

Sunday 24th February 2019

2nd Sunday before Lent

Sexagesima

Green



Collect

Almighty God, you have created the heavens and the earth and made us in your own image: teach us to discern your hand in all your works and your likeness in all your children; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme over all things, now and for ever. **Amen**

1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50 English Standard Version (ESV)

The Resurrection Body

15³⁵ But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?”³⁶ You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.³⁷ And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain.³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

⁴² So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable.⁴³ It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.⁴⁵ Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being”,^[a] the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.⁴⁶ But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual.⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven.⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall^[b] also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Mystery and Victory

⁵⁰ I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Footnotes: a. Greek *a living soul*. b. some manuscripts *let us*.

COMMENT: Corinth was an important and wealthy city on the isthmus (narrow strip of land) separating Northern and Southern Greece. The Apostle Paul spent eighteen months there on one of his Missionary Journeys and established a church there. Acts 18 gives us considerable detail about Paul's work in Corinth during that time. Paul is writing this letter in response to a report about problems in the Corinthian church (1:11). In this letter, he provides apostolic guidance for dealing with those problems. One of the issues at Corinth was the rejection that the dead were raised – being influenced by Greek philosophy they argued that the soul leaves the body. Paul uses the analogy of nature, that a grain of wheat must perish, but in so doing gives rise to new life in a new body. That whilst our present bodies (subject to decay and are wearing away) cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, we will be clothed with a spiritual body. Just as a seed withers in the ground giving way to a new plant, our bodies decay, but give way to being re-housed as it were. This is well illustrated by the reply a retired American President gave to someone who enquired about his health; "John Quincy Adams himself is quite well, quite well, but the house in which he lives at present is becoming a little dilapidated. Time and seasons have nearly destroyed it. The old tenement is becoming almost uninhabitable. I think John Quincy Adams will have to move out of this house soon and get a better. But he himself is quite well, quite well." John Quincy Adams (1767-1848) 6th President of the USA.

Luke 8:22-25 English Standard Version (ESV)

Jesus Calms a Storm

²² One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they set out, ²³ and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger. ²⁴ And they went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. ²⁵ He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and they marvelled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?"

COMMENT: This miracle story is one in the Gospels which is referred to as a 'nature story'. It reveals the scriptural view that creation is not just an act in the past but a continuing involvement of God in the World. The main thrust of the story is that of faith – even though things may get rough – we need to exercise faith in the goodness of God – that he will see us through in the end.

Psalm 65 *Te decet hymnus* Grail Psalter

✠ To you our praise is due in Zion, O God.

¹ *For the Choirmaster. A Psalm of David. A Song.*

² To you our praise is due
in Zion, O God.

To you we pay our vows,
³ you who hear our prayer. ✠

To you all flesh will come
⁴ with its burden of sin.
Too heavy for us, our offenses,
but you wipe them away. ✠

⁵ Blessed is he whom you choose and call
to dwell in your courts.
We are filled with the blessings of your house,
of your holy temple. ✠

⁶ You keep your pledge with wonders,
O God our saviour,
the hope of all the earth
and of far distant isles. ✠

⁷ You uphold the mountains with your strength,
you are girded with power.

⁸ You still the roaring of the seas,
(the roaring of their waves,)
and the tumult of the peoples. ✠

⁹ The ends of the earth stand in awe
at the sight of your wonders.
The lands of sunrise and sunset
you fill with your joy. ✠

¹⁰ You care for the earth, give it water,
you fill it with riches.
Your river in heaven brims over
to provide its grain. ✠

And thus you provide for the earth;
¹¹ you drench its furrows;
you level it, soften it with showers;
you bless its growth. ✠

¹² You crown the year with your goodness.

Abundance flows in your steps,

¹³ in the pastures of the wilderness it flows.

✠ To you our praise is due in Zion, O God.

The hills are girded with joy,

¹⁴ the meadows covered with flocks,

the valleys are decked with wheat.

They shout for joy, yes they sing. **✠**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,**

**As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

COMMENT: This hymn of praise presented many images of peace and prosperity attributed to the gracious interventions of the Lord. At its best Israel's religious tradition included a firm belief in the Lord's sovereignty over the natural world and its productive capacities as well as over historical events. The recognition of this providential sovereignty formed the basis for worshipful rejoicing in a number of psalms. As verses 2-5 state, even the privilege of worshiping the Lord in the temple offered a sign of divine sovereignty.

Post Communion

God our creator, by your gift the tree of life was set at the heart of the earthly paradise, and the bread of life at the heart of your Church: may we who have been nourished at your table on earth be transformed by the glory of the Saviour's cross and enjoy the delights of eternity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Blessing

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary, fill you with his grace to trust his promises and obey his will; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among *you*, and remain with *you* always. **Amen.**