

# Sibyls' Service

Mary Ward

[mary@gkc.org.uk](mailto:mary@gkc.org.uk)

**Welcome**

# Hymn

Come down O Love divine

# Summary of the Law

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

*Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.*

*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
with all your soul, with all your mind,  
and with all your strength.*

The second is this: *Love your neighbour as yourself.*

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

**All** Amen. Lord, have mercy.

# The Beatitudes

Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn,  
for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,  
for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness,  
for they shall be satisfied.

# The Beatitudes

Blessed are the merciful,  
for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart,  
for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are those who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

# Psalm 8

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

# 1 Corinthians 13

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.



# 1 Corinthians 13

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

# Confession

Most merciful God,  
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
we confess that we have sinned  
in thought, word and deed.  
We have not loved you with our whole heart.  
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.  
In your mercy  
forgive what we have been,  
help us to amend what we are,  
and direct what we shall be;  
that we may do justly,  
love mercy,  
and walk humbly with you, our God.  
Amen.

# Absolution

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves,  
and the truth is not in us

If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just,  
and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

# The Lord's Prayer

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.

Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.

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

Amen.

# Communion

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. (1 Cor 11:23–26)

# Communion

The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.  
(1 Cor 10:16–17)

# Song

*Above All Else*, Vicky Beeching

# Personal Reflection



# Theological Reflection

The Love of God is a major theme throughout the OT and NT.

Love is the primary attribute of God in the sense that other attributes such as omnipotence and omniscience can be derived from the primary attribute of Love.

Perfect love cannot be limited in acting out of love, so must be omnipotent to be perfect.

Perfect love cannot be limited by lack of knowledge of how best to act out of love, so must also be omniscient.

Perfect love never ends, so must also be eternal.

# Theological Reflection

God is infinite, and any infinite number divided by any finite number is still infinite. In fact it is still exactly the same. So it is reasonable to believe that I have God's full and complete attention on me all the time as if I were the only person in existence (and this is true for everyone all the time).

We all have a "God shaped hole" in our heart: the place that only God can fill. We are incomplete and unsatisfied and long for this place to be filled.

"You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you", (Augustine *Confessions*). "this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself", (Pascal, *Pensees* 425).

# Theological Reflection

I would like to suggest that God also has a “*⟨your name here⟩* shaped hole” in his heart.

But how could this be? Wouldn't this it make God less than infinite and less than perfect? If God is completely satisfied (being perfect) and then makes room for me, does he become less than before, and therefore less than perfect?

A finite thing can only create a space by losing something or becoming bigger. But God cannot become bigger, or lose something. But an infinite thing can create a space *without* changing size or losing anything. God, out of love, creates within himself this space that only I can fill, and he created me purely as an act of love and grace in order to love me and to allow me the joy of loving him.

# Theological Reflection

It seems impossible that God should have a need and that we should be the thing that meets that need, and many philosophers and theologians will indeed argue that it *is* impossible. God, being perfect, cannot need anything.

But the love of the philosopher's God feels to me more like a vague, generic benevolence, not the passionate and personal burning desire that we read about:

*You have ravished my heart, my sister, my bride, you have ravished my heart with a glance of your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace. How sweet is your love, my sister, my bride! how much better is your love than wine, and the fragrance of your oils than any spice!* (Song 4:9–10)

# Theological Reflection

God also chose you from before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4). Not in the Calvinist sense of choosing who will be saved and who won't but in the sense that, out of the trillions upon trillions of possible beings that he could have created, he chose to create *you* as a special and unique design. The design has been damaged by sin, but he will fully restore it in time to its original perfection. When he looks at us he sees the original design and what it will be restored to become and he loves us.

*Jesus ...for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame' (Heb 12:2)*

# Theological Reflection

Julian of Norwich also speaks of the “love-longing” of Jesus for us:

*For his thirst is his love-longing which goes on and on and will last until we see him on Judgement Day. Chapter 31*

*And I saw with absolute certainty that before God made us He loved us, and that His love never slackened, nor ever will. In this love He has done all His works, in this love He has made all things for our benefit, and in this love we shall live forever. Because of our creation we had a beginning, but the love with which he made us never had a beginning: it was in this love that we had our beginning*

# Song

Your love has ravished my heart  
And taken me over, taken me over  
And all I want is to be  
With You forever, with You forever  
So pull me a little closer  
Take me a little deeper  
I want to know Your heart  
I want to know Your heart  
'Cause Your love is so much sweeter  
Than anything I've tasted  
I want to know Your heart  
I want to know Your heart