

Praying at Home

Some prayers and readings for Ordinary Time



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A Simple form of Morning Prayer

O Lord, open our lips,
And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Silent prayer/reflection on the coming day.

Early in the morning
my prayer comes before you.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

You speak in my heart and say
'Seek my face';
your face, Lord, will I seek.
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in your sight, O Lord,
my strength and my redeemer.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

A Song of God's Grace (Ephesians 1:3–10)

- 1 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord / Jesus / Christ :
who has conferred on us in Christ •
every spiritual blessing / in the / heavenly / realms.
- 2 Before the foundation / of the / world :
he chose us in Christ to be his people •
to be without blemish in his / sight •
to be / full of / love;
- 3 He predestined us to be adopted as his children
through / Jesus / Christ :
this / was his / will and / pleasure;
- 4 In order that the glory of his gracious gift •
so graciously conferred on us in / his Be/loved :
might re/dound / to his / praise.
- 5 In Christ our release is secured and our / sins for/given :

through the / shedding / of his / blood.

- 6 In the richness / of his / grace :
God has lavished on / us all / wisdom and / insight.
- 7 He has made known to us his / secret / purpose :
in accordance with the plan
which he determined beforehand in Christ •
to be put into effect / when the / time was / ripe :
- 8 That the universe, everything in / heaven • and on / earth :
might be brought into a / uni/ty in / Christ.

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

A Bible Reading is read – perhaps using one of the Sunday readings included in this booklet.

Benedictus

- 1 Blessed be the Lord the / God of / Israel :
for he has come to his / people and / set them / free.
- 2 The Lord has raised up for us a / mighty / Saviour :
born of the / house of his / servant / David.
- 3 Through his holy prophets God promised of old •
to save us / from our / enemies :
from the / hands of / all who / hate us.
- 4 To show mercy / to our / forebears :
and to re/member his / holy / covenant.
- 5 This was the oath God swore to our / father / Abraham :
to set us free from the / hands / of our / enemies,
- 6 Free to worship him / without / fear :
holy and righteous before him / all the / days of our / life.
- 7 And you, child, shall be called
the prophet of the / Most / High :
for you will go before the / Lord • to pre/pare his / way,
- 8 To give his people knowledge / of sal/vation :
by the for/giveness / of their / sins.
- 9 In the tender compassion / of our / God :
the dawn from on / high shall / break up/on us,

10 To shine on those who dwell in darkness •
and the / shadow of / death :
and to guide our feet / into the / way of / peace.

**Glory to the Father, and / to the / Son :
and / to the / Holy / Spirit;
as it was in the be/ginning, is / now :
and shall be for / ever. / A-men.**

Various prayers are offered:

The tasks of the day

The Church

The World

Our local community

The Lord's Prayer is said

The Collect for the week is said, found in the weekly readings

The second collect, for peace.

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord,
to know you is eternal life,
to serve you is perfect freedom:
defend us in all assaults of our enemies,
that we, surely trusting in your protection,
may not fear the power of any adversaries;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The third collect, for grace.

O Lord and heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God,
we thank you for bringing us safely
to the beginning of this new day:
defend us by your mighty power
that we may be kept free from all sin
and safe from every danger;
and enable us in everything
to do only what is right in your eyes;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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

Night Prayer: A Simple Order

The Lord almighty grant us a quiet night
and a perfect end.

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

Silent prayer/reflection on the past day.

I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel.
My heart teaches me, night after night.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

We have waited in silence on your loving kindness, God,
in the midst of your temple.
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

I lie down in peace, at once I fall asleep,
for only you, Lord, make me dwell in safety.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

The Psalm

The Reading

A time of silent reflection may follow the reading.

The Gospel Canticle: Nunc Dimittis

- 1 Lord, now you have set your / servant / free :
to go in / peace as / you have / promised.
- 2 For these eyes of mine have / seen • your sal/vation :
which you have prepared for / all the / world to / see;
- 3 A light to re/veal you • to the / nations :
and to give / glory • to your / people / Israel.

**Glory to the Father, and / to the / Son :
and / to the / Holy / Spirit;
as it was in the be/ginning, is / now :
and shall be for / ever. / A-men.**

Into your hands, Lord,
I commend my spirit,
**for you have redeemed me,
Lord God of truth.**

Keep me as the apple of your eye.
Hide me under the shadow of your wings.

The Lord is here.
His Spirit is with us.

**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.**

Visit this place, Lord, we pray,
drive far from it all the snares of the enemy;
may your holy angels dwell with us
and guard us in peace
and may your blessing be always upon us;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Save us, Lord, while waking,
and guard us, while sleeping;
that, awake, we may watch with Christ
and, asleep, we may rest in peace. Amen.**

	Psalm	Reading
<i>Sunday</i>	91	Revelation 22:4–5
<i>Monday</i>	86	I Thessalonians 5:9–10
<i>Tuesday</i>	143:1–11	I Peter 5:8–9
<i>Wednesday</i>	31:1–5, 130	Ephesians 4:26–27
<i>Thursday</i>	16	I Thessalonians 5:23
<i>Friday</i>	88	Jeremiah 14:9
<i>Saturday</i>	4, 134	Revelation 22:4–5

Readings for the Trinity Sunday: 7th June

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and in the power of the divine majesty to worship the Unity: keep us steadfast in this faith, that we may evermore be defended from all adversities; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Isaiah 40. 12-17, 27-31

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance? Who has directed the spirit of the Lord, or as his counsellor has instructed him? Whom did he consult for his enlightenment, and who taught him the path of justice? Who taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding? Even the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as dust on the scales; see, he takes up the isles like fine dust. Lebanon would not provide fuel enough, nor are its animals enough for a burnt-offering. All the nations are as nothing before him; they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness.

Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, 'My way is hidden from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God'? Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

PSALM 8

O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouths of babes and infants you have founded a bulwark because of your foes, to silence the enemy and the avenger.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

Yet you have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honour. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you

have put all things under their feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

2 CORINTHIANS 13.

11-13

Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the god of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. The grace of the lord Jesus Christ, the love of god, and the communion of the holy spirit be with all of you.

MATTHEW 28. 16-20

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

Readings for Corpus Christi: 11TH June

COLLECT

Jesus, Saviour of the world, we thank you that in this wonderful sacrament you have left us a memorial of your passion: grant us so to reverence the sacred mysteries of your body and blood that we may know within ourselves the fruit of your redeeming love; who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

GENESIS 14. 18-20

And King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High. He blessed him and said, 'Blessed be Abram by God Most High, maker of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!' And Abram gave him one-tenth of everything.

PSALM 116: 12-19

What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord, I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his

people. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones. O Lord, I am your servant; I am your servant, the child of your serving-maid. You have loosed my bonds. I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the house of the Lord, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!

I CORINTHIANS 11. 23-26

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you

proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

JOHN 6. 51-58

I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.' The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' So Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day; for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever.'

Readings for Trinity I: 14th June

COLLECT

God, the strength of all those who put their trust in you, mercifully accept our prayers and, because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without you, grant us the help of your grace, that in the keeping of your commandments we may please you both in will and deed; 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.

GENESIS 18. 1-15

The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. He said, 'My lord, if I find favour with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.' So they said, 'Do as you have said.' And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, 'Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes.' Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate. They said to him, 'Where is your wife Sarah?' And he said, 'There, in the tent.' Then one said, 'I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son.' And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. Now Abraham and

Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, 'After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?' The Lord said to Abraham, 'Why did Sarah laugh, and say, "Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?" Is anything too wonderful for the Lord? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son.' But Sarah denied, saying, 'I did not laugh'; for she was afraid. He said, 'Oh yes, you did laugh.'

PSALM 116: 11-18

I said in my consternation, 'Everyone is a liar.' What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord, I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones. O Lord, I am your servant; I am your servant, the child of your serving-maid. You have loosed my bonds. I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.

ROMANS 5. 1-8

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. For while we were still weak,

at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

MATTHEW 9.35 - 10.8

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.' Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him. These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, "The kingdom of heaven has come near." Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

Readings for Trinity II: June 21st

COLLECT

Lord, you have taught us that all our doings without love are nothing worth: send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love, the true bond of peace and of all virtues, without which whoever lives is counted dead before you. Grant this for your only Son Jesus Christ's sake, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

GENESIS 21. 8-21

The child grew, and was weaned; and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned. But Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, playing with her son Isaac. So she said to Abraham, 'Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of this slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac.' The matter was very distressing to Abraham on account of his son. But God said to Abraham, 'Do not be distressed because of the boy and because of your slave woman; whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for it is through Isaac that offspring shall be named after you. As for the son of the slave woman, I will make a nation of him also, because he is your offspring.' So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water, and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, along with the child, and sent her away. And she departed, and wandered about in the wilderness of Beer-sheba. When the water in the skin was gone, she cast the child under one of the bushes. Then she went and sat down opposite him a good way off, about the distance of a bowshot; for she said, 'Do not let me look on the death of the child.' And as she sat opposite him, she lifted up her voice and wept. And God heard the voice of the boy; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven, and said to her, 'What troubles you, Hagar? Do not be afraid; for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is. Come, lift up the boy and hold him fast with your hand, for I will make a

great nation of him.' Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. She went, and filled the skin with water, and gave the boy a drink. God was with the boy, and he grew up; he lived in the wilderness, and became an expert with the bow. He lived in the wilderness of Paran; and his mother got a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

PSALM 86. 1-10

Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. Preserve my life, for I am devoted to you; save your servant who trusts in you. You are my God; be gracious to me, O Lord, for to you do I cry all day long. Gladden the soul of your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you. Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer; listen to my cry of supplication. In the day of my trouble I call on you, for you will answer me. There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours. All the nations you have made shall come and bow down before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name. For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God.

ROMANS 6. 1B-11

Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin. But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that

Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

MATTHEW 10. 24-39

'A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household! 'So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows. 'Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven. 'Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one's foes will be members of one's own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

Readings for the Nativity of John the Baptist: June 24th

COLLECT

Almighty God, by whose providence your servant John the Baptist was wonderfully born, and sent to prepare the way of your Son our Saviour by the preaching of repentance: lead us to repent according to his preaching, and after his example constantly to speak the truth, boldly to rebuke vice, and patiently to suffer for the truth's sake; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

ISAIAH 40. 1-11

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.' A voice says, 'Cry out!' And I said, 'What shall I cry?' All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever. Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of

good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, 'Here is your God!' See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

PSALM 85. 5-12

Will you be angry with us for ever? Will you prolong your anger to all generations? Will you not revive us again, so that your people may rejoice in you? Show us your steadfast love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation. Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts. Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him, that his glory may dwell in our land. Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other. Faithfulness will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from the sky. The LORD will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase.

GALATIANS 3. 23-29

Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ

Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

LUKE 1. 57-66, 80

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. Her neighbours and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, 'No; he is to be called John.' They said to her, 'None of your relatives has this name.' Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. He asked for a writing-tablet and wrote, 'His name is John.' And all of them were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Fear came over all their neighbours, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. All who heard them pondered them and said, 'What then will this child become?' For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him. The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.

Readings for Trinity III: June 28th

COLLECT

Almighty God, you have broken the tyranny of sin and have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts whereby we call you Father: give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service, that we and all creation may be brought to the glorious liberty of the children of God; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

GENESIS 22. 1-14

After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt-offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you.' So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt-offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. Then Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you.' Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. Isaac said to his father Abraham, 'Father!' And he said, 'Here I am, my son.' He said, 'The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?' Abraham said, 'God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son.' So the two of them walked on together. When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in

order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.' And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt-offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place 'The Lord will provide'; as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.'

PSALM 13

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me for ever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all day long? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? Consider and answer me, O Lord my God! Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death, and my enemy will say, 'I have prevailed'; my foes will rejoice because I am shaken. But I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.

ROMANS 6. 12-23

Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions. No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. What then? Should we sin because

we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification. When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. So what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

MATTHEW 10. 40-42

'Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.'

Trinity Sunday Sermon from Norwich Cathedral *Preached by Bishop Graham James*

When the title of our cathedral church is written in full, such as on legal documents, it is always “The Cathedral Church of the Holy and Undivided Trinity of Norwich”. It does rather seem as if Norwich has taken ownership of the Holy and Undivided Trinity. Our Trinitarian possessiveness deserves reflection today.

For Trinity Sunday is the only Sunday in the Christian year devoted to a doctrine. At a time when our country is haunted by terrorist threats and political uncertainty after the General Election, to focus on a complex doctrine may appear off the pace. But seeking to know God has been the way human beings have often responded to uncertain times. If there’s a time to focus on God’s nature, it is now.

Today the preacher must speak of the one God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is one and indivisible. Yet we believe in God the Father, who made the world; in God the Son, who redeemed us on the Cross; in God the Holy Spirit who lives within us and sanctifies us. They are not three gods but one God. But it’s not hard to understand why Christians have been frequently accused by other great monotheistic faiths of undermining the unity of God by this very doctrine we honour today.

In my teenage years I attended Evensong on many Sundays. I recall some lengthy and not very engaging sermons. But the Book of Common Prayer came to my rescue. It has all sorts of tables at the front where you can work out the Golden Number and assess the date of Easter. I thumbed my way through it, looking devout. I discovered the Athanasian Creed. We never actually said it in church even then. It should be recited in place of the Apostles’ Creed at Morning Prayer on various feasts, including Trinity Sunday. It says:

“The Catholic faith is this: that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in unity; Neither confounding the Persons; nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son; and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, the Son and of the Holy Ghost, is all one; the glory equal, the majesty coeternal.”

Later it goes on to say:

“The Father is incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible; and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. And yet there are not three incomprehensibles, but one incomprehensible...”

You may think I was a strange teenager but I found it all this rather fascinating. There was more chance of me being converted by browsing through the prayer book than listening to the sermon. The Athanasian Creed attempts to say something about the extraordinary mystery of God. The creator of the world, the redeemer of the world, and the sustainer of the world are not separate but one. Each is truly God, completely and fully God. There is nothing lacking. And yet somehow that’s not the whole story. The problem with a human being attempting to understand the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is that we can only be in one place at one time, usually only do one thing at one time especially if you’re male, and only think one thought at one time. And yet the single thing we do, the single thought we have, do not exhaust the possibilities of our humanity. We are fully human when we think or do them. But there is more to be said about our humanity.

The problem with analogies from human life is that they are inexact. Analogies are at best a path to understanding. But they can help us on the way.

The New Testament does not explain the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Yet over the first two centuries of Christianity reflection on the experience of faith in Christ led the Church to develop

this doctrine. You see glimpses of it in the very earliest ways Christians prayed. Think how often Christian meetings all over the world are brought to a conclusion by saying the Grace, those words which come straight from St Paul – “the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.”

This isn't the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, of course, but it indicates how God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit proves inseparable from the way Christians have always lived their life in Christ. “The grace”, as we call it, developed within the first fifteen years after the resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit. It's still used regularly by millions, perhaps billions, of Christians across the world today.

Perhaps the most unlikely author of a book about the doctrine of the Holy Trinity was Dorothy L Sayers, the crime writer and the creator of Lord Peter Wimsey. In her book *The Mind of the Maker* she developed an analogy of the Holy Trinity by identifying the Trinitarian pattern of all human activities. She saw God the Holy Trinity in the way a picture was painted or a book was written.

If someone is going to write a novel they must have an idea. The author has got to have some conception of what the book will be about. No-one can sit down and write a jumble of words and call that a novel, even if I've read some which do seem composed that way.

Then the book has to be physically written. The author has got to compose the chapters. The creative idea isn't enough on its own. There's a lot of activity which brings the book into being. And once the book is written and published, others can read it. It has an effect upon them. It has a power all its own. Authors even become readers of their own books.

Idea, activity and power. There you have the bare bones of Dorothy Sayers' analogy of the Holy Trinity. Each is the whole book in itself, but each is so related to the other as to be necessary to the whole. According to Dorothy Sayers, idea, activity and power are reflected in God as Father – he is the creative idea; God the Son is the creative activity; and God the Holy Spirit the creative power. Each is necessary to the other.

Dorothy Sayers pressed home the analogy by relating it to distorted forms of human activity. Some people are full of grand ideas but never put any of them into action. “Oh, he's full of bright ideas” we say of them. Then there are people who rush around doing all sorts of things but have no idea or plan which guides them. They don't have any lasting impact. Activity on its own isn't enough.

There are also those who rely simply on effect. They haven't got an idea and haven't engaged in much activity but hope it will turn out all right in the end. So a weak comedian builds his act simply on the audience's willingness to be amused. The preacher with nothing to say adds a lilt to his voice to cover the lack of content. I will forbear to explore this analogy in relation to the recent general election campaign, but you can apply it anywhere.

But, said Dorothy Sayers, if you bring the creative idea, the creative activity and the creative power together in undivided relationship, you begin to glimpse the nature of our Trinitarian God. If we are made in the image and likeness of God ourselves there should be a reflection of the Trinitarian pattern of God's life within us.

But all this takes us only so far. There is something too static about any analogy. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity doesn't exist to make God intelligible. Remember the Athanasian Creed says that God is incomprehensible. We cannot get our minds around God. Yet that creed reminds us that God is more perfectly one and united than we can possibly be. In God there is a mutual relationship of love which is more outgoing, perfect and complete than the love found in any of us.

I remember someone once saying that the New Testament isn't the report of a committee after some notable events. It is more like a crater after an explosion. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is our reflection on the source of the explosion of love and salvation which is at the heart of the Christian faith. We handle the glorious debris. We ponder what the fall out means. We stretch our minds to understand the continued flow of divine love. We are not really content with God being incomprehensible because God has given us minds. He has given us even more. He has given us Jesus Christ, his Son. And he has given us the Holy Spirit to dwell in our hearts. So here in this cathedral church of the Holy and Undivided Trinity of Norwich our minds and hearts and souls still feel the heat which comes from that Trinitarian furnace which is the love of God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Sermon for Corpus Christi from Guildford Cathedral

Preached by Rev Canon Dr Julie Gittoes

Why couldn't someone else have found it? I opened the box and saw the sacred host... I did not dare to put it back into my pocket. It seemed wrong company for lighter, keys, and dirty handkerchief... I had an outside pocket on the left of my thin jacket – near the heart, I thought; that was where I wanted to put it.

So opens, in translation, Hans Bender's short story: "Die Hostie", "The Host". The unnamed narrator had been a prisoner of war; he'd returned to his home town to discover that none of his relatives could be found. He spends 4 years drifting; he is penniless, hungry, and restless; he lives alongside similarly fragile characters, trying to survive moment by moment, meal by meal, cigarette by cigarette. He dodges the police and mistrusts the church. Yet, the pyx containing the sacred host is something he cherishes and protects; he cannot relinquish it. It reminds him of what he has left behind; it reminds him that he is not beyond the scope of love.

In the closing paragraph, our narrator says: *I left the place... in order to be by myself. But was I really alone? I had the host. I took it away with me into my restless life.*

Hans Bender's story compels us to think deeply about the great feast we celebrate today. Today we celebrate the gift of Christ's real and continuing presence with us; he dwells with us, near our hearts. Yet as we extend the moment of sacramental encounter in adoration and in jubilant procession, our commitment to engage with our world is deepened.

The sacred host is the gift we receive in order that we might become who we are: the body of Christ. Hans Bender's fearful narrator keeps the host in the midst of his restlessness; echoing Augustine's meditation that our hearts are restless until they rest in God. We, as the body of Christ, are also sent out into our restless world. We are conduits of compassion in the midst of isolation; we are expressions of love in response to fear; we are signs of hope in the face of fragmentation. As the Father sent the Son into the world, so we too are sent in the power of the Spirit.

Today the Eucharist has been celebrated in our Cathedral Church and amongst our colleagues in Diocesan House. Communion will have been received in homes, hospitals and prisons. The mass will have been said in rural communities and urban priority areas; in smart city churches and in this town centre parish. In the face of birth and death, disappointment and delight, work and isolation we gather to extend our hands to receive the bread of heaven. In the intensity of those moments, all that we are is drawn into the heart of God; the extensity, the spread-out-ness of our lives is gathered up, and transformed.

That gathering and transformation shapes our engagement with the communities within which we live, and worship and work. We are called to respond to the love of God for the whole world; and we are to connect more honestly, more compassionately with each other. We are called to respond to the love of God as we face both environmental and economic challenges, as we engage with the cultural and political concerns of society.

These things, I know, are very much at the forefront of your plans for mission and ministry in this place. They are also at the forefront of the Cathedral's vision, as we seek to foster Christ-like relationships and deepen our conversations across the diocese and within the public sphere. We are all asking the question: what does it mean to be the body of Christ?

Celebrating this Eucharistic feast is a place of gathering and forgiveness; attentiveness and refreshment; a place of healing and nourishment. Here, in Augustine's memorable turn of phrase, we receive what we are and become what we receive. As we encounter Christ in

this sacrament we are sent out to love and serve him in our homes, in our workplace, in our community. We are gathered and then dispersed, full of purpose and potential. We can be confident in this gift we receive because of Jesus' own words of promise to us.

In John's Gospel, Jesus declares: *I am the living bread that came down from heaven.* It's not surprising that the Jews began to dispute amongst themselves. Jesus' words echo God's provision of manna in the wilderness. The meeting of this physical need was a powerful narrative within the religious tradition. But here, Jesus' promise surpasses the provision of material sustenance. He is not just the provider of bread: he is the living bread. He also surpasses Melchizedek – the priest of God who brought out bread and wine. Jesus himself is the true food; the true drink. Those who eat and drink abide in him and he in them. They will have eternal life. The bread that he gives is for the life of the whole world.

Christ gives himself to us and promises to be with us. Paul reminds the Corinthian church: *This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me... This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.*

That command has echoed throughout history as Christians have gathered together to participate in these sacred mysteries. Such an act of remembrance is dynamic and creative. As we receive Christ's body given for us, we become his body, the Church. As we remember, the fullness of Christ's presence is mediated to us. As we obey that command we are formed into the body of Christ; we are called to mediate the fullness of his life to others. The body that we receive and become is for the life of the whole world.

We have in the Eucharist a memorial of Christ's passion. In such an act of remembrance we stand on the night of his betrayal, yet we do so in the light of resurrection hope. The Eucharist is a place of honesty and of abundance. The risen Christ meets us in the midst of our hopes and failings, our fears and desires. He comes as gift, in bread and wine. As we receive him, he abides with us and we in him. We become his Church, his body. As Paul writes elsewhere in I Corinthians: *Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.*

We encounter Christ in the present reality of our lives. We are one because we share in broken bread. We are whole because we share in out-poured wine. The real presence of Christ's most blessed body and blood calls us to eternal life.

This calling is a future hope, which challenges and transforms our present reality. It begins as we seek to fulfill the highest potential of human life. It continues as we bring to others Christ's promise of abundant life; when we work for justice and peace in his name. That hope is completed when God is all in all; when the fullness of God's kingdom is revealed.

In the Eucharist, Christ calls us into the fullness of life and costly self-giving. The encounter with Christ in these holy mysteries is transforming and challenging; it increases in us our capacity to love. To be fed by the bread of heaven does not remove us from the world; rather it shapes our participation in it. Our obedience to Christ's command to remember is bound up with our obedience to the final imperative of our liturgy: we are sent out as his Body to love and serve him. As we bear the sacred host in procession, we remember that we are called to be his body, walking in his steps.

As the priest and theologian Dan Hardy wrote: *The individual pilgrim shares in the Church's eucharistic communion and eucharistic communion extends beyond the sanctuary into all the daily actions of its members.* He continues, *we are to imitate Jesus by walking around, embodying a presence on the actual land.*

Tonight, as in every Eucharist, we celebrate the reality of Christ's presence among us. He comes among us as a gift. We receive from him what we are becoming: *Corpus Christi*. The challenge to us is to commit ourselves to self-giving. We receive life abundantly in him, we are called to mediate that fullness in the world around us. That is God's mission. That is our

mission. It is a daunting and thrilling task. We are called to be alert to the needs of our community, whilst drawing them into a dynamic society which transcends differences of gender, age, ethnicity or class.

We should not be discouraged for much of this will be achieved through small, risky steps. All these incremental shifts in relationship, all these glimpses of reconciliation become part of a movement of peace, generosity and gladness. That would indeed be a prophetic witness in a world in desperate need of such hope and transformation.

As we participate this great feast, let us give thanks that we have a memorial of Christ's passion; as we celebrate the gift of Christ's presence in bread and wine; may our vision be renewed; let us pray that by the power of the Holy Spirit we may fulfill our calling as the Body of Christ, being sent out to in peace to love and serve. Christ dwells in our hearts; may we share his love in a restless world. Amen.

Sermon for the Nativity of John the Baptist from Durham Cathedral

Preached by Rev Canon Rosalind Brown

There are some things in life that are impossible - like not being able to see our faces except in reflection. Hearing what people's expectations of us at the time we were born is another.

We've just heard a gospel reading about a baby whose birth provoked a lot of comment. The sense of expectation and excitement is tangible. This was a longed-for, miracle child for very elderly parents long past the age of child-bearing. He was truly a gift from God. There had been odd events which set tongues wagging, beginning when his father, a priest, returned dumb from temple service in Jerusalem, and then his elderly mother withdrew from village life and eventually it was obvious that she was pregnant. Now there was this healthy baby boy and great rejoicing among all the neighbours.

Eight days later his mother – who would not normally speak in the circumcision ceremony – interrupted proceedings to stop the men calling him Zechariah after his father, saying his name was John. When the dumb father was consulted, he also named the baby John and, to cap it all, started to praise God after nine months of being dumb.

The result was fear among all the neighbours and news spreading like wildfire in the region. People started to ask what it could all mean. Zechariah, had no doubt about what his son will do: echoing God's words to him when he was told he would become a father, this baby would be called the prophet of the Most High and will go before the Lord to prepare his way. This baby was going to fulfil all the expectations and yearning of the nation.

It was a good thing John could not hear all this. What a weight of expectation on his shoulders, not just from his parents but from the whole community, and, indeed, from God. All parents have high hopes for their children but there's a fine line between hopes that hold out opportunities in contrast to fixed fixed expectations that a child is forced towards fulfilling. We cannot have a master plan for other people's lives; hopes and dreams certainly, supported by the help, encouragement and freedom to become who God has made them. The challenge for Zechariah and Elizabeth was to raise John to be himself so that he could be what he was called to be for others. I remember my father saying, on more than one occasion, when I was frustrated because I couldn't do something, "so long as you do the best you can, that is enough for us" and I'm so grateful that, rather than some unrealisable attainment, was what was expected of me. I wonder what people said when each of you here today was born, and what they expected for and of you. I remember standing at the foot of the hospital cot looking at the first baby born to friends of my age – a growing up moment for me – and her father wondering aloud what the future held for her. Our newest Cathedral baby has been to church and Sunday School every Sunday since his birth about 6 weeks ago and so we can guess that he will grow up to be nurtured in the Christian faith and, knowing his parents whose cello and violin music many people appreciate during the Good Friday liturgy, that he will be musical. But beyond that, who knows?

God has given us the gift of each other to love, respect, enjoy and encourage, but not to control. John was first and foremost a gift to Zechariah and Elizabeth, and I sense tht is how they received him. Some children grow up with enormous expectations on them, often from parents or grandparents. It is impossible to live up to other people's expectations and it is not

just in childhood that intolerable expectations are placed on people, the Archbishop of Canterbury has faced totally unrealistic expectations of what he could or should do and we should be grateful for his godly leadership of the church rather than complain that he does not fulfil our particular expectation of him. It will be the same for the first female bishop who will bear all the unrealistic hopes and fears of people she has never met.

On the other hand, there are good and healthy expectations of us. God is always out in front of us, calling us to be more than we thought possible. I have always been influenced by something I read in the 1980s, that vocation is not an external calling but an internal growing up into oneself, a constant waking up to God, a journey into the unknown with God (*Dominic Gaisford*). You and I are called to grow up into ourselves, constantly waking up to what God is making possible in our life. If you have spent your life trying to fulfil the unrealistic expectations of other people, now is the time to stop. If you don't know who God is calling you to be, now is the time to start finding out. Peter Sinclair began a two stage workshop yesterday for people who are asking themselves questions about what their calling is. If you missed that but are interested in the questions, you might want to join the Faith and Life course which the diocese will be starting in September, details of which are on the diocesan website and will be advertised soon in the Sunday leaflet.

You may be surprised where this leads you. It may be into something quite unexpected or it may be to something that you has always been your ambition but you needed the courage to pursue it, or affirmation about that the path you are on now. For some, it may lead to ordination - next Sunday two former members of the Cathedral community will be ordained here; Ben began training almost straight after leaving University, Kate had a job for a few years before beginning training. Other former members of the Cathedral community will be ordained in Lincoln and Newcastle, and we have more in training.

We celebrate John the Baptist's birth today and heard from the Gospel of St Luke. Luke is interested in telling us about his birth but makes only a passing reference to his death, whereas Matthew and Mark tell us about his violent death but ignore his birth. As some of you know, I write the weekly lectionary column for Church Times and their deadlines mean I am always a few weeks ahead of where we are in the church year. So I have already written the column for three weeks' time when the death of John the Baptist comes round in the normal course of lectionary readings. Thanks to that, in preparing this sermon I have had his death in mind as well as his birth and I have been thinking about what happened in the years that followed in the light of the expectations on John at his birth.

If the people around John at his birth had high expectations, on the face of it they were dashed as John's life unfolded. John's parents were very elderly and it is likely that he was orphaned as a child. We know he lived in the wilderness and scholars speculate that he was raised at an orphanage for the children of priests which was run by the Essene community, the ruins of which have been found in the desert. He emerged from the wilderness to proclaim the coming of the Messiah, gained a following of disciples whom he then encouraged to follow Jesus, and eventually was imprisoned by King Herod whom he condemned for marrying his brother's wife. While in prison he had doubts about whether Jesus was the Messiah, and sent his disciples to ask Jesus who affirmed his calling. This child, who bore so many expectations and was so faithful, ended up with a hard life, imprisonment and execution.

His parents never saw what John achieved. Next week this Cathedral will be full of proud parents celebrating their children's graduation. Some of you here will be receiving your

degrees and we congratulate you and, if you are leaving Durham, send you on your way with our prayers and best wishes, thankful for your part in the Cathedral's life. Expectations may or may not have been met; whether you are thrilled or a little disappointed at your academic achievements, I hope you take from Durham, especially the Cathedral, a sense that it has been a transformative time for you.

The gospel reading we heard today ended, "The child – John – grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel." "He became strong in spirit" – that is the crucial phrase because that is what enabled John to face the uncertain future. For all of us, whether or not we are graduating, the more important question is not about our academic ability, our vocational work skills, our musical, artistic, athletic or any other sort of gifts and prowess, but whether we are growing strong in spirit, growing up into ourselves, waking up to God in our lives as we go with God on a journey into the unknown. For some, that journey looks scary and is one we'd like to avoid if we can – unemployment, cancer or other illness, disability and limitation, bereavement or any of the other hard things that happen to people. For others the journey looks hopeful with new and unexpected opportunities and blessings. Wherever it leads, we go with God.

The connection of John with the wilderness is why we heard from Isaiah of the voice crying, originally to exiles separated from their home by a vast wilderness, "In the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord." The wilderness environment was harsh, but formed John into the man he became who could endure what was coming to him. It is the same for us, the circumstances of our life may be harsh at times, but even there our Christian character can be honed and formed, we can grow and become strong in spirit.

We sang in our opening hymn that we will respond to the message John the Baptist proclaimed,

Come then and hearken, for he brings
Glad tidings from the King of kings.
Yea, let us each our hearts prepare
For Christ to come and enter there.

Your vocation as a baptised Christian is to hear God's glad tidings, to be open to God and to grow up into yourself in God, to become more than you dream possible because God is leading and guiding you day by day. We do this through small steps in daily life. Take a new step this week to grow in love for God. If you don't read the bible each day, begin now so that you grow to know God better: the Cathedral shop can provide bible reading notes to help you understand what you read. I commend the diocesan courses and the Benedictine Week. There are endless opportunities for practical service: the foodbank, Street Pastors, visiting housebound people. We will meet God in the people we meet there. For all of us, John's call comes ringing through the ages inviting us to respond to God's gracious love, and to become strong in spirit.