

ORLAGH IN THE CITY

Third Sunday of Lent 2026

Stilling moment

Opening Psalm 42

*Like the deer that yearns for running streams,
So my soul is yearning for you, my God.*

My soul is thirsting for God, the God of my life;
When can I enter and see the face of God?

O send forth your light and your truth; let these be my guide.
Let them bring me to your holy mountain to the place where you dwell.

And I will come to the altar of God, the God of my joy.
My redeemer, I will thank you on the harp, O God, my God.

Why are you cast down, my soul, why groan within me?
Hope in God; I will praise him still, my saviour and my God.

Opening Prayer

O God, living and true, look upon your people, whose dry and stony hearts are parched with thirst. Unseal the living water of your Spirit; let it become within us an ever-flowing spring, leaping up to eternal life.

Thus may we worship you in spirit and in truth through Christ, our deliverance and hope, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, holy and mighty God for ever and ever. Amen.

A reading from the book of Exodus (17:3-7)

But the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the LORD, "What shall I do for this people? They are almost ready to stone me." The LORD said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarrelled and tested the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

Responsorial Psalm (95):1-2,6-9

Come, ring out our joy to the Lord;
hail the rock who saves us.
Let us come before him, giving thanks,
with songs let us hail the Lord.

Come in; let us bow and bend low;
 let us kneel before the God who made us:
 for he is our God
 and we the people who belong to his pasture,
 the flock that is led by his hand.

O that today you would listen to his voice!
 ‘Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
 as on that day at Massah in the desert
 when your fathers put me to the test;
 when they tried me, though they saw my work.’

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans (5:1-8)

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God!

Lord, you are really the saviour of the world:
 give me the living water, so that I may never get thirsty.

Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God!

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John (4:1-46)

Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard, “Jesus is making and baptising more disciples than John” (although it was not Jesus himself but his disciples who baptised), he left Judea and started back to Galilee. But he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “**Give me a drink.**” (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “*How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?*” (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “**If you knew the gift of God and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.**” The woman said to him, “*Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?*” Jesus said to her, “**Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.**” The woman said to him,

“Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

Jesus said to her, **“Go, call your husband, and come back.”** The woman answered him, *“I have no husband.”* Jesus said to her, **“You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband,’ for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!”**

The woman said to him, *“Sir, I see that you are a prophet. Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.”* Jesus said to her, **“Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”** The woman said to him, *“I know that Messiah is coming”* (who is called Christ). *“When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.”* Jesus said to her, **“I am he, the one who is speaking to you.”**

Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, *“What do you want?”* or, *“Why are you speaking with her?”* Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, *“Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?”* They left the city and were on their way to him.

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, **“Rabbi, eat something.”** But he said to them, **“I have food to eat that you do not know about.”** So the disciples said to one another, **“Surely no one has brought him something to eat?”** Jesus said to them, **“My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, ‘Four months more, then comes the harvest’? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, ‘One sows and another reaps.’ I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.”**

Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, *“He told me everything I have ever done.”* So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, **“It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Saviour of the world.”**

When the two days were over, he went from that place to Galilee (for Jesus himself had testified that a prophet has no honour in the prophet’s own country). When he came to Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, since they had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the festival, for they, too, had gone to the festival.

Then he came again to Cana in Galilee, where he had changed the water into wine.

Quiet Prayer | Lectio Divina | Creed | Intercessions

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our
Lord, who was conceived by the Holy
Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was
crucified, died, and was buried; he
descended to the dead. On the third day
he rose again; he ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the
Father, and he will come to judge the
living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy
catholic Church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection
of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.

Communion Reflection

Psalm 42

*Sicut cervus desiderat
ad fontes aquarum,
ita desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus.*

As a deer longs
for flowing streams,
so my soul longs for you, O God.

G. Palestrina, sung by Voices of Ascension Choir

Going out as the people of God

*When you find a well drink deeply
And maybe soon you'll discover
That you've become what you received
Then you'll be a well for others to find.*

Notices

Closing Hymn

*Grant to us, O Lord, a heart renewed;
Recreate in us your own Spirit, Lord!*

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord our God,
When I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel. R.

Deep within their being I will implant my law;
I will write it in their hearts. R.

I will be their God,
and they shall be my people. R.

And for all their faults I will grant forgiveness;
Nevermore will I remember their sins. R.

