

# St John's

## Prayer

We thank you, heavenly Father, for Christ's sacrifice on the cross: help us to take up our cross and follow you in service to others. May we give to those in need as you have given to us. We especially pray for those who are sick:

**Sick:** Scott Bradley, Dawn Forey, Ruth Gillespie, Hanna Lebrato, Jack Mannix, Marion Mason and Sue Ralfe.

We also commend to God, those who have died:

**RIP:** Beryl Royal

Lord, in Your mercy. Hear our prayer.

## Contacts

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The Parish Office is closed.

**Matthew and Jonny say  
Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer each day  
Join in [here](#).**

# St John's Church Pew Sheet 30th August 2020

## Welcome!

The Government has allowed places of worship to open for individual prayer and services.

**St John's Church is open for prayer:**  
10.30am-12.30pm each day

**St John's Church is open for services:**  
9.30am Sundays  
10.30am Wednesdays

Our online services will continue for the time being.

**Then Jesus told his disciples,  
'if any want to become my followers,  
let them deny themselves  
and take up their cross and follow me.'**

**Matthew 16:24**

## **ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST - MISSION STATEMENT**

Drawn together by Christ's love, we seek by his grace to live out his commandments to love the Lord our God with all of our being; and to love everyone we come across as we love ourselves.

**[www.stjohnschurchstanmore.org.uk](http://www.stjohnschurchstanmore.org.uk)**

Please do check our website for future updates

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## The Eleventh Sunday After Trinity

### **Collect**

God of constant mercy, who sent your Son to save us: remind us of your goodness, increase your grace within us, that our thankfulness may grow, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Bible Readings** (click on links to access passages):

[Jeremiah 15:15-21](#)

[Romans 12:9-21](#)

[Matthew 16:21-28](#)

### **Short Sermon by Jonny Rapson, Assistant Curate**

Sacrifice is not often something that is deemed popular in the modern world today. In the eyes of the world, sacrifice might be possible if someone has done something for me, or if it seems 'worth it.' But sacrifice, that requires no return on an investment, is not generally encouraged. I say the modern world today, but in reality, human aversion to sacrifice is no new occurrence, helpfully displayed in our gospel reading today. Jesus begins to explain to his disciples that he must face great suffering at the hands of the religious leaders, only to face death at their hands. However, he also explains that He would be raised on the third day.

The comfort of the resurrection is of no use to Peter, who forbids that any of these events should ever come to pass. Recognising Peter's failure to understand the wider story of redemption, Christ utters the famous words '*get behind me Satan.*' Peter was setting his mind to human things and this human aversion to sacrifice comes into full view. Even though it brings redemption and resurrection, for Peter, the sacrifice is not worth paying in human terms. It is not a sound investment. Jesus must bring a human victory, an army of conquerors to overthrow the Roman empire and the religious elite. But Jesus is not bringing a temporary human victory, but a spiritual victory that will expand across the cosmos.

Not only must Peter understand that sacrifice is an essential part of God's plan for all of creation, but it is also an essential part of the life of a disciple.

*'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.'* The life of a disciple must contain sacrifice. A self-sacrifice that does not seek a return on investment, but a sacrifice that takes up our cross to follow Christ in the way of righteousness. Bearing our cross is probably one of Jesus' most difficult commands. Not only must we make sacrifices for our loved ones, but we must sacrifice for those who we struggle to love. Jesus went to the cross for the disciples and his family, but he also went to the cross for those who shouted 'Crucify!' before Pontius Pilate. Sacrifice often means that we have to put others before ourselves even if it is a detriment to our own needs and wants.

As I have reflected on this passage, I have wrestled with the two seemingly opposing concepts of self-sacrifice and self-care. Can these two concepts co-exist? If we are called to take up our cross and sacrifice for others, how can this run alongside our need to care for ourselves? Are we to run ourselves into the ground with that cross upon our back? Well, the answer to this paradox lies in Christ himself. Because as we learn in the Gospels Christ sacrificed for others, but he also took time to rest, pray, and spend time with family and friends. Christ shows us that life can be lived full of both self-love, and self-sacrifice. We can care deeply for ourselves while also taking up our cross. While the world both past and present might want to tell you that self-love and self-sacrifice are mutually exclusive, the reality is that there is a beautiful harmony between the two.

Christ Rested. Christ Sacrificed.

He cared for himself, yet he bore the cross of sin and shame. His self-love and care played an important role in the biggest sacrifice in the history of the universe. Could Christ have ever borne the cross if He was weighed down by crippling self-loathing? So therefore as Christians, we are called to live a life where we strive to harmonise self-sacrifice and self-love. Each day we are being called to take up your cross, and love others as you love yourself. Both are dependent on one other. We cannot love ourselves if we do not love others, and we cannot love others if we do not love ourselves.