

**Dorset South & West Written Service, Sunday 19th June 2022.
‘Our Father’. Prepared by Revd Jean Quick.**

Call to worship: Psalm 103:13: "As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him."

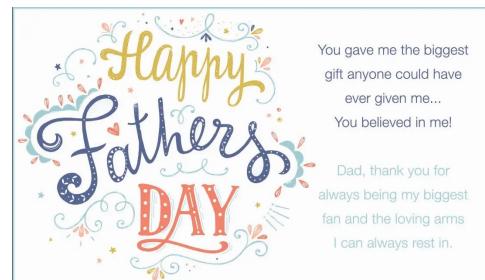
Hymn: STF 51

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;
as thou hast been thou for ever wilt be:

*Great is thy faithfulness!
Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided.
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.*

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love:

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!



Prayers of Adoration and Confession

Our Father on this Father's Day we praise and adore you for being our Heavenly Father. When we think of what that means words fail us. You brought this world into being with all its splendour and majesty. We look at creation and marvel at the unnumbered wonders around us. We see daily delights around us that inspire us. The glorious sun rise or sunset. The tiniest of flowers breaking through the toughest ground. The diversity of insects and animals and so much more. The beauty of creation astounds us. To think that you are our Heavenly Father who with all the complexities of this world still has infinite time to bestow upon us when we turn to you is beyond our comprehension. Your love astounds us and we bring you our thanks and praise.

Forgive us for the times we forget about you. When we tie ourselves in needless knot's of worrying, when all we need to do is bring our concerns to you in prayer. Forgive us when we take your gifts of this life for granted. When we misuse or are careless with what you have so freely given to us. Forgive us and in that forgiveness help us to use the gifts you have given us to enable and enrich the lives of all in our diverse and divine family. **Amen**

Bible Reading: Matthew 6.v 6-9; 25- 34. New International Reader's Version

When you pray, go into your room. Close the door and pray to your Father, who can't be seen. Your Father will reward you, because he sees what you do secretly. When you pray, do not keep talking on and on. That is what ungodly people do. They think they will be heard because they talk a lot. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need even before you ask him.“This is how you should pray.”“Our Father in heaven,.....

.....v25 “I tell you, do not worry. Don't worry about your life and what you will eat or drink. And don't worry about your body and what you will wear. Isn't there more to life than eating? Aren't there more important things for the body than clothes? Look at the birds of the air. They don't plant or gather crops. They don't put away crops in storerooms. But your Father who is in heaven feeds them. Aren't you worth much more than they are? Can you add even one hour to your life by worrying?

“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the wild flowers grow. They don't work or make clothing. But here is what I tell you. Not even Solomon in all his royal robes was dressed like one of these flowers. If that is how God dresses the wild grass, won't he dress you even better? Your faith is so small! After all, the grass is

here only today. Tomorrow it is thrown into the fire. So don't worry. Don't say, 'What will we eat?' Or, 'What will we drink?' Or, 'What will we wear?' People who are ungodly run after all those things. Your Father who is in heaven knows that you need them. But put God's kingdom first. Do what he wants you to do. Then all those things will also be given to you. So don't worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Reflection:

Recently we have had the Eurovision Song Contest. One of my favourite Eurovision songs is 'All kinds of everything remind me of you.' Sung by Dana and such a happy song. It easily lends itself to today's theme; Father's Day. Especially when you apply it to Our Heavenly Father. I am fortunate in that I can also apply it to my earthly father who I have so many wonderful memories of and literally, all kinds of things remind me of my Dad.

Sadly this is not true for everyone. Talking to a young man recently and sharing with him how my father made everything fun, his experience was quite different; his father really believed in not 'sparing the rod'. He was a very strict father but still despite the beatings, the young man said he deserved them and learnt respect and discipline.

My father from an early age would tell me fantastic tales. Coming home from a fairly mundane day at work he would answer my questions about where he had been, with tall stories of traveling to China or some other far flung places. My school diary entries had my teachers in a quandary! He also taught me to marvel at the bugs and flora and fauna in the garden. Water was a place where we could be really happy. If it rained we still stayed in the sea, ducking our heads underneath the waves so the rain couldn't soak us! Really Dad! Still to this day if a wave breaks over me I can see and hear my father turning around and shouting at it, 'you bully!'. Of course he wasn't perfect and he was strict but a good father.

You will have your own personal memories of your father, I hope some, if not all will be good. One inescapable fact is that our parents gave us the gift of life.

Today is Father's Day and it's celebrated each year in mid June, in most countries.

Although it was originally largely a religious holiday, Father's Day has been commercialised with the sending of greeting cards and the giving of gifts. Other males—for example, grandfathers or new partner's who have assumed parenting roles—are often also honoured on this day. In a number of countries Roman Catholics have continued to observe the feast day of St. Joseph, on March 19, as a tribute to fathers.

St Joseph is so underrated in our Christian faith and in the stories of the birth of Christ. He was Jesus' earthly father and took on so much regarding his part as the betrothed to Mary and the immaculate conception. One wonders how he was as a Father to the young child Jesus? Was he playful, inspirational, a strong influence? Did he try to pass on and teach him his skills and trade as a carpenter? However much of that reflection belongs to later on in the year.

We know Jesus frequently communed with his Heavenly Father and especially through the Lord's Prayer. He explained in great detail about our relationship to our Heavenly Father. It is through Christ's sacrificial death that we see how much our Heavenly Father loves us and to what lengths he will go for us. For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son.

A small boy said, "Father's Day is just like Mother's Day, only you don't spend as much on the gift. When we think of the immensity of God our Heavenly Father's gift to us how much of ourselves do we give to Him?"

Someone remarked on the sad range of Father's Day cards. They are either sailing boats, golf clubs or poking fun at a Father's inadequacy. If we could see our lives as a greeting card to our Heavenly Father on this Father's Day what image would be there? Some may well want the poking fun and claiming inadequacy image! I love the prayer from the Iona community that goes something like this. 'When we kick God in the teeth, He is concerned about if we have stubbed our toes!'

We have the pandemic, now the war in the Ukraine and the escalating economic crisis and there is still so much more that we could blame God for.

He has broad shoulders and wants us to be honest with Him even though in our heart of hearts we know we bring the troubles of life often upon ourselves. We also know that one certainty in life is that we don't live forever and death especially untimely is often one a time when we kick out at this supposed God of love. Yet we know He bears our suffering and we can't know the reason why to all of life's ill's but we know He is a God who cares to the uttermost and showed that in the sacrificial death of his only son.

My image for my Heavenly Father's Day card would be that inspirational verse and picture of footprints in the sand. This popular text is based in Christian beliefs and describes an experience in which a person is walking on a beach with God. They leave two sets of footprints in the sand. The tracks represent stages of the speaker's life. The two trails dwindle to one, especially at the lowest and most hopeless moments of the

person's life. When questioning God, believing that the Lord must have abandoned him during those times, God gives the explanation, "During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

This Father's Day what kinds of everything remind you of your Heavenly Father and maybe too your own father?

Hymn: STF 519

Father, I place into your hands
the things I cannot do.
Father, I place into your hands
the times that I've been through.
Father, I place into your hands
the way that I should go,
for I know I always can trust you.

Father, I place into your hands
my friends and family.
Father, I place into your hands
the things that trouble me.
Father, I place into your hands
the person I would be,
for I know I always can trust you.

Father, we love to see your face,
we love to hear your voice.
Father, we love to sing your praise
and in your name rejoice.
Father, we love to walk with you
and in your presence rest,
for we know we always can trust you.

Father, I want to be with you
and do the things you do.
Father, I want to speak the words
that you are speaking too.
Father, I want to love the ones
that you will draw to you,
for I know that I am one with you.

Prayers of intercession

Let us Pray for father's and those who have been or are father figures.

We give thanks for our father's and for those who we know are in the father parenting role.
We pray for those who are new to this role, for those who maybe struggling for what ever reason to be a good father. Give them courage and patience. Help those who struggle to know what to do and to make good choices and decisions. Today Heavenly Father we pray you will empower your earthly fathers and let them know that they too are in your care.

Father in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for all, but especially for father's caught up in war torn lands. We pray for father's taken from their children and facing great danger in order to bring peace for their children and children's children. We pray earnestly for peace for our whole world. For an end to war and aggression in every form.

Father in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for all facing any kind of sickness and especially for those who watch over their children in their suffering. We bring to mind those we know personally in need and ask that you will be very near to them.

Father in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for those who might be considered as 'father's of nations'. We think of those in positions of power and authority who must try to govern and make policy choices for the betterment of all. Guide them and help them to do what is right.

Father in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We gather together all our prayers to our Heavenly Father in the Lord's Prayer ...

Our Father

Hymn: STF 82

O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder consider all the works thy hand hath made, I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder, thy power throughout the universe displayed:

*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to thee:
how great thou art, how great thou art!*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander
and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;

when I look down from lofty mountain grandeur, and hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze:

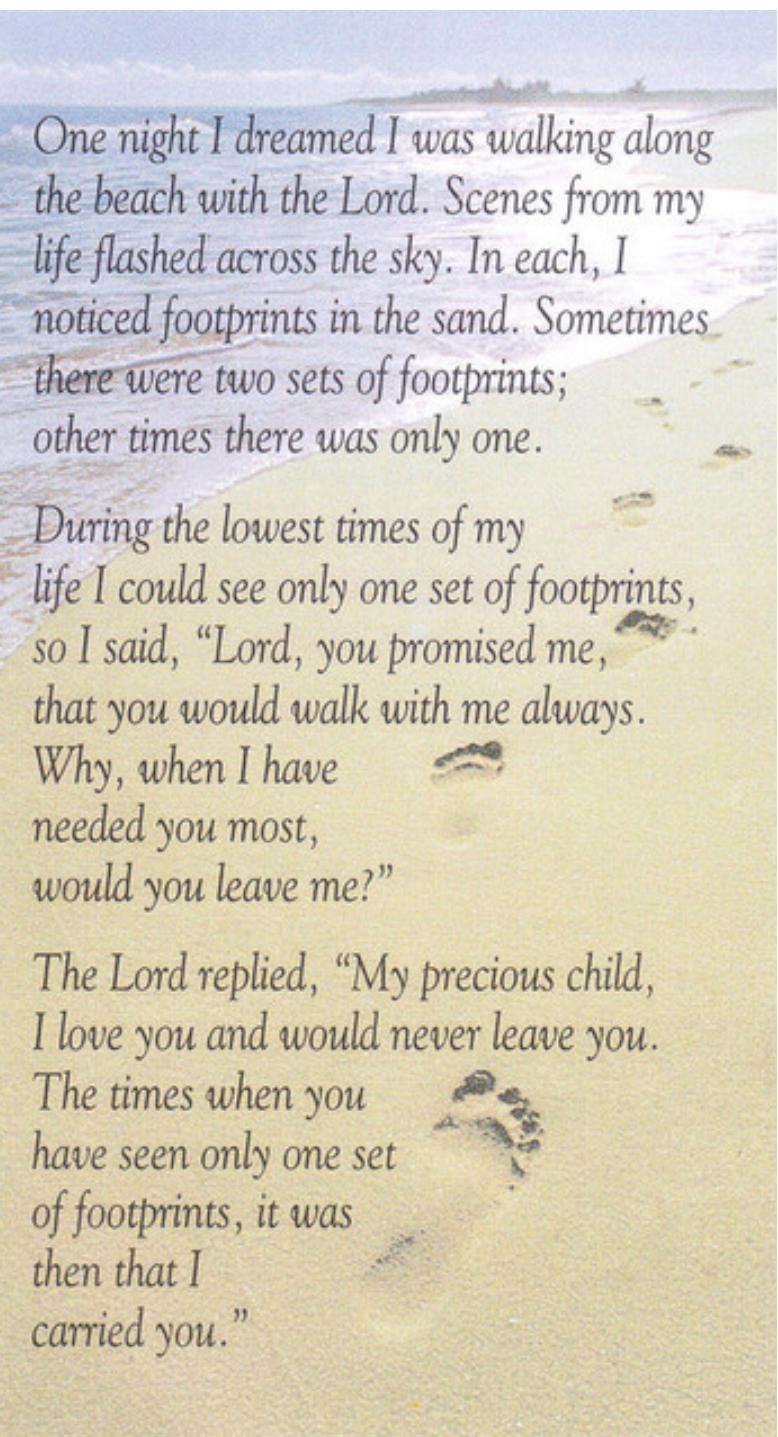
And when I think that God, his Son not sparing, sent him to die, I scarce can take it in that on the cross, my burden gladly bearing, he bled and died to take away my sin:

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation and take me home - what joy shall fill my heart; then shall I bow in humble adoration, and there proclaim: my God, how great thou art:

Blessing

May God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the source of all goodness and growth, pour his blessing upon all things created, and upon us his children, that we may use his gifts to his glory and the welfare of all peoples; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among us and remain with us always.

Amen.



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