

The Parish Church of St Faith, Great Crosby

*The* **Eucharist**  
*and Parade and Toy*  
**Service**  
*for The Feast of St Nicholas*



Nicholas was a fourth-century bishop of Myra in Asia Minor (southern Turkey) There are a number of well-known stories about him. Most of these came from a 9<sup>th</sup> century hagiography (biography of a Saint) and many of them concern his love and care for children, how he fed the hungry, healed the sick and cared for the oppressed. He saved three girls from a life of slavery by providing them with dowries and this led to the tradition of bearing gifts to children on his feast day, a custom that of course eventually moved in many places to the Christmas celebrations themselves. Nicholas is Patron Saint of, among other things, children, the sea, pawnbrokers, and Russia!

Selecting Nicholas or 'Boy Bishops' was a popular Medieval tradition throughout Western Europe. The young age at which Nicholas became a bishop, and his care for the 'least' once he did is the basis for the custom. It is partly a bit of fun but it has a serious point as well - a lesson in humility and recognition of the wisdom of the young and the 'least.' Cathedral choristers would choose one of their number to be the Boy or Nicholas Bishop. The boys' regular roles, such as acolyte or server, were filled by the cathedral canons. During his period in office, the "bishop" could declare holidays and treats as well as distribute sweets and gifts. The custom spread the length and breadth of England—first in cathedrals, collegiate churches and schools, later in many parish churches as well. The practice became more raucous and disorderly, until, by the time of the Reformation, there were calls to put a stop to the high jinks.

The custom of selecting a youthful Nicholas Bishop has been revived and updated in some English cathedrals and parishes – as we are doing this year at St Faith's. Now, as before, the lad, and of course, often now the lass, is fully outfitted as a bishop, with cope and mitre and crozier. The words of the Magnificat, "He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly," form part of the ceremony, as the Child Bishop takes the Bishop's seat; the adults then takes a lower place. In Salisbury and Hereford cathedrals, the installed Boy Bishop preaches a sermon, leads the prayers, and asks for God's blessing on the people. The ceremony we are using is adapted from the one used in Hereford.

# *The Gathering*

## *Hymn*

+In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

## *Bidding Prayer:*

My brothers and sisters, as we continue to walk through this season of Advent, let us in this holy season reflect on the coming of Christ who brings light to the world. Let us leave behind the darkness of sin, walk in the light that shines on our path, and renew in ourselves the hope of glory to which he calls us.

The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

**and also with you.**

## *Prayers of Penitence*

### *and Lighting of the Second Candle on the Advent Wreath*

Jesus is the Good Shepherd:  
let us call to mind the times  
when we have failed to hear his voice  
and not followed where he has led.

## *Kyrie Confession*

Lord Jesus, you call by name those who are yours:

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you lead us in the right paths  
for your name's sake:  
Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you are the door of the sheepfold;  
those who enter by you will be saved:  
Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

*Absolution*

Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom  
that cannot be destroyed, +forgive you your sins, open your  
eyes to God's truth, strengthen you to do God's will and give  
you the joy of his kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

*The Second candle on the Advent wreath is lit.*

**Lord Jesus, light of the world,  
the prophets said you would bring peace  
and save your people in trouble.  
Give peace in our hearts this Christmas  
and show all the world God's love. Amen.**

*The Collect:*

Almighty Father, lover of souls,  
who chose your servant Nicholas  
to be a bishop in the Church,  
that he might give freely out of the treasures of your grace:  
make us mindful of the needs of others  
and, as we have received, so teach us also to give;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## *The Liturgy of the Word*

*All sit.*

### *The Old Testament Reading*

A reading from the prophecy of Isaiah. (Isaiah 61.1-3)

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion -- to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.

*At the end of the Reading:*

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*All stand for the Gospel*

Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the good shepherd:

I know my own and my own know me. *John 10.14*

**Alleluia.**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark  
(Mark 10.13-16)

People were bringing little children to Jesus in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it." And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

*At the end of the Gospel:*

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Inauguration of the Child Bishop*

Blessed are they who put their trust in the Lord.

*N.*, you have been chosen to serve in the office of Child Bishop of this church of St Faith, Great Crosby in Waterloo, in the Diocese of Liverpool. Will you be faithful and keep the promises that were made for you in Holy Baptism?

*The Child Bishop responds:*

*I will: the Lord being my helper.*

Will you pray regularly for all who need your prayers?

*I will: the Lord being my helper.*

People of God, is it your wish that *N* be consecrated as 'Bishop of Waterloo'?

*All respond: It is.*

*The Child Bishop kneels and offers this collect*  
Almighty God, by whose grace alone  
we are accepted and called to your service:  
strengthen us by your Holy Spirit  
and make us worthy of our calling;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Blessing of the Boy Bishop*

God the Holy Trinity make you strong in faith and love,  
defend you on every side, and guide you in truth and peace;  
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the  
Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.  
**Amen.**

*The Child Bishop stands and receives the Bishop's pastoral staff,  
then faces the congregation*

*Presentation*

Brothers and sisters, I present to you N., duly inaugurated as  
Bishop of Waterloo for the duration of the Christmas Tree  
Festival.

*The congregation greets the Child Bishop with applause*

*All sing: Magnificat (or the Choir may sing a Magnificat), during  
which the 'Bishop of Waterloo' is led to the Bishop's throne, and  
sits down at the words 'he has put down the mighty from their  
throne.'*

**With Mary let my soul rejoice,  
and praise God's holy name -  
his saving love from first to last,  
from age to age the same!**

**How strong his arm, how great his power!  
the proud he will disown;  
the meek and humble he exalts  
to share his glorious throne.**

**The rich our God will send away  
and feed the hungry poor;  
the arms of love remain outstretched  
at mercy's open door.**

**So shall God's promise be fulfilled,  
to Israel firmly made:  
a child is born, a Son is given  
whose crown will never fade.**

**All glory to the Father, Son  
and Spirit now proclaim;  
with Mary let the world rejoice  
and praise God's holy name!**

*The 'Bishop of Waterloo,' as is the custom at Nicholastide, delivers  
a short sermon.*

*The Child Bishop asks God's blessing for the congregation:*

Jesus said to his disciples,

'Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child shall never enter it.'

Our help is in the name of the Lord:

**who has made heaven and earth.**

Blessed be the name of the Lord:

**now and for ever. Amen.**

May almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
bless, preserve and keep us from this day forward and for  
evermore.

**Amen.**

*The Prayers*

People of God: prepare!

God, above all, maker of all, is one with us in the Christ child.

Maranatha! **Come, Lord Jesus!**

God, the mighty God,  
bends down in love to earth.

Maranatha! **Come, Lord Jesus!**

God with us, God beside us,  
comes soon to the world he has made.

**Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!**

We are God's children,  
We seek the coming Christ.

Maranatha! **Come, Lord Jesus!**

See, I am coming soon!

**Amen, come Lord Jesus.**

**May the Lord when he comes  
find us watching and waiting. Amen.**

*The Liturgy of the Sacrament*

*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 to guide our feet into the way of peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

*Offertory hymn*

*Preparation of the Table*

As this bread was scattered and then gathered and made one, so may your church be gathered into your kingdom.

**Glory to you, O God forever.**

*The Eucharistic Prayer*

The Lord be with you

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

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

Lord of all life, you created the universe,  
where all living things reflect your glory.  
You give us this great and beautiful earth,

to discover and to cherish.

And now we give you thanks,  
because your Son, our Lord, was awaited by the prophets,  
announced by an angel, conceived by a virgin,  
and proclaimed at last to men and women of every age.

You give us happy times and things to celebrate.

In these we taste your kingdom,  
a feast for all your children.

You made us all, each wonderfully different,  
to join with the angels and sing your praise:

**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.**

We thank you, loving Father, because, when we turned away, you sent Jesus, your Son. He gave his life for us on the cross and shows us the way to live.

Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine may be for us Christ's body and his blood.

On the night before he died, when darkness had fallen, Jesus took bread. He gave thanks, broke it, and shared it with his disciples, saying:

'This is my body, given for you.  
Do this to remember me.'

After they had eaten, he took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and shared it with his disciples, saying:

'This is my blood, poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins.'

So Father, with this bread and this cup we celebrate his love, his death, his risen life.

As you feed us with these gifts, send your Holy Spirit, and change us more and more to be like Jesus our Saviour.

Help us, Father, to love one another, as we look forward to that day when suffering is ended, and all creation is gathered in your loving arms.

And now with Our Blessed Lady, St Faith, St Nicholas and all your saints we give you glory, through Jesus Christ, in the strength of the Spirit, today and for ever. **Amen.**

*The Lord's Prayer*

As we wait in joyful expectation for the coming of his kingdom, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

**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.**

*Agnus Dei*

*All say or sing:*

**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 your peace.**

*Invitation to Communion*

God's holy gifts for God's holy people.

**Jesus Christ is holy,  
Jesus Christ is Lord,  
To the glory of God the Father.**

*At the distribution of communion, the minister says to each communicant:*

The Body of Christ

The Blood of Christ                      *and each responds: **Amen.***

*After Communion, silence is kept and the Angelus is rung.*

*Prayer After Communion*

God, shepherd of your people,  
whose servant Nicholas revealed the loving service of Christ  
in his ministry as a pastor of your people:  
by this Eucharist in which we share  
awaken within us the love of Christ  
and keep us faithful to our Christian calling;  
through him who laid down his life for us,  
but is alive and reigns with you, now and for ever. **Amen.**

*Our offerings of toys are brought forward. The President, Servers  
and 'Bishop of Waterloo' receive them.*

*These will be distributed in Sefton to children and teenagers who  
are in conditions of economic hardship.*

*Notices may be given.*

## *The Dismissal*

### *Hymn*

#### *Blessing*

Christ the good shepherd,  
who laid down his life for the sheep,  
draw you and all who hear his voice  
to be one flock within one fold;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.

### *Acclamation*

Jesus says: I am the good shepherd.

**The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.**

Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.

**The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.**

I know my sheep and call them by name.

**The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.**

Go in the peace of Christ.

**Thanks be to God.**

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