



## Worship resources 5 before Advent

Two significant passages form the basis for worship this week in the Lectionary: The Great Commandment and the death of Moses. Depending on whether you are following the Gospel or the continuous Old Testament readings, you may focus on only one of these, but the connections between the two are also a wonderful springboard for this week's worship. In so many ways Moses, who struggled with the people of Israel for so long, is a challenging example of what it means to love God and neighbour.

However we may approach it, though, this week we will be unable to avoid the challenge to love better, to love more widely, and to love more passionately.

### INTRODUCTIONS

*For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines*

**Deuteronomy 34:1-12**: Moses climbs Mount Nebo and views the whole of the promised land. Then he dies, but no one knows where his grave is. After the thirty day mourning period, Joshua takes over as leader of the Israelites.  
OR **Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18**: God commands Moses to tell the people to be holy as God is holy. Commands are then given that they must deal justly and fairly with one another, and must love their neighbours as they love themselves.

**Psalms 90:1-6, 13-17**: A prayer accredited to Moses, praising God for God's greatness, God's help for God's people and God's calling of the people to turn back to God. Also a plea for God's kindness to be with God's people and for God to sustain their work.

OR **Psalms 1**: A song in celebration of the righteous whose lives are built on God's commands, and who, unlike the wicked, bear fruit and prosper.

**1 Thessalonians 2:1-8**: A description of the faithful ministry of the apostles among the Thessalonians, in spite of persecution – a ministry approved by God, free from impure motives or boasting, not seeking special treatment, but caring and gentle.

**Matthew 22:34-46:** Jesus is asked what the greatest commandment is, and he replies that it is to love God with everything and to love our neighbours as ourselves. Then he asks whose son the Messiah is. When the religious leaders reply that he is David's son, Jesus asks why David refers to the Messiah as "Lord" – and no one is able to give an answer.

[Click here to view the readings](#)

[http://bible.oremus.org/?show\\_adj=no&passages=Deuteronomy%2034:%201-12%0Acw%20Psalm%2090:%201-6,%2013-17%0A1%20Thessalonians%202:%201-8%0AMatthew%2022:%2034-46](http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Deuteronomy%2034:%201-12%0Acw%20Psalm%2090:%201-6,%2013-17%0A1%20Thessalonians%202:%201-8%0AMatthew%2022:%2034-46)

## COLLECTS OF THE DAY

### Collect One

Blessed Lord,  
who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning;  
Grant that we may in such wise hear them,  
read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them,  
that by patience, and comfort of thy holy Word,  
we may embrace, and ever hold fast  
the blessed hope of everlasting life,  
which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

### Collect Two

Blessed Lord,  
who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning:  
Help us to hear them,  
to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them  
that, through patience, and the comfort of your holy word,  
we may embrace and for ever hold fast  
the blessed hope of everlasting life,  
which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let us pray for all people, everywhere, whoever they are and whatever their needs.

O God, you created us and you love us as our father; teach us to trust you and help us all to know that you love us completely. Help us to trust that you will always answer our prayers and that we must not only ask, but also listen

and look for the answer.

We pray for those who hate, that they may learn to love. We pray in particular for those who suffer at the hands of others and for those whose lives and liberty are overtaken by causes which are not their own. Grant, Lord that all people may live without fear and hatred as they walk in your ways.

Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

We pray for people of faith throughout the world, that aspiration to Godly truth might prevail and banish the temptation in men to commit atrocities in the name of faith. We pray for the Church worldwide, its unity and its message. We pray that its light may shine in this world of darkness, that all may know the true love of our Lord Jesus Christ and that we may be proud to confess that we are Christians.

Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

We pray for governments that they may rule with wisdom and justice, and with respect for their subjects and for other nations. We pray especially for the new and faltering nationhood of Iraq, as well as for the United States as it prepares for the presidential election, that wisdom and truth may prevail over personal ambition.

Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

We pray for all who suffer in mind or body and for those who care for them. We pray for the sick and the sorrowful; for those who mourn; for those without faith, hope or love.

We pray for any known to us who are in special need of our prayers at this time. We remember them now in a moment of silence ....

Lord, in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

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

### **POST COMMUNION**

God of all grace,  
your Son Jesus Christ fed the hungry  
with the bread of his life and the word of his kingdom.  
Renew your people with your heavenly grace,  
and in all our weakness

sustain us by your true and living bread,  
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for  
ever.

## PRAYERS

Lord of creation, you give new strength to our faith. Grant that we may  
recognise your presence in all life and history, and face our trials with serenity  
and peace. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Let me prefer your presence, O God, to all other company. Let me exalt your  
name, O Lord, above all other names and let me love your will, O God,  
beyond all other desires; for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen. *Therese of  
Lisieux, 1873-1897*

Love has brought us here today. Not our love for God but God's steadfast  
love for us:

The love of the Holy for that which is full of flaws.

The love of the Seeker for the that which is lost.

The love of the Healer for that which is diseased.

The love of the Reconciler for that which is alienated.

Love has brought us here today. We love because God first loved us. Help  
us, O Lord, never to nurse the grievance that separates us from you and from  
one another. Grant us grace to forgive those who have wronged us. May we  
know that no sin is so great that it cannot be confessed; no wound so deep it  
cannot be healed, and no sinner so lost that grace cannot bring them home.

*William Booth, 1829-1912*

Unite our hearts, O Lord, in bonds of affection that we may live with one  
another in humility and peace. Give us patience in the time of trial, and  
steadfastness in the tasks before us. Refresh our hearts in the hour of  
anguish and sustain us in the day of our need. Be to us, and to your whole  
Church, both our everlasting light and our eternal salvation; through Jesus  
Christ our Lord. **Amen** *Bernard Albert, 1569-1636*

Strengthen us, O God, to relieve the oppressed, to hear the groans of poor  
prisoners, to reform the abuses of all professions; that many be made not  
poor to make a few rich; for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen. *Oliver Cromwell.*

Almighty God, maker of all things, thou hast placed thy creatures necessary  
for our use in diverse lands: grant that all people s and nations, needing one  
another, may be knit together in one bond of mutual service, to share their  
diverse riches; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *Anon 16th Century*

## **LECTIONARY NOTES 1**

### **REFLECTIONS ON THEME:**

The Great Commandment resonates powerfully through this week in the Lectionary. It's significant that this is what ends the great debate between Jesus and the religious leaders in the Gospel reading – even in confrontation, the focus of Jesus is on love. The related Old Testament reading (Leviticus) gives the original reference for the second part of the commandment, about loving our neighbours. In the continuous Old Testament readings we come to the end of Moses' life on the brink of the promised land. Moses power in leading the Israelite people is praised in this account, which evokes the memory, not just of Moses' mighty works, but also of his great patience and care for God's people – a quality which, although not specifically mentioned here, certainly contributed to his greatness. The Psalm of Moses, however, definitely picks up Moses' compassion and love as he pleads (as he often did) for God to care for and be kind to God's people. Psalm 1 connects with the gospel, celebrating those who obey God's laws which, in this case, relates specifically to those who live in love of God and of neighbour. Finally, the letter to the Thessalonians gives a description of a ministry that is performed in grace and love, which is focussed on bringing others into the joy of the love of God, and which expresses deep love for the people to whom the ministry is being offered. In many ways, this is a picture of what obedience to the Great Commandment looks like in practice. There can be no question this week – the Scriptures never let us off the hook of love.

### **CONNECTING WITH LIFE:**

**GLOBAL APPLICATION:** In the world of war, climate change, poverty, economic crisis and dread diseases, love may appear to be powerless and irrelevant. This may be because our view of love is so often informed not by Jesus, but by Hollywood. When love is nothing more than a feeling that one "falls" into and out of, it has nothing to say the big issues we face. But, when love is lived as Jesus did – practically, sacrificially, passionately and justly – it speaks directly to the root causes of our struggles. Ultimately all of our dealings in the world will grow out of one of two sources. If fear is the primary driver of our lives, we will ensure we have more than enough weaponry to protect us and we will easily attack any person or country we perceive as a threat. If fear is our foundation, we will hoard our wealth, and we will grab what we can with little concern for the impact on others or on our environment. When fear is our foundation, we will tend to minimise care and compassion for those who are unrelated to us or different from us. But, when love is our foundation, everything changes. Love drives to seek connection and understanding, not war. Love drives us to share what we have so that all may have their needs met. Love leads us to think carefully about how we

treat our environment and how we use our resources, and how we deal with those who are suffering, even if they are unrelated to us. Authentic love is expressed in practical efforts to bring justice, in tough and vulnerable peacemaking, in concern for the "least" and most vulnerable. Authentic love recognises the connections and interdependence between all people and between us and our world. Authentic love is the most desperately needed, and most powerful, solution to the tough struggles of our time. The challenge is whether we are prepared to embrace love, to live love, to "preach" love and to work to spread love through the world. Can we allow love to be the primary force behind our voting, our ethics, our morality, our social participation and our interactions. If we can and do, we will discover that, little by little, the world begins to shift further along a trajectory of compassion.

**LOCAL APPLICATION:** It should be common sense, and yet, love is so often rejected as a "strategy" for engaging other people in our communities and neighbourhoods. There is never a shortage of opportunities to express the kind of authentic love that Jesus practiced. Within our own homes and families, when we prioritise showing love, we discover deepened relationships, higher commitment levels, and the kind of self-giving serving of one another that enables us to navigate whatever conflicts may arise. In our churches, when we make love the primary framework within which we engage each other, we find ourselves learning from one another, celebrating our differences and making space for the needs of others. In this environment, conflicts over style of music, times of worship, and ministry priorities become less important and are much easier to navigate. In addition, when love is the driver of our ministry, the surrounding community inevitably feels and notices the difference. Those who struggle financially are able to find support and dignity in the church. Those who seek God are welcomed, even though they may think or act differently. Those who find themselves in crisis discover a place of safety and comfort and help. This has always been how the Church should look, but unfortunately, we have too often allowed our fear to trump our love, and we have become a people who too easily shut others out, point fingers and pronounce judgment. It is not our condemnation of others, nor our fear of them, that will lead us to God's life. Rather, it is our striving to live out the self-giving love of Christ that will bring life to those around us and those who are share in our community. Somehow we know this, but fail to live it. Perhaps this week our worship can help us to let what we know become what we do.

## LECTIONARY NOTES 2

## **Matthew 25:31-46**

The following excerpt is from Buechner's book *The Faces of Jesus*:

In one of the most powerful passages in the Gospels, Jesus while still on earth foretells this scene of the Last Judgment. All the nations of the earth are drawn up before the Son of Man, he says, and the Son of Man will separate them from one another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. It is the principle by which he separates them that split history in two. Placing the souls of the righteous on his right hand, he says to them, "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me," and when the righteous turn to him and ask when they can ever have had the opportunity to do such things for him, he answers them by saying, "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me." And then the unrighteous, of course. "I was hungry and you gave me no food," he says — thirsty, a stranger, naked and sick and in prison — and to their shuddering question *Lord, when?* he has a shuddering answer: "As you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me."

Thus for Jesus the only distinction between men that ultimately matters seems to be not whether they are churchgoers or non-churchgoers, communists or capitalists, Catholics or Protestants or Jews, but do they or do they not love — love not in the sense of an emotion so much as in the sense of an act of the will, the loving act of willing another's good even, if need arise, at the expense of their own. "Hell is the suffering of being unable to love," said old Father Zossima or, as John puts it in his first epistle, "He who does not love remains in death." It is no wonder that enthroned in the ivory diptych with his mother on her knees at his side, Jesus throws up his hands in dismay.

*As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.* Just as Jesus appeared at his birth as a helpless child that the world was free to care for or destroy, so now he appears in his resurrection as the pauper, the prisoner, the stranger: appears in every form of human need that the world is free to serve or to ignore.

## **SERMON OUTLINE**

### **Proper 25A Matt 22:34-46 the great commandment...**

facing continuing controversies, Jesus had *put the Sadducees to silence* in debate over the resurrection...

**1. The Lawyer:** Pharisee trained in the Law - *asked him a question to test him.* <sup>36</sup>*Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?* – a verbal enticement to debate!

**2. The Law:** basically the Decalogue - but also 613 statutes - some *great* & some *little*... If Jesus magnified one, he would belittle others thus falling into a trap!! Jesus neatly sidesteps the trap to proclaim a great eternal truth...

**3. The Love:** that must be demonstrated....

**a) for God:** *with all your heart/soul/mind* (37) - ie with all your being! The Jews recited the **SHEMA** (Deut 6.5) each morning & evening. It is the first verse memorised by children and is still used in synagogue services. Indeed it is a key verse for all Jews and Christians!

**b) for neighbour:** *love your neighbour as yourself* (39 - Lev 19.18) - still needed in the life of the world today!

**4. The Lord:** Jesus raises a counter point - <sup>42</sup>*What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?* - a theological issue... they reply *the Son of David* - messianic title - long-awaited deliverer/saviour of his people... Jesus says that the title is really inadequate – Christ is more than that! He quotes Ps 110.1 to illustrate that *if David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?* If he is David's Lord, he is Lord of all Jews and Lord of all...

***If he isn't Lord of all, then he isn't Lord at all!*** Jesus silenced his questioners - *no more questions*.... Only one remains for us - *What do you think of the Messiah?*

Norman Porteous

## ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

"**The Benedictine tradition of community**," the Rev. Anjel Scarborough, Sermons that Work, Episcopal Digital Network

<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/2014/10/04/20-pentecost-proper-25-a-2014/>

**Ministry Matters.**

[http://www.ministrymatters.com/bin\\_list/?this\\_sunday=1#axzz2WxzlwWf](http://www.ministrymatters.com/bin_list/?this_sunday=1#axzz2WxzlwWf)

"**Loving God with All Your Mind**," the Rev. Dr. Brett Younger, Day 1

[http://day1.org/3241-loving\\_god\\_with\\_all\\_your\\_mind](http://day1.org/3241-loving_god_with_all_your_mind)



**"If Christ Is King, What Does That Mean?"** Greg Garrett, *Day 1*,  
<http://day1.org/3357-if-christ-is-king-what-does-that-mean>

**Christ the King Sermons**, Edward F. Markquart, *Sermons from Seattle*.  
<http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/christ-the-king.htm>

**"Heaven's Audit of One's Soul,"** the Rev. Dr. Wiley Stephens, *Day 1*  
<http://day1.org/1120-heavens-audit-of-ones-soul>

## CHILDREN

Mainly on theme Christ the King

[Worshiping with Children](#), Proper 26, Including children in the congregation's worship, using the Revised Common Lectionary, Carolyn C. Brown,  
<http://day1.org/1120-heavens-audit-of-ones-soul>

["A Thanksgiving Story,"](#) Christ the King, Frances Woodruff, *On the Chancel Steps*.  
<http://day1.org/1120-heavens-audit-of-ones-soul>

[Faith Formation Journeys](#), Children Sermon,  
<http://faithformationjourneys.blogspot.co.uk/2011/10/children-sermon-reign-of-christ-sunday.html>

[Story for Children's Worship and Family Activity](#), Christ the King, at *word-sunday.com: A Catholic Resource for the Lectionary* by Larry Broding.  
<http://www.word-sunday.com/index.html>

["Unto the Least of These,"](#) and ["King Backward,"](#) Charles Kirkpatrick, Sermons4kids.com.  
<http://www.sermons4kids.com/least-of-these.html>

## HYMN SUGGESTIONS

[Come, Let Us Sing Of A Wonderful Love](#)

[Love Divine, All Loves Excelling](#)

[It Passeth Knowledge That Dear Love Of Thine](#)

[To Fill The World With Love \(In the morning of my life\)](#) (*Link to YouTube video*)

[Hold On To Love](#)

[Love](#) (*van de Laar*)

[May The Words Of My Mouth](#) (*Link to YouTube video*)

[Jesus, My Desire](#)

[Love](#) (*Tomlin – Link to YouTube video*)

[Wonderful Love](#)

**One World Week - 19-26 October 2014**

Details from [www.oneworldweek.org](http://www.oneworldweek.org) - PO Box 2555, Reading RG1 4XW. Tel:  
0118 939 4933

E-Mail: [enquiries@oneworldweek.org](mailto:enquiries@oneworldweek.org)

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