

A Service of Evening Prayer
Saint Aidan's Episcopal Church
Commemoration of the Ordination of Florence Li Tim-Oi (transferred)
Wednesday, January 25, 2023

Opening Sentence

Officiant Light and Peace in Jesus Christ our Savior.

All ***Thanks be to God.***

Officiant

You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to God. -Matthew 5:14-16

Officiant

Let us pray.

All

Gracious God, we give you thanks for surrounding us, as daylight fades, with the brightness of the vesper light; and we implore you of your great mercy that, as you enfold us with the radiance of this light, so you would shine into our hearts the brightness of your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Psalm 116:1-2

Antiphon I will lift up the cup of salvation and call upon the Name of my God. Hallelujah.

- 1 I love you, O God, because you have heard the voice of my supplication,*
because you have inclined your ear to me whenever I called upon you.
- 2 The cords of death entangled me; the grip of the grave took hold of me;*
I came to grief and sorrow.

Antiphon I will lift up the cup of salvation and call upon the Name of my God. Hallelujah

First Reading

Lector: A reading from Much Beloved Daughter.

In 1948, Li Tim Oi was given an opportunity to leave her own parochial concerns and see something of the wider world. She went as the only woman in a party of eight Chinese clergy led by Bishop Halward to the United States of America.

‘I organized the local people to run the church in my absence, and the Archdeacon visited from time to time to celebrate Holy Communion. I was away for eight months.’

Bishop Hall had decided to send a small party from the diocese for two reasons. First, many of the clergy, including Li Tim Oi, needed a rest after the rigors of war. Secondly, Bishop Hall saw political trouble ahead in China and wanted his clergy to be rested ready to deal with the trials ahead and to have a wider view of the world, so as to be able to put the political changes in China into a wider perspective.

‘Bishop Hall knew that one day the liberation would arrive. He took the chance to send us to have a holiday, but also to explore new ideas we might be able to adapt for use in a new China.’

... The clergy traveling with Li Tim Oi well knew that she was an ordained priest, but before leaving for America Li Tim Oi was given strict instructions by Bishop Halward to keep this fact hidden.

'He told me, you must not tell anyone you are an ordained priest and you must not preach or make any public statements.' It was the year of the Lambeth Conference, and her ordination was very much a talking point in Church circles.

'I was told to keep quiet,' Li Tim Oi remembers, and keeping true to her vows as a priest she obeyed her bishop. 'But why,' she admits having asked herself, 'am I so peculiar? Why should it be so strange that I am a priest and a woman?'

although she fully intended to keep her vow of obedience, it was impossible. As soon as the ship docked at San Francisco, after the Pacific crossing, Li Tim Oi Was met by one of her old teachers, the Rev. Tam Chao Tin.

'He met me at the quayside.' "Li Tim Oi," he said, "this coming Sunday we have arranged for you to preach at our church." I was allowed to accept the invitation.'

Lector Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

All ***Thanks be to God.***

Canticle

Colossians 3:13; 12-16

***Christ has been raised and is seated at the right hand of God; *
therefore set your mind on things that are above,***

***not on things that are on earth, for you have died, *
and your life is hid with Christ in God.***

***As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, *
clothe yourselves with compassion and kindness.***

***Bear with one another, and as God has forgiven you, *
so you also must forgive.***

***Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, *
and with gratitude in your hearts,
sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.***

***Above all, clothe yourselves with love, *
which binds everything together in perfect harmony.***

Second Reading

Reader A reading from the Gospel of Luke (10:1-9).

After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. He said to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!" And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you."

Officiant Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Shared Reflection

The Magnificat

*Christ has given us the ministry of reconciliation; *
we come therefore as ambassadors of Christ. Alleluia.*

*My soul proclaims your greatness, O God;
my spirit rejoices in you, my Savior, *
for you have looked with favor on your lowly servant.*

*From this day all generations will call me blessed; *
you, the Almighty, have done great things for me,
and holy is your Name.*

*You have mercy on those who fear you *
from generation to generation.*

*You, O God, have shown strength with your arm, *
and scattered the proud in their conceit,*

*Casting down the mighty from their thrones *
And lifting up the lowly.*

*You have filled the hungry with good things *
and sent the rich away empty.*

*You have come to the help of your servant Israel, *
for you have remembered your promise of mercy,*

*The promise made to our forebears, *
to Abraham, Sara and their children forever.*

*Glory to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God, *
as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.*

Antiphon *Christ has given us the ministry of reconciliation; *
we come therefore as ambassadors of Christ. Alleluia.*

The Prayers

Officiant God be with you.

People **And also with you.**

Officiant Let us pray.

**God in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.**

***Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.***

Suffrages

- V. Show us your mercy, O God;
R. ***And grant us your salvation.***
V. Clothe your ministers with righteousness;
R. ***Let your people sing with joy.***
V. Give peace, O God, in all the world;
R. ***For only in you can we live in safety.***
V. O God, keep this nation under your care;
R. ***And guide us in the way of justice and truth.***
V. Let your way be known upon earth;
R. ***Your saving health among all nations.***
V. Let not the needy, O God, be forgotten;
R. ***Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.***
V. Create in us clean hearts, O God;
R. ***And sustain us by your Holy Spirit.***

The Officiant invites additional prayers, silently or aloud.

Collects

Officiant

Gracious God, we thank you for calling Florence Li Tim-Oi, whose name means much-beloved daughter, to be the first woman to exercise the office of a priest in our Communion; By the grace of your Spirit inspire us to follow her example, serving your people with patience and happiness all our days, and witnessing in every circumstance to our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the same Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. ***Amen.***

Keep watch, dear God, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, O Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. ***Amen.***

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O God, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. ***Amen.***

Officiant Let us bless God.
People ***Thanks be to God.***

Officiant

The grace of our Savior Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. ***Amen.***

Sources

- This evening prayer service is adapted from Vespers in the *Saint Helena Breviary* (Church Publishing, 2006); Evening Prayer in *Enriching Our Worship I* (New York: Church Publishing, 1998); and the *Book of Common Prayer* (Church Publishing, 1979).
- The Psalm translation is from *The CSF Office Book*.
- The first reading is from *Much Beloved Daughter* by Florence Li Tim Oi with Ted Harrison, (London, UK: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1985), 61-62.
- The readings appointed for today can be found at http://www.satucket.com/lectionary/Li_Tim-Oi.htm
- The Collect for Florence Li Tim-Oi, first woman priest in the Anglian Communion, 1944, is slightly adapted by the Sisters of St. Helena in *The St. Helena Breviary* (New York: Church Publishing, 2006), 279.