of helplessness, when they see the mountains all around them and

they cry out for assistance. Who is going to help on this road? Where can they put their trust when the going is tough, when they are afraid or unsure? from where will my help come?

But the Psalm is something more than a travelogue, it actually speaks about LIFE. Like the pilgrims on the road to Jerusalem we often find ourselves dished up something that makes us feel helpless like those foreboding mountains. Troubles and uncertainties, unknowns and dangers. We can only imagine what they might have been in the lives of those Pilgrims.

But we know our situation well enough: even before Coronavirus, troubles at work, troubles in relationships, projects that seem impossible, a health challenge, grief from a broken relationship. You know what I mean, Don't you? And I look up at the mountain and say – where am I going to get help?

There are lots of temptations at this point aren't there? Mine is – work harder and smarter to manage the situation. If I can just nut it out, then I will know what to do. I rely on my competence. But Coronavirus makes that almost impossible. Others of us run the self-help books on relationships or management techniques. Still others of us don't even know where to look and we end up – despairing – being anxious, worrying about tomorrow, fretting over the situation.

We've seen examples of that in the last few weeks haven't we? The only explanation for all the toilet paper purchasing is that people are trying to wrest back control in an anxious time. Where do we go for help?

Well the Pilgrim Psalmist had the answer in v 2 My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth.

This is the real answer to where we flee for help. There IS no place to flee other than into the arms of the Lord God; Yahweh our creator. If you have the access to the one who made the world, then surely any obstacle that the world

throws up at you, like mountains and valleys and relationships and workplaces and even viruses; then the best place for help is with the one who made it all.

Jeremiah says: Jeremiah 32:17 Ah Lord GOD! It is you who made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.

The pilgrim Psalmist knows this too. He knows that the mountains around him are mountains that have been put there by this God that he knows and worships; and that this God is the origin of his help.

My help comes from the Lord

I wonder if that is the first cry of your heart when you look for help? To look first to the Lord. To seek help from the one who made the world in the first place.

You are Kept vv 3-8

The Psalm changes voice in v 3 from the voice of the Pilgrim, to the voice of a teacher. And in particular he talks about being KEPT. In fact, a derivative of the word “keep” appears in all but one of the remaining verses.

Look for a moment at verse 5. “The Lord is your Keeper” – what does this mean? To be a keeper is to be a guard or a watchman or an attendant. You know those Ads on the TV for safety of children around water, that say if you take your eyes off the child for a second, that they may drown? They are trying to make parents vigilant, responsible; watchful guardians of their children’s safety. This is who God is for his people. He is your guardian. Your watchman. Your keeper.

How does he keep the pilgrim on the way? Let’s look at v 3 He won’t let your foot be moved, or better, he won’t let your foot slip and slide, tremble or stagger.

As the pilgrim went along the rough gravel paths on her way to Jerusalem, she’d get the metaphor. Last Friday Helen and I went bushwalking up Mt Wellington to get away for a few hours. A couple of times on the very rocky path – we lost our foothold for a second. My feeble attempt to protect her was “be careful”. But God won’t let your foot slip

Point is: The LORD God will not let your life lose its foothold, and go sliding down the embankment; he will hold you when you waver and stagger and tremble. God’s attention is acute.

But also constant v 3b-4. “he who keeps you will not slumber. He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.”

Something lovely in these verses. The first line speaks of the individual – the “you” in v 3 is singular. The second line applies to the people of Israel as a whole. God’s protection of Israel is extended to the individual pilgrim. The

promise to the people is the promise to the individual. It is a promise to us as the people of God, but also to each one of us sitting in our own seat.

And THAT promise is his hyper-vigilance over us. He won't slumber – that is – he is not going to doze off in the chair on a Saturday afternoon – slumber, any more than he is likely to sleep soundly at night. God doesn't snooze or take a nap. He doesn't sleep at night.

Even the best parents like to get some sleep at night; but not God. There he is – sitting by your bed watching you constantly through the night and the day.

There is a lovely prayer service buried in the Prayer Book, called Prayer at the end of the day. Sometimes, when I am particularly anxious, I read these prayers before I go to sleep, to calm my anxious heart,

Save us, Lord, while we are awake, protect us while we are asleep that we may keep watch with Christ and rest with him at peace.

It ends with: Lighten our darkness, Lord, we pray: and in your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night, for the Love of your only Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.

It is a reminder that he is up all night. When I am resting in my bed, I can leave my anxieties with him.

I wrote to the clergy this week, encouraging them to have a technology Sabbath. A full 24 hours each week without listening to the news or looking at social media, or fretting over email, or being anxious about Coronavirus news. Because God is always on the job!

The Lord is your keeper v 5. He is the shade at your right hand, the sun will not strike you by day nor the moon by night. Day and night, by sun and by moon; the Lord watches over you. He shades you from the burning sun. He protects you from the cold desert nights under the moonlight. The point is this. Life is full of all kinds of dangers; all kinds of inconveniences like the heat and cold. "The adversities and miseries of the human life" – as Calvin called them. But the Lord's help is a match for them all.

v 7 The Lord will Keep you from all evil – from the jackals and bandits on the road. "He will keep your life" v8 – The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore. All your movements and forever, the Lord will guard, will keep, and attend to.

I think of the front door of my house. The latch on the inside, and the keyhole on the outside, and the amount of times the people in our house use that

door, over the course of the year. And the Lord is watching. Even when the door is quiet as we are locked in isolation. He watches us.

The Lord – the creator of heaven and earth, the one who made the mountains, the one sent his Son to die for me is watching, keeping me, every time I come and go now and FOR ever.

As we step through the rhythms of daily life: waking and sleeping, eating and drinking, coming and going, walking running and sitting, laughing and crying, standing and sitting, loving, and being loved, worshipping, and sinning, thinking, and speaking working, and playing. He KEEPS your life.

Please note: that never ONCE in the Psalm does he say; that he makes the road easy, or that he takes away pain or that problems and calamities, mountains and pandemics will not strew your path. The scriptures are real – they know our lives will be filled with difficulties of one sort or another. But the assurance is he will be there. He will keep us.

When I was a young lad I had some fears, and when I had to face them, I taught myself how to get through the day. I imagined – putting my hand into God's hand, and like a little child, being able to face the difficulties and horrors that the world was able to dish up.

Like these words from Psalm 37:23-4 Our steps are made firm by the LORD, when he delights in our way; though we stumble, we shall not fall headlong, for the LORD holds us by the hand.

He doesn't promise us a cushioned life, a comfortable life. But a kept life.

When you look to the mountains. When you watch the TV news. When you read the next instalment of the unfolding horror of COVID19. When you find yourself out of work or out money, or lonely and isolated. Filled with fear and wracked by grief. Where will your help come from? Your help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

We are sent into the world secure in the knowledge that in all our comings and goings the Lord of the universe is our guardian and watchman, and that we are Kept.