*Gift better than himself God doth not know*

*Gift better than God no man can see.*

*This gift doth here the giver given bestow,*

*Gift to this gift let each receiver be.*

*God is my gift, himself he freely gave me;*

*God’s gift am I, and none but God shall have me.*

*Excerpt from The Nativity of Christ*

*by Robert Southwell*

**THE GATHERING**

*Instrumental music before the service*

*This is Real Love* – Mezzo Piano

*Consecrate* – Parachute Band

*Entry of the ministers*

**Song**

*Call me and I will come -* Edwina Hayes

**Greeting**

*Bishop* Grace, mercy and peace

from God our Father

and the Lord Jesus Christ,

be with you

*All* **and also with you.**

**Welcome and introduction**

*Bishop* We gather as family and friends,

who have walked with Rachel

in the journey of faith.

We are here to thank God for her vocation,

to witness her vow

and to pray for God’s blessing

as she makes her commitment to the single consecrated life.

Rachel, we rejoice with you and celebrate

the gift of celibacy that God has given you.

Our God is relational, Three Persons,

a union of love, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Created by God, we are all bearers of the divine image, made for relationship.

At the core of our being,

we all long for union with God,

our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,

and so as we come to witness

Rachel make her Vow,

let us pray that we may all

name our own longing for God,

and know God’s desire for us.

With Rachel, may we, too, hear

the delight of God in choosing us,

and discover the joy of saying

our ‘yes’ in response.

O God, You have made us for yourself,

and our hearts are restless

‘til they find rest in you.

*Silent reflection*

**Confession**

*The Bishop introduces the confession*

Come, let us return to the Lord and say:

All   **Lord our God,**

**in our sin we have avoided your call.**

**Our love for you is like a morning mist,**

**like the dew that goes early away.**

**Have mercy on us;**

**deliver us from judgement;**

**bind up our wounds and revive us;**

**in Jesus Christ our Lord.** cf Hosea 6

**Absolution**

The Bishop declares

Almighty God,

who forgives all who truly repent,

have mercy upon you,

pardon and deliver you from all your sins,

confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,

and keep you in life eternal;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All   **Amen.**

**Songs of Worship**

SIMPLICITY

I come in simplicity,

Longing for purity

To worship you

In spirit and truth

Only you.

Lord strip it all away

Til only You remain.

I’m coming back

To my first love

Only You.

*Chorus*

*You’re the reason I sing,*

*The reason I sing,*

*Yes, my heart will sing*

*How I love you.*

*And forever I’ll sing,*

*Forever I’ll sing,*

*Yes, my heart will sing*

*How I love you.*

I come with my broken song,

To you the Perfect One

To worship you

In spirit and truth

Only You,

Only You.

Give me a childlike heart,

Lead me to where you are

Cause I’m coming back

To my first love

Only You.

*Chorus*

How I love you,

How I love you,

How I love you,

My first love.

*Chorus*

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THE GOODNESS OF GOD

I love you, Lord,

Oh your mercy never fails me,

All my days, I’ve been held in your hands.

From the moment that I wake up,

Until I lay my head,

Oh I will sing of the goodness of God.

*‘Cause all my life you have been faithful,*

*And all my life you have been so, so good,*

*With every breath that I am able,*

*Oh, I will sing of the goodness of God.*

I love your voice,

You have led me through the fire,

And in darkest night You are close like no other,

I’ve known you as a Father,

I’ve known you as a Friend,

And I have lived in the goodness of God.

*Chorus*

Your goodness is running after, it’s running after me,

Your goodness is running after, it’s running after me.

With my life laid down, I’m surrendered now,

I give you everything,

‘Cause your goodness is running after,

It’s running after me.

*Repeat*

*Chorus*

Ben Fielding | Brian Johnson | Ed Cash | Jason Ingram | Jenn Johnson © 2018 Capitol CMG Paragon

And I will love you Lord my strength,

And I will love you Lord my shield,

And I will love you Lord my rock, forever

All my days I will love you God.

*Repeat*

Hallelujah Our God reigns,

Hallelujah our God reigns,

Hallelujah our God reigns,

Forever all my days Hallelujah.

*Repeat*

Ian McIntosh | Jenn Johnson

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**Collect**

*The Bishop prays*

Merciful God,

you have prepared for those who love you

such good things as pass our understanding:

pour into our hearts such love toward you

that we, loving you in all things and above all things,

may obtain your promises,

which exceed all that we can desire;

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

**Amen.**

**THE LITURGY OF THE WORD**

**First Reading**

*The Old Testament reading is read by the Revd Lusa and Mirjam Ngoy, Community Companions*

**Song of Songs 8:5a, 6-7**

Who is that coming up from the wilderness,
     leaning upon her beloved?

Set me as a seal upon your heart,
    as a seal upon your arm;
for love is strong as death,
    passion fierce as the grave.
Its flashes are flashes of fire,
    a raging flame.
Many waters cannot quench love,
    neither can floods drown it.
If one offered for love
    all the wealth of one’s house,
    it would be utterly scorned.

**The Psalm**

*The Psalm is read by Rachel’s Father, John Bennetts*

**Psalm 27: 4-8**

One thing I ask of the Lord,
    this only do I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
    all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the Lord
    and to seek him in his temple.
For in the day of trouble
    he will keep me safe in his dwelling;
he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle
    and set me high upon a rock.

Then my head will be exalted
    above the enemies who surround me;
at his tabernacle I will sacrifice with shouts of joy;
    I will sing and make music to the Lord.

Hear my voice when I call, O Lord;
    be merciful to me and answer me.
To you O my heart he has said, “Seek my face!”
    Your face, Lord, I will seek.

**HYMN**

How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer’s ear!
It soothes her sorrows, heals her wounds,
And drives away her fear.

It makes the wounded spirit whole
And calms the troubled breast;
’Tis manna to the hungry soul,
And to the weary, rest.

And to the weary rest.

Dear Name! The Rock on which I build,
My Shield and Hiding Place,
My never-failing treas’ry filled
With boundless stores of grace!

Jesus! My Shepherd, Brother, Friend,
My Prophet, Priest, and King;
My Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
Accept the praise I bring.

Accept the praise I bring.

Weak is the effort of my heart,
And cold my warmest thought;
But when I see Thee as Thou art,
I’ll praise Thee as I ought.

Till then I would Thy love proclaim
With every fleeting breath,
And may the music of Thy name
Refresh my soul in death.

Refresh my soul in death.

John Newton 1779

Chris Bowater | Tune ‘Rachel’

© 1976 Sovereign Lifestyle Music

**Gospel Reading**

*The Gospel is read by Bishop Peter Fox, who will be the Guardian of Rachel’s Vow*

*Please stand*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

**Glory to you O Lord.**

**John 12:1-8**

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus’ feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, ‘Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?’ (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) Jesus said, ‘Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**Praise to you O Christ**

**Sermon**

*The preacher is the Revd Dr Caroline Yandell, a long-standing friend.*

**THE RITE OF CONSECRATION**

**Song**

*The music group sings*

Take, O take me as I am,

summon out what I shall be.

Set your seal upon my heart,

and live in me.

**The Presentation and Scrutiny**

*Sr Rachel Overton, Rachel’s spiritual director, presents her to the Bishop*

*Sr Rachel*

Bishop Martyn, I present to you, Rachel,

who asks you to receive her vow

to the Single Consecrated Life.

*Bishop* Rachel, What do you seek?

*Rachel* I seek the mercy of God,

and to make a vow of celibacy

consecrating my life to God,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*Bishop*  Are you truly resolved to live in the state of celibacy and in the service of God and his Church?

*Rachel* I am.

*Bishop*  Accepting consecration in the single life,

are you resolved to follow the example of

our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God,

who in love, gave his life

for the salvation of the world?

*Rachel*  I am.

*Bishop and all present* **Thanks be to God.**

*Rachel kneels before the Bishop*

*Bishop* Brothers and sisters, let us pray to God the Almighty Father through his Son Jesus Christ, that he will pour out the Holy Spirit on Rachel, his servant whom he has called to be consecrated in his service.

Come Holy Spirit.

Come with anointing love.

Come with grace and power.

*Silent Prayer*

**Invitation and Profession**

*The Bishop invites Rachel to make her profession*

*Bishop* Rachel, I now invite you to make your profession.

*Rachel*  Bishop Martyn, receive my resolution to follow Christ in a life of consecrated celibacy,

which I here profess,

initially for 3 years,

before you and God’s people.

I pray that I may receive grace to persevere in love and faithfulness.

**The Prayer of Consecration**

*Bishop* Loving Father, you have loved and redeemed us through your Son Jesus Christ. He is your Word, through whom all things were made.

Look with favour on this your servant Rachel, who has resolved to follow you in the holy state of celibacy.

You have inspired her to make this vow

and she now gives you her heart.

Lord, protect Rachel, that she may be strengthened by your blessing and consecration.

*Here the Bishop anoints Rachel*

Through the gift of your Holy Spirit,

give Rachel chastity with right judgement,

kindness with true wisdom,

gentleness with strength of character,

freedom with purity of heart.

Give her the gift of love

to love you above all others.

May her life deserve our praise,

without seeking to be praised.

May she give you glory by holiness of life.

Be yourself her glory, joy and whole desire.

Be her comfort in sorrow,

her wisdom in perplexity,

her protection in the midst of injustice,

her patience in adversity,

her riches in poverty,

her food in fasting,

her remedy in sickness.

She has chosen you above all things,

may she find all things in possessing you.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ,

your Son,

who lives and reigns with you

and the Holy Spirit,

one God, for ever and ever.

*All* **Amen.**

**The Giving of a Ring**

*Bishop*  Lord God, bless + and hallow this ring

as the outward sign of the vow

that Rachel has made this day.

*The Bishop gives the ring and says:*

Receive this ring;

and wear it as a sign of your consecration.

Be faithful to him who has called you to himself.

**Prayers of Intercession**

*The prayers are led by Christine Barnabas, a friend and consecrated celibate*

*Leader* O, to be a friend of God.

*All* **How sweet to be a friend of God.**

**THE LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT**

**The Peace**

*The Bishop introduces the Peace*

God is love

and those who live in love live in God

and God lives in them.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

*All*   **and also with you.**

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

**Hymn**

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven to earth come down;
Fix in us thy humble dwelling;
All thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation;
Enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit,
Into every troubled breast!
Let us all in Thee inherit;
Let us find Thy promised rest.
Take away our love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty to deliver,
Let us all Thy life receive;
Suddenly return and never,
Never more Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray and praise Thee without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish, then, Thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be.
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
'Til in heaven we take our place,
'Til we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Charles Wesley | William P. Rowlands

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**The Eucharistic Prayer**

The Lord is here.

*All*   **His Spirit is with us.**

Lift up your hearts.

*All*   **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*All*   **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

Blessed are you, Lord God,

our light and our salvation;

to you be glory and praise for ever.

From the beginning you have created all things

and all your works echo the silent music of your praise.

In the fullness of time you made us in your image,

the crown of all creation.

You give us breath and speech, that with angels and archangels

and all the powers of heaven

we may find a voice to sing your praise:

*All*    **Holy, holy, holy Lord,**

**God of power and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

How wonderful the work of your hands, O Lord.

As a mother tenderly gathers her children,

you embraced a people as your own.

When they turned away and rebelled

your love remained steadfast.

From them you raised up Jesus our Saviour, born of Mary,

to be the living bread,

in whom all our hungers are satisfied.

He offered his life for sinners,

and with a love stronger than death

he opened wide his arms on the cross.

On the night before he died,

he came to supper with his friends

and, taking bread, he gave you thanks.

He broke it and gave it to them, saying:

Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you;

do this in remembrance of me.

At the end of supper, taking the cup of wine,

he gave you thanks, and said:

Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,

which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Great is the mystery of faith:

*All***Christ has died:**

**Christ is risen:**

**Christ will come again.**

Father, we plead with confidence

his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross;

we remember his dying and rising in glory,

and we rejoice that he intercedes for us at your right hand.

Pour out your Holy Spirit as we bring before you

these gifts of your creation;

may they be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

As we eat and drink these holy things in your presence,

form us in the likeness of Christ,

and build us into a living temple to your glory.

Bring us at the last with all the saints

to the vision of that eternal splendour

for which you have created us;

through Jesus Christ, our Lord,

by whom, with whom, and in whom,

with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,

we worship you, Father almighty, in songs of everlasting praise:

*All*   **Blessing and honour and glory and power**

**be yours for ever and ever.**

**Amen.**

**The Lord’s Prayer**

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

*All* **Our Father in heaven,**

**hallowed be your name,**

**your kingdom come,**

**your will be done,**

**on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins**

**as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation**

**but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,**

**and the glory are yours**

**now and for ever.**

**Amen.**

**Breaking of the Bread**

*The Bishop breaks the consecrated bread.*

We break this bread

to share in the body of Christ.

*All*   **Though we are many, we are one body,**

**because we all share in one bread.**

**The Agnus Dei**

*All*   **Lamb of God,**

**you take away the sin of the world,**

**have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,**

**you take away the sin of the world,**

**have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,**

**you take away the sin of the world,**

**grant us peace.**

**Giving of Communion**

*The Bishop offers an invitation to Communion*

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ

which he gave for you,

and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink

in remembrance that he died for you,

and feed on him in your hearts

by faith with thanksgiving.

**Music during Communion**

I am broken at Your feet,
Like an alabaster jar.
Every piece of who I am,
Laid before Your majesty.

I will bow my life
At Your feet,
At Your feet.
My lips,
So lost for words,
Will kiss Your feet,
Kiss Your feet.

Oh the gravity of You,
Draws my soul unto its knees.
I will never be the same,
I am lost and found in You.

Rend Collective

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Lord You have my heart
And I will search for Yours
Jesus take my life and lead me on
Lord You have my heart
And I will search for Yours
Let me be to You a sacrifice

*And I will praise You Lord
And I will sing of love come down
And as You show Your face
We'll see Your glory here.*

Martin Smith

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**Post Communion**

*The Bishop prays*

Almighty God,

you have taught us through your Son

that love is the fulfilling of the law:

grant that we may love you with our whole heart

and our neighbours as ourselves;

through Jesus Christ our Lord

**Amen.**

**Prayer after Communion**

*All* **Almighty God,**

**we thank you for feeding us**

**with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.**

**Through him we offer you our souls and bodies**

**to be a living sacrifice.**

**Send us out**

**in the power of your Spirit**

**to live and work**

**to your praise and glory.**

**Amen.**

**Hymn**

Be Thou my Vision O Lord of my heart,
Naught be all else to me save that Thou art.
Thou my best thought by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my Wisdom and Thou my true Word,
I ever with Thee and Thou with me Lord.
Thou my great Father and I Thy true child.
Thou in me dwelling and I with Thee one.

Be Thou my breastplate my sword for the fight,
Thou my whole armour and Thou my true might.
Thou my soul's shelter and Thou my strong tower.
O raise Thou me heavenward great Power of my power.

Riches I heed not nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance now and always.
Thou and Thou only the first in my heart.
O Sovereign of heaven my treasure Thou art.

High King of heaven when victory’s won,
May I reach heaven's joys bright heaven's Sun.
Heart of my own heart whatever befall,
Still be Thou my Vision O Ruler of all.

Eleanor Henrietta Hull | Mary Elizabeth Byrne

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