



William
Lambe
450th
anniversary

ST JAMES' CHURCH, ISLINGTON N1 8PF

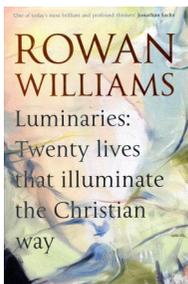
17th May 2020 EASTER 6 Year A 20/20

Jesus, during your ministry on earth you showed your power and caring by healing people of all ages and stations of life from physical, mental, and spiritual ailments. Be present now to people who need your loving touch because of COVID-19. May they feel your power of healing through the care of doctors and nurses. Take away the fear, anxiety and feelings of isolation from people receiving treatment or under quarantine. Give them a sense of purpose in keeping healthy and protecting others from exposure to the disease. Protect their families and friends and bring peace to all who love them; for the sake of Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Collect: Give us we pray gentle God, a mind forgetful of past injury, a will to seek the good of others and a heart of love, that we may learn to live in the way of your Son, Jesus Christ, through whom we pray. Amen.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE, whose 200th anniversary is being celebrated this year, was never an easy person to work with. According to one of her diary entries, even God told her off for being too pushy! She made few friends - and even these tended to be people who had influence. and who could get her what she wanted. One of them, Sir Sidney Herbert, she literally worked to death. But without her drive and determination, thousands more would have died of cholera in the Crimean war in the 1850s and the creation of a professional body of nurses may well have taken another generation to achieve.

Intense people like Florence Nightingale - and we all know people like her - may not be very comfortable to live and work with but from a respectable distance, we can see through some of the angularity of her personality and begin to understand how 'the lady with the lamp' was so loved by the soldiers whose lives she had transformed. This is made easier when we read Florence's diary with its commentary on her spiritual struggles which continued throughout her life. Originally a Unitarian, she was brought up in the Church of England but several of her greatest friends were Roman Catholics including the great pastor to the poor, Cardinal Manning. When Jesus talks about friendship in today's Gospel it is friendship of the deepest kind, one that 'knows all things and bears all things'. Sometimes to be a friend we have to put aside always 'liking' the person. Sometimes they need greater support than that.



LUMINARIES Next week I would like to turn to one of our greatest 20th century Archbishops, Michael Ramsey who combined profound thinking with kindness and a great desire that those in the pew should see what he could see.

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St James' Islington: discovering how to live like Jesus in the 21st century



HALL KITCHEN RENOVATIONS You will remember that in the recent Stewardship renewal campaign we spoke of how dependent we are on income from the hall to keep the Church afloat. A third of our revenue comes from Hall and Church hirings. So it is vital to keep our facilities up to scratch and while we can't allow people into the Hall this is the ideal time for JM Solutions to renew all the cupboard space and work surfaces and for the walls to be repainted. (We can also get rid of some of junk that has accumulated in there too!) It should look much better when it is finished, hopefully by May 29th.



JULIA MAILE, one of your young Mums at St James', is working with two friends to collect top quality clothes and books for distribution among families in our area - the equivalent of the local Food Banks. Their first class website [www.merrygoroundUK.org] has more details and we at St James' are helping to store the clothes while the Hall is out of action. She would be really grateful for your support.

ASCENSION SUNDAY How we will miss releasing our balloon next Sunday morning! Please keep St James' in your prayers until such time as we can be together again.

Calendar and Daily Prayer themes

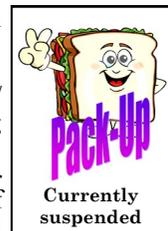
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|--------------------------------|--|
| Sun 17 <i>EASTER 6</i> | Barry, Hayley, Theo and Freddie Jenkins |
| Mon 18 <i>DEL Easter 6</i> | Alexandra Jones; Grace and Elrose Joseph |
| Tues 19 <i>St Dunstan</i> | Miranda Jules; Eva, Roy, Jerome and Zuri Kasella |
| Wed 20 <i>St Alcuin</i> | Charlotte, Josh and Olivia Kennedy; Philip Kingstons |
| Thurs 21 <i>ASCENSION DAY</i> | Kingsley Lewis; Beryl Lloyd |
| Fri 22 <i>Feria</i> | Kurt, Julia and Florence Maile; McBrien families |
| Sat 23 6 <i>Feria</i> | Paula, Gianni and Giandre Morrison; Bill Murphy |
| Sun 24 <i>ASCENSION SUNDAY</i> | Jade Nicholson, Charlie and Henry Green |

PRAYER BOARD/NOTICES Requests for prayer welcome

- BIRTHDAY** Many Happy Returns on Wednesday to Julia Maile, founder of Merry-Go-Round, the charity collecting 'good as new' clothes and books for local residents; on Friday to Mae Dennison who will be 5, a day she shares with Kris Hyde on our sick list and with Dan Bryan.
- SICK** Annie Bryan, Chou Seng Joo, Emily Grainger, Kris Hyde, Hayley Jenkins, John, Klenan, Kingsley Lewis, John Scott, Charlie Sharpe, Rene, Vera Taggart, Melanie Toogood and Angela Vinnicombe.
- DEPARTED** We pray for the souls of Rose Baker, to be laid to rest on Wednesday; and of Dorothy Little (Bracklyn Court), to be laid to rest on Friday.
- INTERNATIONAL CHURCH LINKS US:** Fr Travis and Suzanne Smith, Angleton/Alvin, Texas; Japan: Fr Sebastian and Yuki Naniwa, now serving in a new parish in Ehime near Hiroshima.



PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE No new news about **Nazanin Zaghari-Radcliffe's** license which allows her to be with her family out of Evin jail. We pray for her, and also for her husband Richard and their daughter Gabriella in London. Sadly we have still heard nothing about **Kylie Moore-Gilbert** (left), a British-Australian academic, who seems to have disappeared from view. We also pray for **Anoosheh Ashoori**, a businessman sentenced to ten years and for **Aras Amiri**, an Iranian employee of the British Council, currently studying philosophy at Kingston University. Nazanin and Aras had become good friends in Evin jail.



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A SERVICE
OF THE WORD

for Easter 6 2020

as streamed from
St James' Church,
Prebend Street, N1

SERVICE OF THE WORD FOR EASTER 6

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**
Peace be with you. **And also with you.**

Welcome to St James' Church, Islington, for this Service of the Word for the Sixth Sunday in the Easter season.

One of the most moving video clips that I came across this week was of a speech made to her colleagues by a long serving nurse at the Royal Free Hospital after she had recovered from coronavirus. With more than a slight catch in her voice her thank-you led to tears and wild clapping as she left the ward, a wonderful glimpse of the filming that Fergal Walsh has been doing in local hospitals recently. You may remember that last Sunday I mentioned the way he and his crew have opened our eyes to the extraordinary work of the doctors and nurses during the Covid-19 pandemic. This must count as one of their golden moments.

So today a double celebration. First we are giving thanks for the work of Florence Nightingale whose 200th anniversary falls about this time and whose life is celebrated in Rowan Williams' book *Luminaries* which is acting as a core text for our reflections each week in St James' parish.

As we think of her, so I hope we can focus together on our gratitude for the medical profession in all its diversity and complexity - and in particular, as we celebrate International Nurses Day, our nurses and midwives who are uppermost in our prayers this morning.

But before we begin, let us call to mind the presence of God - wherever we are - thanking him for all that he has given us this week; thanking him too for the fellowship of the Church which links us not just with other members of St James' but also with our fellow Christians around the world, starting with the Collect for the 6th Sunday of Easter:

Collects

Give us we pray gentle God, a mind forgetful of past injury, a will to seek the good of others and a heart of love, that we may learn to live in the way of your Son, Jesus Christ, through whom we pray. Amen.

O God, who gave grace to your servant Florence Nightingale to transform the medical conditions of her day: grant to all who heal the same gifts of attention to detail and enduring love, that your saving health may be available to all who suffer; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Word of God

1st Reading: (1 Peter 3: 13-18 CEV) Who will want to harm you if you are doing good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what your critics fear, and do not let yourself be intimidated. Instead, let your heart be filled with the love of Christ our Lord.

With him as your guide, be ready to stand up for your faith and the hope that lies within you. Speak out with gentleness and respect. Conduct yourself with transparent honesty so that those who abuse you for your integrity and care for others will be exposed for their hypocrisy. For it is far better to suffer for doing good (if suffering should be God's will) than to suffer for doing evil.

Remember how Christ also suffered, once for all, the most righteous of men suffering for the utterly unrighteous, in order to bring them to God. While he was put to death in the flesh, his Spirit remained free.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn: **AM522 We cannot measure how you heal** [t Banks and Braes]

*We cannot measure how you heal
or answer every sufferer's prayer,
yet we believe your grace responds
where faith and doubt unite to care.
The pain that will not go away,
the guilt that clings from things long past,
the fear of what the future holds
are present as if meant to last.*

*But present too is love that tends
the hurt we never hoped to find,
the private agonies inside,
the memoires that haunt the mind.
Your hands, though bloodied on the cross
survive to hold and heal and warn,
to carry all through death to life
and cradle children yet unborn.*

*So some have come who need your help,
and some have come to make amends:
your hands which shaped and saved the world
are present in the touch of friends.
Lord, let your Spirit meet us here
to mend the body, mind and soul,
to disentangle peace from pain
and make your broken people whole.* (Words: John Bell and Graham Maule)

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia. Jesus said, If anyone loves me they will keep my word, and my Father will love them and we shall come to them. Alleluia.

Gospel: (St John 14: 15-21 CEV) Jesus said to the disciples, 'If you love me, you will have the strength to do all that I ask of you. And when I am no longer with you I will ask the Father, and he will send the Holy Spirit who will be with you for ever.'

He is the Spirit of truth. The rest of the world cannot receive his gifts because they are blind: they can neither see him nor know him. But you know him because he lives inside your heart.

He will come and share your life so that you will not feel that you have been orphaned. Very soon I will vanish from this world but you will still see me and you will still live in me. Just as you know that I am as one with the Father, so I am as one with you and you are as one with me.

As you listen to my words and take to heart all that I have taught you, so you will grow in love for me and will be loved by my Father. Each one who loves me I will love; and I will come and be with them for ever.'

SERMON FOR EASTER 6 | 17.05.2020

Acts 17: 22-31; 1 Peter 3: 13 - end; St John 14: 15-21

In honour of Florence Nightingale, the year 2020 has been designated as the International Year of Nurses and Midwives. Who could have imagined, when the idea was first mooted, that we would be going through the worst pandemic in our lifetimes and that the work of our nurses and other trained medical staffs would bring such heartfelt waves of appreciation from grateful patients the world over?

The honour being given to Florence Nightingale - including the setting up of a network of Nightingale specialist intensive care hospitals around the country - is well deserved. She, almost singlehandedly, transformed the nursing profession from a shadowy body of often drunk, male, totally untrained and often disabled army veterans (or women without other means of support) - into a well, ordered agency of treatment and recovery. After her first appointment as a hospital supervisor she was credited with having turned a chamber of horrors into a model hospital. She soon discovered the link between poor hygiene and infectious disease and, at a practical level she also found time to invent an ingenious system of bedside call bells and dumbwaiters so that nurses did not spend all their time running up and down endless flights of stairs.

When the Crimean war broke out in 1854, Florence was persuaded by the Minister for War, Sir Sidney Herbert, to take a party of nurses (10 Roman Catholic nuns, 14 Anglican nuns and 14 others) to work with the wounded in the military hospital at Scutari. She found the administration of the field hospitals to be utterly chaotic: blankets undistributed, no changes of bed linen and overflowing latrines. Small wonder that far more men were dying of disease and cold than from their wounds. At every turn she faced opposition from the generals who did not want 'bossy women' appearing to be in charge but as the Nightingale team proved their ability to get men back to the front, so attitudes changed.

Her systematic approach to hospital life was transformative: basic hygiene brought the cholera epidemic under control, cooking was properly supervised, the welfare of the men and their families at home were made a priority and as a result her reputation among the infantry soldiers became legendary. Stories about 'the lady with the lamp' were regularly included in letters from the front. When the war ended in April 1856 she returned to England a national hero and she was received at Windsor by Queen Victoria.

But there was another side to all this work: her constant demands on Sir Sidney Herbert were such that his health collapsed and he died, prematurely, in 1861. In one of her mystical 'conversations with God', dream-like periods of meditation that were her mainstay throughout her life, she records in her diary that God had said to her *You are here to carry our my programme. I am not here to carry out yours.* She noted afterwards, *I must remember that God is not my private secretary.*

As Rowan Williams points out in his sketch of her, Florence Nightingale was a driven woman, *obstinate, self-righteous, generous, sacrificial, angular, judgmental and compassionate - all at once.* And yet it was this combination of characteristics that led to Florence Nightingale's greatest achievements spread over the remaining fifty years of her life until her death at the age of 90. Just one example: in May 1859 she had been drafted in to serve on the Indian Sanitary Commission which was looking at the conditions in over 200 military establishments spread throughout the sub continent where nearly 7% of the non-combatant soldiers were dying each year. It soon became clear that she had no useful medical data with which to work and so she wrote to each of the 200 commanding officers demanding that the relevant documents be sent to her. The replies filled two large vans. Without a computer or much by way of secretarial help she summarized all the evidence and then set out, clearly and forcefully, all her recommendations, often using her own version of the pie chart to show as accurately as possible, the relevance of the statistics she had accumulated. The death rate fell almost instantly.

Here in England Nightingale used money raised by public subscription to set up the Nightingale Training School at St Thomas Hospital. She mentored nurses called to serve during the American Civil War and Nightingale nurses were sent to Liverpool where, for the very first time, they worked in the Workhouse infirmaries, replacing the Sarah Gamp type women so caricatured by Charles Dickens in Martin Chuzzlewit. Her greatest book, *Notes on Nursing*, written in 1859, though written for those nursing at home, went on to be the core text for all nurse training from 1860 onwards. As Caroline Worthington, director of the Florence Nightingale Museum says: *Florence transformed nursing when she got back from the Crimea. She had access to people in high places and she used it to get things done. Florence was stubborn, opinionated and forthright but she had to be those things in order to achieve all that she did.*

But some would also want to suggest that there was also a degree of latent racism in Florence Nightingale. Her relationship with the Jamaican Mary Seacole in the Crimea had clearly not been an easy one. Nightingale wrote, *I had the greatest difficulty in repelling Mrs Seacole's advances, and in preventing association between her and my nurses (absolutely out of the question!). Anyone who employs Mrs Seacole will encounter much kindness, but also much drunkenness and improper conduct.* Florence's attitude to women too was complex. Clearly Florence Nightingale improved the status of trained women nurses but she also believed that women tended to 'crave sympathy' and were generally not as capable as men. She had little time for women seeking the vote and generally preferred the company of well connected men. She often referred to herself as 'a man of action' and as 'a man of business'.

In our first reading today, St Peter lays out the qualities that he hoped would be found in the lives all of those seeking to serve Christ. *Put up with being criticised and abused; suffer if need be; learn to be patient; model yourself on Jesus who gave up his life, a righteous man dying for the unrighteous...* Yet as we nod our agreement, we recall that Peter was, by and large, not very good at any of these things!

But a few moments reflecting on the work of our amazing nurses, those on the Covid-19 wards as well as the nurses who deal with the births of our children, the care for the elderly - and everything in between, may help us to realise what Jesus' words in this Gospel are really driving at.

To Philip who wanted everything cut and dried and obvious (*Show me the Father* he demands), Jesus says: *you are seeing the Father, all the time, in the works of compassion and love that I am showing you - and in the actions of all those who listen to my words too.* But God's compassion comes in all sorts of shapes and sizes - and people.

Florence Nightingale's long life was spent loving the sick through an unflinching attention to detail: concentrating absolutely on the matter in hand, not allowing herself to be deflected by other concerns. Listening to a nurse being interviewed by Fergus Walsh from University College Hospital the other night, I could see exactly the same singlemindedness and a wonderful grasp of every element that would transform the health of her patients. Even the way she and her colleagues turned a man who had been on a ventilator for three weeks was a perfect example of love in action.

But that kind of working 'costs'. It is the compassion that allows someone to be 'spent' in the service of their patients. In churches we are very familiar with the symbolism of the candle which produces warmth and light - but, ultimately, only by burning itself out. Wouldn't it be lovely if we could be all these wonderful things Peter talks about and come out still being patient and courteous and even good humoured?!

Florence Nightingale's angularity wasn't part of her chosen armoury: no one chooses to be superior and abrupt. Being able to be all things to all people and keep your own integrity is amazingly difficult and when nurses are lovely as well as professional (and they often are) then we have a double reason for thanking them!

But in both cases we should have no compunction about setting aside the bits of their lives that may not be absolutely perfect, only too well aware that we need to ask each other for just the same generosity of spirit. Instead of focusing, as we can so easily do, on what we find annoying in one another, may we look instead, as Jesus said, at the evidence of what the Spirit of God is doing in each of our lives. God uses even the angular and the pig-headed to build his kingdom of love and good works!

And it was knowing this that led Florence Nightingale to include in her nursing handbook the advice to make sure that - at some point in every day - a nurse should give some time to prayer and meditation, so making physical the promise of Jesus at the end of today's Gospel that *whoever asks for anything in my name will receive it*.

As we thank God for our nurses and midwives, we thank him in particular for their clear, single-minded professionalism and their care for each and every patient entrusted to them, especially under the severe pressures under which they are currently working.

And we join our prayers for them with our thanks for Florence Nightingale and her extraordinary work in transforming the nursing profession.

Give us we pray gentle God, a mind forgetful of past injury, a will to seek the good of others and a heart of love, that we may learn to live in the way of your Son, Jesus Christ, through whom we pray. Amen.

Musical Interlude

Adam Dickson plays Traumerei by Robert Schumann

Creed

Let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

**Though he was divine, he did not cling to equality with God,
but made himself nothing.
Taking the form of a slave, he was born in human likeness.
He humbled himself and was obedient unto death,
even the death of the cross.**

**Therefore God has raised him on high,
and given him the name above every name:
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
and every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Nursing today

Norah Hodge shares something of her role as a nurse working alongside local GPs.

Being a nurse means.....
you will never be bored.
You will always be frustrated.
You will be surrounded by challenges.
So much to do and so little time.
You will carry lots of responsibility
and very little authority.
You will step into people's lives
and you will make a difference.
Some will bless you. Some the opposite.
You will see people at their worst - and at their best.
You will never cease to be amazed
at people's capacity for love, courage, and endurance.
You will see life begin - and end.
You will experience resounding triumphs
and devastating failures.
You will cry a lot.
You will laugh a lot
and you will know what it is to be human
and to be humane.

Confession

**Merciful God,
we have sinned in what we have thought and said,
in the wrong we have done
and in the good we have not done.
We have sinned in ignorance:
we have sinned in weakness:
we have sinned through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry for all the hurt we have caused.
We repent and turn to you
for the healing of our souls, our minds and our bodies.
Forgive us, for the sake of Jesus Christ
and renew our lives to the glory of your name. Amen.**

Through the cross of Christ may God have mercy on us,
pardon us and set us free;
that we may know that we are forgiven and may live in peace.
May God strengthen us in all goodness and keep us in life eternal
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A psalm of thanksgiving

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me bless his holy name.

**Bless the Lord, O my soul;
let me never forget
all the good things he has done for me.**

He sends his angels to care for us
and heals all our illnesses;

**he saves us from being too sad;
he shares all the good things the world has to offer;
he is generous and kind.**

Just like a parent cares for their children,
so the Lord cares for those who ask for his help.

**The goodness of the Lord
rests on all who love him:
and he freely gives his blessing
to those who listen to his voice.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit;

**as it was in the beginning, is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

[Psalm 103]

The Prayers

We begin our prayers with the Nightingale Prayer, written by Deva-Marie Beck, a prayer used in many hospitals around the world:

Today, our world needs healing and to be rekindled with love.
Once, Florence Nightingale lit her beacon of lamplight
to comfort the wounded,
and her light blazes a path of service across a century to us.
May her example continue to inspire the countless nurses and healers
who have followed in her footsteps. Amen.

These prayers were written by members of the United States Catholic Nurses Association:

Let us call to mind the nurses and midwives who have touched our lives when we needed them most and who, by their skill and compassion have enabled us to return to health and happiness:

Gentle God, we pray in thanksgiving for the nurses in our community. You have given them such an important vocation – asking them to mirror your love and compassion for the sick. When we watch them at work, we sense your presence in their words and deeds.

Grant them the perseverance and strength needed to do their job well. Give them courage to speak on behalf of those they serve and to speak up for those in greatest need.
Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Gentle God, we ask you to draw near to nurses and midwives who have given their lives in service to others. Fill their minds and their hearts with your wisdom so that even when they are under severe pressure they may truly be your hands and feet in each place where they work.

Comfort those who feel inadequate in their sorrows and disappointments, in their losses and worries and be with all those who are frightened.

Shelter them in times of trial and support them with colleagues who care so that they may have space to rest and to listen for your voice.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

And our other prayers:

Gentle God be with those who are on furlough,
those worried about their jobs and how to make ends meet;
be with those whose businesses are under real threat
and those having to make staff members redundant.
Give wisdom to all those in our Town Halls and voluntary groups
caring for the homeless and the isolated.

Give hope to those whose dreams are being tested -
those to be married, those unable to be with loved ones,
those leaving school and those on the threshold of new careers.
Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Gentle God, we pray for those whom we love
who are not well, in mind, body or spirit.
We offer you their names now
and ask you to bless them all:
Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

To you, Lord, we commend the souls of those who have died,
praying today for Rose Baker, Dorothy Little and Audrey Willis.

We remember too those whose anniversaries fall during this coming week:
Margaret Osborne, Joseph Daley and John Willis

Rejoicing in the fellowship of Mary the Mother of God, St James, St Peter and all the saints, we commend ourselves and all those for whom we have prayed, to God's unfailing love:

Merciful Father:

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

And so we join with Christians the world over as we say together:

**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 this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Lockdown

Fr Richard Hendrick OFM

Yes there is fear. Yes there is isolation.
Yes there is panic buying. Yes there is sickness.
Yes there is even death.

But,
They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise
You can hear the birds again.

They say that after just a few weeks of quiet
The sky is no longer thick with fumes
But blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi
people are singing to each other
across the empty squares,
keeping their windows open
so that those who are alone
can hear the sounds of family around them.

Today a young woman I know
is busy spreading fliers with her number
through the neighbourhood
so that older people may have someone to call on.

Today Churches, Synagogues,
Mosques and Temples
are preparing to welcome
and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary.

All over the world
people are slowing down and reflecting.
All over the world
people are looking at their neighbours in a new way.

All over the world people are waking up to a new reality
to how small we are
and how little control we really have.
But how great is our capacity
to love and to endure.

So as we pray we remember that
yes there is fear.
but there does not have to be hate;
yes there is isolation
but there does not have to be loneliness;
yes there is panic buying.
but there does not have to be meanness;
yes there is sickness.
but there does not have to be disease of the soul;
yes there is even death -
but even that is the gateway to a new kind of loving.

Wake up to the choices that lie in your hands.
Breathe deeply
and listen to how the birds are singing again,
and how the sky is clearing again.
Recall too how we are always held
in the hands of our loving God.

So open the windows of your soul
and though we may not be able
to touch one another across the empty square,
let us sing together of the goodness of the Lord.

Notices

Blessing

May Christ, who makes saints of sinners, who has transformed those we
remember today, raise and strengthen us so that we may transform the
world; and so may the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and
the Holy Spirit, be with us, now and for ever. Amen.