



*The Order of Saint John of Jerusalem,
Knights Hospitaller Australasia
Priory of Tasmania*

A Liturgy of the Word

for

The Feast of John the Baptist

*The Parish Church of All Saints
South Hobart*

Wednesday 24 June 2020

11.00am

ORDER OF SERVICE

*The Prelate, Chevalier The Reverend Canon David O'Neill KJSJ,
welcomes the people. The hymn is then sung.*

Let all with faith come gather with humble contrite hearts,
like John, beloved patron we too can play our part.
Our faith in God our Maker, gives courage and gives strength
to trust in all things unseen; our vows our sure intent.

The Knights of old were caring they saw the desperate need
to help the travelling pilgrims; they took the loving lead;
gave succour, peace and shelter to all who came their way,
the Knights gave humble service, we follow still today.

Our sacred vows now guide us, to search through many lands
for those who need assistance; all creeds join willing hands.
We pray for grace to honour and pour on all who seek
our love, respect and service; the lonely and the weak.

We thank the Lord who calls us to tread his faithful way,
of living life through others, to serve each glorious day.
We thank the Lord our Maker, on whom we all depend,
to lead us, love us daily, our teacher and our friend.

The Knights of old still with us, beside us as we pray.
Their vision, vows and actions will guide us on our way.
Let all who serve sing loudly and hearts of gladness raise
our joyful hymns and greetings with thankful love and praise.

The Officiant then says,

Blessed be God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Blessed be God's Kingdom now and for ever.

Open our lips, O Lord.

And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,
to you be praise and glory for ever!
We rejoice in the glorious splendour of your majesty
as we honour John the Baptist.
You called him in all his words and deeds
to prepare your people for the coming of your Son,
Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God,
by returning to a life founded on the Covenant of love.
As Patron of our Order, he calls us to a life
which points to the presence of your Son, Jesus Christ,
as we seek to wear the white cross inwardly and outwardly
bringing his love and compassion to bear on all our activities.
Pour your grace into our hearts,
That we may follow in his footsteps
And by your grace reveal your presence,
Father Son and Holy Spirit.

Blessed be God for ever.

Let us Pray.

Almighty God,
by your providence your servant
John the Baptist was wonderfully born,
and sent to prepare the way for your Son, our Saviour,
by preaching repentance;
make us so to follow His holy life
that we may truly repent according to His teaching
and, following His example,
speak the truth constantly,
rebuke vice boldly,
and suffer patiently for the truth's sake,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

All sit for the first reading.

THE FIRST READING

*read by Chevalier Edward Gauden, CGSJ
Vie Prior, Tasmanian Priory*

A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah.

In the days of King Josiah, the word of the LORD came to me, saying: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you. "Ah, Lord GOD!" I said, "I know not how to speak; I am too young."

But the LORD answered me, Say not, "I am too young." To whomever I send you, you shall go; whatever I command you, you shall speak. Have no fear before them, because I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD. Then the LORD extended his hand and touched my mouth, saying, See, I place my words in your mouth! This day I set you over nations and over kingdoms, to root up and to tear down, to destroy and to demolish, to build and to plant.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

All stand to sing the hymn.

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
be all else but naught to me, save that thou art;
be thou my best thought in the day and the night,
both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,
be thou ever with me, and I with thee, Lord;
be thou my great Father, and I thy true son;
be thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.

Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;
be thou my whole armour, be thou my true might;
be thou my soul's shelter, be thou my strong tower;
O raise thou me heavenward, great Power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise;
be thou mine inheritance, now and always;
be thou and thou only the first in my heart;
O Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.

High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright Sun,
O grant me its joys after victory is won;
great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be thou my vision, O Ruler of all.

THE SECOND READING

*read by Chevalier John Kennedy, KJSJ
Prior, Tasmanian Priory*

A Reading from the Gospel according to Saint John.

Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he spent some time there with them and baptized. John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim because water was abundant there; and people kept coming and were being baptized— John, of course, had not yet been thrown into prison.

Now a discussion about purification arose between John's disciples and a Jew. They came to John and said to him, 'Rabbi, the one who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you testified, here he is baptizing, and all are going to him.' John answered, 'No one can receive anything except what has been given from heaven. You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, "I am not the Messiah, but I have been sent ahead of him." He who has the bride is the bridegroom.

The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. For this reason my joy has been fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

THE HOMILY

*Chevalier The Reverend Canon David O'Neill KJSJ
Prelate, OSJ Australasia*

The greatness of John the Baptist lies in the fact that when the true light appeared in the person of Jesus, he moved aside to make way for him.

Most of us will remember people who have been lights in this way for us: they will have guided, encouraged, sustained and nurtured us on our way and, at the right time, will have let us go. That is part of their greatness in our eyes. Many of them will be out of sight now, but, I hope not out of mind.

To make way, or to make room, for another person calls for humility and generosity of spirit. Indeed, it calls for a kind of dying to self.

The greatness of John the Baptist lies in the fact that he firmly refused to become the centre of his own movement. At every opportunity he pointed to "the one who was to come"; the one whose sandals he felt unworthy to undo. As John himself expressed it, "I must decrease that he might increase." This is another way of talking about 'dying to self.' John is showing us an openness to be ready to re-orient our lives at different steps on our Christian pilgrimage.

Our states are slowly coming out of hibernation as our medical professionals continue to deal with and keep an eye on COVID-19. During the lockdown we have been unable to express the community of our Order, express community that we share in other areas of our daily life. How have we 'decreased so that another may increase?'

Benedictine Sister Joan Chittester provides a way forward when she writes: ‘Hospitality means we take people into the space that is our lives and our minds and our hearts and our work and our efforts. Hospitality is the way we come out of ourselves. It is the first step towards dismantling the barriers of the world. Hospitality is the way we turn a prejudiced world around, one heart at a time.’

We may have begun contacting people intentionally more regularly, writing or emailing more regularly. With our families we may have sat a little more regularly. With all these people we may have listened to them a little more intentionally, responded so that they know we are hearing them. We may have re-learned how important bonds of love and friendship are, what ‘community’ really means and what its obligations are. Will we resolve to continue in the ‘new’ way?

At these points we are asked to turn, not so much away from ourselves but beyond ourselves. We re-orientate our lives; and this means, John Main says, “not rejecting ourselves but finding our marvelous potential as we come into full harmony with God. This awareness of potential is the positive basis of Christianity, and so, for a Christian, the central concern is not self, nor is it sin. The central reality is God, and love and, as far as we are concerned, growth in God’s love.” It is that mystery to which John points us; a mystery now unfolded by the generous gift of Christ our Lord.

That is the greatness of John the Baptist. It can be our greatness too.

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

‘Come, My Way, my Truth, My Life’

from the ‘Five Mystical Songs’ by Vaughan Williams

settings of poems by George Herbert

Alec Beattie - Baritone

Anne Morgan - Organ

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Read by Br Frederik Le Mesurier SBSJ

With confidence let us pray to the Father.

For your Church and its mission,
that in faithful witness it may preach the gospel
to the ends of the earth.
Lord of compassion,
in your mercy, hear us.

For the Australasian Grand Priory of the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem,
its priories in Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania;
for those in authority;
for all members and their families in their daily life;
that our works of love and mercy
may renew hope and faith in those we serve.
Lord of compassion,
in your mercy, hear us.

For peace in the world,
that a spirit of respect and reconciliation may grow
among nations and peoples.
Lord of compassion,
in your mercy, hear us.

For the poor, the persecuted and all who suffer;
for refugees and prisoners, and all in danger;
for medical researchers,
especially as they search for vaccine for COVID-19;
for frontline medical professionals
that they may be protected and sustained in times of stress.
Lord of compassion,
in your mercy, hear us.

For grace to amend our lives and to further the reign of God.
Lord of compassion,
in your mercy, hear us.

For our departed loved ones and members of our Order,

that they may find a place of refreshment, light and peace.
Lord of compassion,
in your mercy, hear us.

The Prelate continues,

Accept our prayers, Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray:

**Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name.
Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

All stand to sing the following hymn.

HYMN

The voice of God goes out through all the world:
God's glory speaks across the universe.
The great King's herald cries from star to star:
with power, with justice, Christ will be the way.

The broken reed he will not trample down,
nor set his heel upon the dying flame,
he binds the wounds, and health is in his hand:
with power, with justice, Christ will be the way.

Anointed with the Spirit and with power,
he comes to crown with comfort all the weak,
to show the face of justice to the poor:
with power, with justice, Christ will be the way.

His touch will bless the eyes that darkness held,
the lame shall run, the halting tongue shall sing,
and prisoners laugh in light and liberty:
with power, with justice, Christ will be the way.

THE DEDICATION

The Prelate says,

My brothers and sisters in the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem,
Knights Hospitaller, Australasia, as we celebrate the Feast of our
Patron, I invite you to recommit yourself to the Order and to its
mission.

All say the following prayer.

**God of all grace
we thank you for the many skills of body and mind
that you have given us.
We gratefully offer them in the service of our Order
for the well-being and prosperity of all people
and for the honour and glory of your name. Amen.**

The Prelate says

May God who has given us the will to do these things give us the
grace and power to perform them. **Amen.**

Remember, O Lord, what you have wrought in us
and not what we deserve:
and as you have called us to your service

make us worthy of our calling;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage;
hold fast to that which is good;
render to no-one evil for evil;
strengthen the faint-hearted;
support the weak; help the afflicted;
give honour to all; love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

*The Priory of Tasmania thanks
Sr Gemma Le Mesurier SSSJ
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