



Sunday Service

Sunday 17th May 2020 – Rogation Sunday

Opening Prayer

Risen Christ, you called your followers to go and make disciples of all nations:
Help us to obey your command and draw the nations in to your love in the power of the Holy Spirit,
to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Bible reading

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Matthew 28 : 16 -20

Reflection : The Great Commission

- A commission is something we normally associate with art. Artwork may be commissioned by private individuals, by governments or by businesses.
- But commissions aren't limited to artwork. The dictionary defines a **commission** as 'an instruction, command, or role given to a person or group'.
- The commission that Jesus gave to his disciples, just before he ascended into heaven, was to 'go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'.

So, what is it that makes Jesus' commission 'great'?

- Firstly, the command 'make disciples of all nations' is aimed at all people. Previously, Jesus only sent the disciples to minister to the Jews, although he himself was quite prepared to reach non-Jews. We think of the Roman centurion and the Samaritan woman. But now Jesus increases his intended flock many, many times.
- Secondly, Jesus advocated baptism of new believers because in baptism we are united with Jesus. Baptism is a symbol of our willingness to live as Jesus taught during his ministry on earth and to join with others who have similarly asked for forgiveness of their sins and decided to follow the way Jesus walked.
- Thirdly, although the word 'trinity' doesn't appear in the Bible, Jesus refers to baptism 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit': as clear a definition of The Trinity as you could hope for. In the Old Testament, many of the prophets received messages from God the Father and Moses even met him face to face. But it was only when Jesus was born that God came into the world to walk, eat, sleep and die just as we mortals do. How much closer, then, can our relationship be with God if we can also believe that Jesus was both divine and human and that, yes, he taught and performed miracles but that he also made the ultimate sacrifice of love for all of us by dying on a cross. Christians also believe that he rose from death and eventually ascended into heaven, sending God's Holy Spirit to be with the disciples. And that same Holy Spirit is available to us today: to comfort us and give us courage, so that we can face each day sure in the knowledge that we aren't alone and we are equipped to do His will and take on this Great Commission.

A prayer for all those affected by coronavirus

Keep us good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy.
Sustain and support the anxious, be with all those who care for the sick,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may find comfort knowing nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Final prayer

Eternal God, whose Son Jesus Christ conquered death and rose to new life, fill us with your Holy Spirit so that we may obey and teach all your commandments, this day and for ever. Amen.

Blessing

And now, may God, who through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ has given us the victory,
give us joy and peace this Easter time.

And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us now and evermore. Amen.