

A SERVICE OF THE WORD

MARKING THE CENTENARY OF THE END OF THE CIVIL WAR IN IRELAND

Introduction

The eleven-month Irish Civil War ended on 24 May 1923. As few Protestants had been involved in the conflict as combatants the biggest impact of the conflict on members of the Church of Ireland concerned assaults on their persons and property. Compensation claims submitted subsequently to the Free State and British governments showed that the number of Protestants among victims in these categories was disproportionately higher. This was particularly visible in the cases of the number of ‘big houses’ damaged or destroyed in arson attacks during the conflict. Approximately 300 such houses were damaged or destroyed between 1920 and 1923, two-thirds during the Civil War.

One such residence was Cappoquin House in County Waterford, the home of Sir John Keane, targeted because of Keane’s appointment as a member of the new Irish Free State Senate. Keane was among those who chose to rebuild their homes and commit to life in the new Free State. He served in the Free State Senate until its abolition in 1934 and in Seanad Éireann between 1938 and his retirement in 1948, making him one of the longest serving Church of Ireland members of the Oireachtas in the early years of the State.

Keane’s decision to remain in Ireland reflected the fact that, once the Civil War ended, life in independent Ireland resorted to a largely peaceful state after nearly ten years of disruption during various armed conflicts. The historian R.B. McDowell noted that, apart from the constitutional and political situation, ‘there were remarkably few drastic changes’ to the overall lives of Protestants, noting the retention of Protestant influence in institutions such as Trinity College and *The Irish Times*.

While peace prevailed after 1923, the toll taken by the years on conflict became clear when the statistics for religion and birthplace from the 1926 Irish Free State census were published in 1929. This showed a decline of 34 per cent in the ‘Protestant Episcopalian’ (largely Church of Ireland) population of the twenty-six counties of the Free State since the previous census in 1911. In spite of this the resilience of the Church of Ireland minority to adapt to life in the changed circumstances of the 1920s was epitomised by the Venerable Henry J. Johnson, Archdeacon of Ardagh, in his address for the annual report of the Ardagh Synod in 1925: ‘... despite all the changes—social and political—which have fallen upon our country in the past years or may befall us in the future we have faith enough in the Providence of Almighty God to believe that our Church will never perish out of this land unless she deserves to do so’.

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Gathering as God's People

Greeting

We meet in the presence of God who knows our needs, hears our cries, feels our pain, and heals our wounds.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble. *Psalm 46.1*

Appropriate words of welcome and introduction may be said.

Bidding Prayer

Almighty God,
you call us into a common fellowship of solidarity and peace;
draw nearer to us as we commemorate the centenary of the end of the Civil War.
As we reflect on the horrors of conflict and division,
may you move us always to work for peace and justice in this country and beyond
and enable us to heal troubled memories and divisions of the past;
this we ask through the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A hymn may be sung

Penitence

Christ our passover lamb has been sacrificed for us.

Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all malice and evil
and confessing our sins with a sincere and true heart. *1 Corinthians 5: 7, 8*

or

Let us come to the Lord, who is full of compassion, and acknowledge our transgressions in penitence and faith.

Lord God,
you sent your Son to reconcile us to yourself and to one another.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus,
you heal the wounds of sin and division.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Holy Spirit,
through you we put to death the sins of the body and live.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

*Other short penitential sentences may be inserted between the petitions of the Kyries.
The Beatitudes (BCP pages 223-224) may also be used*

If a priest is officiating he/she pronounces this absolution:

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

If no priest is present the following is said:

May the Father
forgive us and strengthen us
to reject violence and division
and to obey his call to healing and peace. **Amen.**

Ministry of the Word

At least one of the readings below must be used.

If only one reading is used it must be from the New Testament.

First Reading

Micah 4: 1-4, James 3: 13-18, Ephesians 2: 13-22, or 1 John 4: 16b-21

Psalm

Psalm 47, 100, 121, or 130

Second Reading

Matthew 5: 1-12, Matthew 5: 38-48 or John 15: 9-17

The Sermon

A hymn may be sung

Responding

Affirmation of Faith

Let us confess the faith of the Church.

**We believe in God the Father,
who made the world.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ, his Son,
who redeemed humankind.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God.**

Or

Let us declare our faith in God:

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

The Apostles' Creed or Nicene Creed may also be used.

Prayers of Intercession

Words in italics are suggestions, to be used, adapted, or added to, as necessary.

Almighty God, you promised through your Son Jesus Christ to hear the prayers of those who ask in faith:

We pray for your Church in all the world, for its unity and mission, *for this diocese and for N. our bishop* and for all faith leaders in this land.

Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

We pray that we may continually work for peace

and embody God's ministry of reconciliation in all that we do and say.

Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

We pray for those who help to demolish walls of mistrust and prejudice and seek to heal the wounds of past conflicts.

Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

We pray for all who stand alongside victims of hatred and sectarianism, that we may work unceasingly for human rights, equality and justice on this island and beyond.

Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

We pray for all who continue to carry the hurts of the past, especially the scars left behind as a result of civil war.

Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

We pray for historians, researchers and all who help us to interpret our past, that they may have wisdom and right judgement and that their work may bring healing and peace.

Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

We pray that the leaders of this and of every nation may be given the courage to choose good and reject evil in accordance with your will.

Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

We pray for all who display courage in upholding justice and in preserving peace throughout the world.

Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

We pray for our fellow countrymen and women who work for the resolution of conflict in our society and beyond.

Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

We pray for the sick, suffering and bereaved. We especially remember those who still bear the physical and psychological scars of the past.

Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

We pray for all who bear the wounds of conflicts past and present, for the reconciling of memories and for the healing of wounded history.

Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

We remember all who lost their lives in the Civil War. We pray that as we remember, we may be mindful of your reconciling love, brought to perfection in the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Risen Lord.

Silence

Grant that we may share with them the joys of your eternal kingdom.

Lord in your mercy.

Hear our prayer.

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

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, so we pray:

**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.**

or

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to say:

**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.**

Going Out As God's People

Concluding Prayer

Heavenly Father,
as we mark the centenary of the end of the Civil War in Ireland,
grant to us a true sense of what it is to be your people in the world.
We ask you to so guard and guide all who reflect on the past,
all who lead us in the present,
and all who shape our future,
that we may model our society on the image of Christ and to his glory,
in whom we trust and through whom we pray. **Amen.**

Blessing

God grant to the living, grace,
to the departed, rest,
to the Church and to the nations, peace and concord;
and the blessing...

Dismissal

The Lord bless us and protect us,
and share in abundance of life in his Name. Amen.

PROPER FOR USE AT A CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION MARKING THE CENTENARY OF THE END OF THE CIVIL WAR IN IRELAND

Introduction to Penitence

Christ our passover lamb has been sacrificed for us.
Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all malice and evil
and confessing our sins with a sincere and true heart. *1 Corinthians 5: 7,8*

or

Let us come to the Lord, who is full of compassion, and acknowledge our transgressions in penitence and faith.

The Peace

Jesus said:
Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.
Not as the world gives do I give to you.
Do not let your hearts be troubled,
neither let them be afraid. *John 14: 27*

The Preparation of the Table

Lord, in these gifts of bread and wine
may your healing presence come upon us,
and draw us closer to you in faith and hope. **Amen.**

Preface

And now we give you thanks
because through your Son Jesus Christ
you have reconciled the world to yourself,
pouring out your life-giving peace and healing power
upon the nations of the world,
and calling us into a new relationship with you and one another.

Post Communion Prayer

God of peace,
whose Son Jesus Christ proclaimed the kingdom
and restored the broken to wholeness of life:
Look with compassion on the anguish of the world,
and by your healing power
make whole both people and nations;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Blessing

May the God of peace,
who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ,
that great shepherd of the sheep,
comfort and assure you of his love
in this world and the next;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among *you* and remain with *you* always. **Amen.**

or

The peace of God,
which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God.
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among *you* and remain with *you* always. **Amen.**

Notes

1. The material in this service is provided as a resource for those leading worship around the time of the centenary of the end of the Civil War in Ireland. The service may be used as a stand-alone act of worship or material from it may be used at other suitable places in other services provided in the Book of Common Prayer, or at local commemorative events.
2. Propers for a celebration of Holy Communion are included at the end of this booklet.
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