**Morning Praise @ Home 15th October 2023**

**Opening prayer**

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and**

**repent.** **Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us**

**from our sin.** **Renew a right spirit within us** **and restore us to the joy of your salvation,** **through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image

to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Bible Reading Matthew 22: 1 – 14

###

**Reflection**

*‘….how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’*

On a superficial reading, the story in this parable seems monstrously unfair: why go to the trouble of inviting someone to a wedding banquet, but then condemn them to punishment – simply because they were inappropriately dressed? We may find ourselves stumbling awkwardly over this parable, wishing it had been composed slightly differently!

Yet if it had been, a vital point would have been lost. Jesus is saying that it is not enough simply to accept an invitation and ‘turn up’. The religious leaders of Jesus’ time believed that they knew it all and there was nothing further to learn; they had ‘turned up’. Jesus’ words act as a warning to Christian readers not to fall into the same trap.

Much of Jesus’ teaching points towards this end, and expresses the same truth in a variety of ways. Some seeds fall in shallow soil, where they shrivel because they have no root (Luke 8.6,13); the branches of the vine need pruning in order to bear fruit, but those that remain barren are removed and burned (John 15.1-16); the person who buries his talent loses even the little he originally had (Matthew 25.25,30). Yes – all are invited to the banquet, but the invitation is not to stagnation, but to openness and growth.

**Affirmation of faith**

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

**We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

**Prayers of intercession led by Ruth**

This week most of us had to confront the face of evil as we watched events unfold in Israel and Gaza.

*A voice is heard in Ramah,*

*weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children
and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more.*
Matthew 2:18

Prince of Peace, we cry out to You today for the people of Israel and Gaza; these very lands You know so well. We pray with all our hearts for those grieving the sudden loss of loved ones, those who’ve been captured, and those whose homes have suddenly been destroyed.

Lord, we also pray for a miraculous de-escalation of this dangerous conflict. Terrible things are being done, many hundreds have died, hospitals are overflowing, many are suddenly grieving. Violence is provoking violence but we pray for reason to prevail over rage and revenge. May those with a vested interest in escalating this crisis somehow be restrained.

We pray for active and effective peacemaking at an international political level. May the measured voices of diplomacy constrain violence on every side. We pray for those involved in negotiating the release of hostages and safe routes out of Gaza.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

**The Lord’s Prayer** As our Saviour taught us, so we 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 today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be, that you may live and work to his praise and glory, and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen**