

## **EVENING SERVICE**

15 March 2009, Killean & Kilchenzie

*3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Lent*

*Communion & Thanksgiving*

*preacher: Rev Martin Grashoff*

*hymns: Church Hymnary. Fourth Edition (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 2005)*

---

### **Welcome & Intimations**

**Opening Hymn** : 'Abide with me' (CH 580)

### **Prayer**

**Readings** : Psalm 51:15-17 (*New Jerusalem Bible*) & Mark 1:4-5 (*Good News Bible*)

### **Address**

In Christian tradition bringing sacrifices has an important place. We should all be prepared to bring sacrifices, isn't it? But Psalm 51 is quite clear about it: God doesn't want sacrifices. And John the Baptist is tough on confession and conversion, but he doesn't say a word about sacrifice.

Our world is full of sacrifices. My mother sacrificed her school years to look after her mum, and later after me and my five brothers and sisters. She never finished secondary school, although she could have done that very well. My father sacrificed all of his time to take care of the parishes in which he ministered. Only after my father's retirement my parents took the time to enjoy their life.

A lot of people sacrifice their dreams, their freedom, their peace of mind, or even their entire lives to do things they think they have to do first. It is always difficult to decide whether or not they really need to do that.

Now there is something scary about these sacrifices. Quite often people start to think that in return for their sacrifice they will receive some kind of reward. After you have worked as hard and long as you can, you will be able to enjoy your wealth and leisure time.

People can even start thinking in a similar way about God. If we refrain from certain things, especially pleasant things, God will reward us later.

This is exactly what we should *not* do, says Psalm 51 (a psalm known as a psalm of penitence, by the way). This is not how the world works. After a life of hard work, most people will just have a wee pension. And if you have always skipped the enjoyable things in life, how could you enjoy them later?

Instead, the Psalm says, we should have *a broken and contrite heart*. What will that

mean? It does not mean, that we should believe we are only bad people, or sinners. It does mean that we should learn to accept life as it comes. 'Whatever your destiny, take life as it comes,' was the proverb under our daughter's emails. She knew what she was talking about, believe me.

Life comes as it comes. That includes wondrous moments, and the exact opposite. We want to make it all wondrous, but we have to accept that we can't. Often we spoil the party by ourselves, often we just lack the ability to make it work. Once we have accepted this, we will know what *brokenness* and *contrition* mean.

After that we can really enjoy to good things in life, even if they just come bit by bit. Having a party if you can spend hundreds of pounds is no big deal, but having a great time together on just five pounds definitely is. Trying to force your luck, will not work. Accepting life as it is will open you up for all the good that is around you.

And what about *conversion*? Conversion is a continuing process. God is very patient. Every time we go the wrong direction again, we can turn back, convert, change for better. And communion is the strongest expression of this. After all, wasn't it Judas who was present at the first communion, also Jesus's last supper on earth?

**Communion hymn** : 'Here, O my Lord, I see thee face to face' (CH 664:1-4)

**Invitation**

**Narrative**

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**The Lord's Prayer**

**Prayer of Consecration**

**Communion**

**Prayer after Communion**

**Closing Hymn** : 'Too soon we rise; the symbols disappear' (CH 664:5-7)

**Blessing**