

Service of the Word for Advent 1 and the Feast of St Senan, 2020

Welcome (*Michelle Brown, Lay Worship Leader, St Sennen Church*)

As we gather to watch, wait and repent at the start of the season of Advent and to celebrate the feast of the founder of our church and village, St Senan of Scattery, in this the 1500th anniversary year of continuous worship in that place, let us start by joining in a prayer for St Senan's traditional feast on 8th March:

Loving Lord, may everything I do begin with your inspiration, continue with your help and reach perfection under your guidance. **Amen.**

(from the Holy Family of Bordeaux, a confraternity of service).

And so we pray: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

God in Christ has revealed his glory.

Come let us worship.

From the rising of the sun to its setting
The Lord's name is greatly to be praised.

Give him praise, you servants of the Lord.

O praise the name of the Lord!

The lighting of the Advent Candle

Today is the first Sunday of Advent, the Sunday in which we recall the hope we have in Christ. The prophets of Israel all spoke of the coming of Christ, of how a saviour would be born, a king in the line of David. They spoke of how he would rule the world wisely and bless all nations. As followers of Christ, we await his return. We light this candle to remember that as he came to us as humbly in the manger at Bethlehem and gave light to the world, so he is coming again in power to deliver his people. We light this candle to remind us to be alert and to watch for His return. (*Light Advent Candle One - Purple*)

Let us pray - Loving God, we thank you for the hope you give us. Help us prepare our hearts for the Lord's coming. Bless our worship. Help us live holy and righteous lives. We ask it in the name of the one born in Bethlehem, Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of Preparation

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Invitation to confession

God shows his love for us in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Let us then show our love for him by confessing our sins in penitence and faith. May your loving mercy come to me, O Lord, and your salvation according to your word:

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Your word is a lantern to my feet and a light to my path:

Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

O let your mercy come to me that I may live, for your law is my delight:

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and keep us in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Collect

Almighty God, as your kingdom dawns, turn us from the darkness of sin to the light of holiness, that we may be ready to meet you in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Gospel Reading

Alleluia, alleluia. Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God. **Alleluia.**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to **Mark 13.24-37**:

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples: ²⁴In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

²⁶Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in clouds" with great power and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³²But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵Therefore, keep awake – for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Address

Advent Sunday is also Sennen Feast day, and so now we are 3 for 3 of having all our church feast days in lockdown of one type or another. It is challenging trying to celebrate the witness of the saints of old outside the building that is so very much linked to the history of the parishes.

Sennen Feast always must hold Advent Sunday and Feast in a creative tension. Advent is the beginning of the new church year, a season of penitence and being prepared. Feast seems more like a joyous explosion of wonder and happiness at our community, past present and future.

Into this heady mix is the reading for today, Mark's gospel sounds very much like a reading for our time. Be alert, he says and I for one am waiting for the following message of wear a mask, wash your hands, and stay two metres apart!

None of us were ready and prepared for the pandemic, nor the reality of the lockdown, but we at least knew by the second lockdown that we could cope, and what we needed. We also knew what to look out for – the R rate, the ways to manage the lockdown, who would be breaking the law or the spirit of the law. We knew to look out for rising temperatures and coughs, and to act. We knew the importance of isolation to prevent the spread of the disease.

We also know that we avoid taking excessive risks, and we check those around us to make sure that they are not going to be in trouble or endanger us.

We knew we could cope; we knew what was needed. We knew who a good role model would be, and who would not! We know what to look out for, and the importance of acting appropriately.

What if we applied this to our faith? To be this alert to the moments of God's glory around us? To be ready to see God at work around us.

What if we applied this to our own spiritual growth, to check for the things that lead to health and those that take us into a space or situation that leads to us imagining the absence of God, being unable to connect to God? To know we can cope with dry periods in our spiritual life.

What if we applied this to our prayer life, that we knew what to look out for that would help us pray, help us engage with scripture, help us act out our faith in acts of service and love? We would know we must not take excessive risks of stopping praying, stopping reading scriptures, stopping worshipping God.

When Senan (Sennen) first stepped on these shores 1,500 years ago, we know that he was just a man, an ordinary human being like you and I. But he had a mission, he heard God's call on him and was obedient. He shared the good news of Jesus for this world to the people of Sennen in such a way after his short visit here, the stories of faith, the influence of his prayers remained and created a fertile vibrant growth in this community.

He could not have done this without God. Nor without being alert and attentive to the holy in this place and being alert to God's whisper in this land. Did Senan know that he could cope with being a forerunner for Christ, or being the one who brought the news of Christ to a community that had not heard of Jesus God's Son? Did Senan know what was needed for these people at the end of the world?

I think he did.

For Senan like so many of those greats in the history of our Christian faith, knew that for all people the power of knowing Jesus would change lives, the healing of knowing the love of God for yourself would change your life.

So, wherever he went he shared the love and the power of God, and left the communities knowing that it was over to them whether this knowledge would make a difference. Senan leaving so soon in his ministry means that he was not trying to win folk for Christ to make himself important or feted, he knew he was part of a chain of people who would be the church, the people of God in this community.

And the chain of follows is still growing, you and I are standing in the footsteps of Senan, Buriana and Levan, and all the saints who loved God and were alert to God's call on our lives today. Be alert, **keep awake**, for God is calling you to follow him, love him, serve him today as he called the saints from long ago, and as he will call those who will come after us for generations to come.

The 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 to 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. *cf Philipians 2.6-11*

Prayers of Intercession

(Incorporating some prayers in a time of Covid, from St Senan's Parish, Shannon, Ireland)
Lord Jesus, you travelled through towns and villages "curing every disease and illness". At your command, the sick were made well. St Senan, St Buriana, St Levan and a host of other faithful men and women came to Cornwall in the boat with no oars to serve you and to love their neighbours as themselves in a time of danger from plague, poverty and conflict, let us tread with trust, courage and perseverance the paths they have shown us. Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of the coronavirus, that we may experience your healing love. Amen.

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

We pray Lord that we work as a community to heed the health alerts, to be calm and not panic, to uplift each other's spirits, and be open to change as needed. We pray for the many ways in which we show respect for ourselves and others, in our conversations and activities, and in our willingness to

adapt our lifestyles, in our gifts of patience and tolerance, in our use of social media, in our personal and communal prayer for others and ourselves.
Lord, in your mercy **hear our prayer.**

We pray Lord for people affected in any way by coronavirus, for people who have died and their families, for people who have coronavirus and those who have recovered, for people who are in isolation at this time, for those struggling with loss of work and poverty, for people working in hospitals, clinics, and medical centres, for doctors, nurses, medical staff and medical scientists, for ambulance, emergency services, and information technology people, for carers, counsellors and pastoral care ministers, for those in government, that they may lead with wisdom, integrity and compassion.
Lord, in your mercy **hear our prayer.**

Father, we join our prayers with those of St Senan, the saints of Cornwall and of Ireland and of all those who have served you and worshipped you. May we, in our time, be united with them, in you, with all our loved ones gone before and with us still, that we may rejoice in your peaceable kingdom for all eternity.

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

The Peace

In the tender mercy of our God, the dayspring from on high shall break upon us, to give light to those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death and to guide our feet into the way of peace. *cf Luke 1.78,79*
Let us pray for God's peace to be with one another

The Lord's Prayer

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.

Prayer

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, creator of light and giver of life, to you be glory and praise for ever. In Jesus your light has shone out; and you have given your Holy Spirit as a mighty stream of life-giving water to

refresh and renew the face of the earth. Let your light shine in us that we may be beacons of justice and bearers of hope. Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Blessed be God for ever.

Blessing and Dismissal

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility; that on the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Now, may the blessing of God the Father, the Incarnate Son and the life breathing Spirit rest upon us and our homes now and in all eternity. **Amen.**

We have seen his glory, **the glory revealed to all the nations.**
John Henry Newman marvellously and vividly expressed the spirit of this waiting in one of his sermons: "We are not simply to believe, but to watch; not simply to love, but to watch; not simply to obey, but to watch; to watch for what? For the great event, Christ's coming..."

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