

Service for Week 13th – 19th July 2026

By Chaplain Andy

Our Opening Prayer.

Loving God, teach us to look to you the one unchanging reality in a world that is constantly moving on. Teach us that you alone offer a hope that endures, a purpose that defies the ravages of the years.

Assuring us that though all else may fade away, your love will remain the same, through Jesus Christ.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven.....

Amen

Bible Reading Romans 8 :12-26

Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.

For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

Holy words, Holy wisdom,

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

Our text today is from Paul's letter to the young church in Rome. This was a group of followers of Christ who were Jews and non-Jews (Gentiles). After

Christ's crucifixion, death and resurrection the apostle Paul is on one of his missionary journeys and writes to prepare this group who met in one another's houses or perhaps in the large house of a wealthy member, for his intended visit to Rome.

In his letter Paul is teaching this group of believers about Jesus and how God through Jesus forgives them from their sins, frees them from the strict traditions of religious law and gives them the assurance of eternal life. This Paul writes, is brought about by having God's Holy Spirit in their lives. They may have come together from different faith backgrounds but you have nothing to fear, he assures them, because you have received the Spirit of unity and are all now part of God's family.

Paul writes these words about Christ's suffering and death on the Cross- 'we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.' Referring to the glory which came about through Jesus's resurrection. What God in Christ did by this has given us all a glorious hope for our lives and for the future. Paul then goes on to write about 'our suffering'. We don't know what suffering the young church had been going through. This may have been persecution or the suffering experienced by individual members of the church but we know that Paul himself suffered physically. The bible

does not say what he suffered from exactly but he refers to having a "thorn in the flesh" which may have been recurring malarial fever, or epilepsy.

Paul says that suffering and decay is also what our world is subject to. He writes that we live in the hope that 'Creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay'. But the greatest hope for all followers of Christ is the assurance that we shall return to be with God when we die. The death of Jesus on the Cross and his resurrection means that we are delivered from the cycle of sin and spiritual death. Our sins are forgiven and our spirits will live on and return to God when we die.

Paul writes about this hope to give encouragement to those followers of Christ in Rome, and for us – 'But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.' And while we wait God's Holy Spirit is with us to give us strength. **Amen**

Closing prayer

Lord God, help me to understand that the truth of resurrection is not just limited to the future, to life after death, but is about the present, life now! Help me to understand that even in the commonplace and mundane acts in life that even there, and especially there, you bring hope and resurrection.

Amen

Prayers inspired by Prayerfully Yours by Nick Fawcett