



## The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity: 30<sup>th</sup> August

Take some time to be still, perhaps light a candle and offer your own prayer to God. You may find the following words helpful.

Father God, help us to come to you this morning with open and thankful hearts. Fill us with the joy and peace that comes with knowing you. Be with us as we walk in your light, rejoice in your love and reflect your glory.

**Amen**

### Hymn 382: Let all the World

#### Welcome

The Lord be with you,  
**and also with you**

#### Prayer of Preparation

**Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord.**

**Amen**

#### Prayer of Confession

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: The first commandment is this: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbour as yourself". There is no other commandment greater than these. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

**Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
we have sinned against you  
and against our neighbour**

in thought and word and deed,  
through negligence, through weakness,  
through our own deliberate fault.  
**We are truly sorry**  
**and repent of all our sins.**  
**For the sake of your son Jesus Christ,**  
**who died for us,**  
**forgive us all that is past**  
**and grant that we may serve you in newness of life**  
**to the glory of your name.**  
**Amen**

Lord have mercy  
**Lord have mercy**  
Christ have mercy  
**Christ have mercy**  
Lord have mercy  
**Lord have mercy**

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. **Amen**

## **Gloria**

**Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.**  
**Amen.**

## **Collect**

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray and to give more than either we desire or deserve: pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask but through the merits and mediation of 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**

## **Old Testament Reading: Jeremiah 15:15-21**

O LORD, you know; remember me and visit me, and bring down retribution for me on my persecutors. In your forbearance do not take me away; know that on your account I suffer insult. Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I am called by your name, O LORD, God of hosts. I did not sit in the company of

merrymakers, nor did I rejoice; under the weight of your hand I sat alone, for you had filled me with indignation. Why is my pain unceasing, my wound incurable, refusing to be healed?

Truly, you are to me like a deceitful brook, like waters that fail. Therefore, thus says the LORD: If you turn back, I will take you back, and you shall stand before me. If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless, you shall serve as my mouth. It is they who will turn to you, not you who will turn to them. And I will make you to this people a fortified wall of bronze; they will fight against you, but they shall not prevail over you, for I am with you to save you and deliver you, says the LORD. I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked, and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Hymn 161: Father hear the prayer we offer

### Gospel Reading: Matthew 16:21-end

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

**Glory to you, O Lord**

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.' But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.' Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? 'For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ**

### Sermon: Rosemary Feuell

“From that time on” ... “From now on” . words from the film “The Greatest Showman” – these words announce a new episode, or the beginning of new efforts. We expect such words to usher in a time of plain sailing, easy progress. For Simon Peter it might well have seemed that way: he had played his part, he'd got it right with his great confession: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” He believed he knew what to expect now, with Christ's kingdom unfolding and his role in it defined to him before his very eyes and ears. It's simple then to suppose we have the map, see far into the promising new situation – but if the person we intend following is indeed the Messiah, Son of God, awaited through long centuries, our certainties may melt rapidly into

uncertainties, our inspiration into ashes, as new awareness invades our ears. This was Peter's experience.



Peter knew the Old Testament prophets and how Jeremiah, say, thought he understood God's message to the nation but continued confused, frustrated, anguished... : "Why is my pain unceasing, my wound incurable...?" Jeremiah cries. (Jeremiah 15: 18). Peter too would quickly have plunged back into misery as Jesus dwelt on His coming suffering and dying among the powers away in Jerusalem. Jesus *does* mention His resurrection here, but Peter seems not to notice. He cannot absorb the message when Jesus foretells His Passion, and pointedly reprimands Jesus as if He'd got it wrong, or was drifting off course and he, Peter, needed to be ready to protect Him: "Lord! This must never happen to you!" (Matthew 16: 22)

What a reversal: Peter, apparently spiritual, insightful, now stunned to hear Jesus call him "Satan", and barrier to God's ways, without diplomacy or warning! Surely he had very much adopted the divine standpoint, not the human, glimpsing the Saviour in all His authenticity. He missed the resurrection reference, but also seemingly forgets that even his bold flash of insight was a gift from God, not his own understanding or desire, as maybe here, to promote, and protect, the One he had come to love so much.

Now, though, it is the whole disciple band who are warned about understanding their chosen life with Jesus too lightly. Jesus emphasises the harshness of following, self-denial, laying down your own will and longings. There is a sense of the final curtain falling as Jesus says, "... For the Son of Man is to come with his angels .. and will repay everyone for what has been done." (Matthew 16: 28) .. and they learn His new kingdom will come before they all die – both certainties and uncertainties appearing now, as none of them know how these things will occur, feel, or impact on them..

From now on this future is full of paradox:

Enjoying Jesus .. means... self-denying;

being safe now, or saved later... means loss;

gaining the world.. sounds like ... opening yourself to rejection and death...

and still more unknowns are suggested...

Now Jesus' words actually move between two different senses of life, the present with its insecurities; and the future with judgement and rewards, losses and gains. Jesus had already cautioned these very disciples about losing and gaining life, loving themselves, expecting peace but missing the sword of conflict at every turn. They still did not expect that tension and struggle. Clearly too they miss the good news of Christ's imminent kingdom – and the future righting of wrongs in the glory of the Father. The chapter finishes with almost abrupt silence. There is nothing to say unless you dare admit you have taken all this on board.

Peter does not yet see the links between human and divine action/reaction:

He confessed Christ... now he is given the kingdom's keys;

He took his mind off Christ's real purpose.. now he is lost in worry and stratagems;

If he holds himself back, following Christ's allotted way, he will find all he desires;.

If he loses all his being in Christ, he will certainly finish fulfilled;  
If he just waits in faith, this Messiah he affirmed will come into His own.

Jeremiah glimpses this dynamic in words from God:

“If you turn back, I will take you back. If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless, you shall serve as my mouth. ... they shall not prevail over you; for I am with you to save you and deliver you.”  
(Jeremiah 15: 19, 20b)

Happily we know that in later weeks/months Jesus accepted every step of Peter's towards Him, and forgave every step leading away, making him into a spokesman of precious truths of the kingdom, a kind of mouthpiece for the disciples and for those wondering about becoming disciples. Think of his eloquent words on the day of Pentecost, to those far off and those who were near.. and at Joppa by the sea, defending the Gentiles' right to know Jesus fully. (Acts 2: 39 & 10:34)

In today's passage Peter is still stunned, analysing, wondering. But he is learning the secret of trusting the invisible, as Moses did – for, though Jesus Himself could be *seen*, it took far more, far longer, to perceive His true position and powers – to realise how, as the image of the invisible God, all things were already holding together, progressing in Him.. and that the suffering of the Cross was not to be a disaster, but a way to “reconcile to himself all things .. on earth and in heaven “ making peace – never defeat – by that blood of the Cross. (Colossians 1: 15, 20)

However, Peter is blundering a bit here, awkward till his understanding grows.. This is very like us, puzzled, needing to know, getting our perspectives wrong.. until discovering we are with this Incomparable Friend en route to sharing His kingdom and gaining true self, not exactly as reward, but as consequence of joining in.

Desperate prayer and pleading can be seen as unclenching a clenched fist. It's as if Peter bangs down his fist here – “I'm not having that, Jesus” but is then gently shown where they are all going, far beyond that Cross. He didn't see the unwritten story then.. but the early Church learned it, and churches of subsequent centuries. Peter, puzzled, protesting; Jesus, certain of His own journey and of Peter's transformation; Peter reprovved, worried, letting go, till the new realities come and what Saviour and prophets foretold takes shape. It is an older Peter who tells us that all

prophecies were confirmed and confusing darkness was only “until the day dawns and the morning star rises in our hearts.” (2 Peter 1:19)  
All this incomprehension, these times of missing the meaning, all become tamed memories as Jesus' kingdom comes and the message of invisible, everlasting love can go out - amid some opposition – with great joy.



## Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## **Prayers**

Father of all, we thank you for the wonder of your creation, with its magnificence and amazing complexity. Help us to be better stewards of this world so that all may benefit from what you have provided – resources, beauty, space.

Lord in your mercy

### **Hear our prayer**

We ask for wisdom and integrity for the leaders of nations. May those who govern do so with compassion and take responsibility for the ways their decisions affect others. We lift up those who are affected by wars, violence, storms and famine. Help us also to play our part in fostering peace and justice, overcoming past hurts with your forgiveness, and working to reduce discrimination and hatred through your love.

Lord in your mercy

### **Hear our prayer**

We pray for children as they return to schools and colleges this week – may they feel safe and cared for as they adapt to different routines and changes to their surroundings. And we ask for your guidance for their teachers and school staff as they reassure and try to settle those who are anxious. We thank you for their hard work planning and preparing for a return to school. Please watch over our children and those who care for them.

Lord in your mercy

### **Hear our prayer**

God of Grace, we ask that you draw near to all who are lonely, afraid, or unwell. We pray for those who are too ill or scared to go out or meet with friends. Draw close to them, and help us as a church community to reach out, providing companionship and support. We thank you for all those who work so hard to provide care to those in need – please strengthen them and sustain them. We pray particularly for Mary Hunt and all those waiting for tests and treatment at this time.

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

We lift up to you all who mourn – may your presence be real to them even in the darkest moments, may they know your comforting arms around them. We pray particularly for Agnes Stamper and her family; and for the family and friends of Anthea Pritchard.

Lord in your mercy

**Hear our prayer**

Help us this week to see things with your priorities. Give us patience and insight when we encounter difficult situations. And help us to hold firm to your promises – knowing that you understand, remember us and care for us wherever we are and whatever circumstances we find ourselves in.

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

**The Peace:**

Take a moment and offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for each other and our church family church community. Maybe call or text someone who would enjoy sharing the peace with you.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy, that you may be kept safe and blameless in spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**And also with you.**

**Hymn 333: It is a thing most wonderful**

**Lord's Prayer**

**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.**

**Hymn 420: Lord thy word abideth**

**Remembering the Lord's Supper:**

Take a moment to remember the final meal that Jesus shared with his disciples. As we think about this meal - with the washing of feet and bread and wine shared with friends - we remember Jesus' offering of himself on the cross. We rejoice in his resurrection from the dead and look

forward to the coming of God's Kingdom. While we cannot receive Christ in the sacraments in the usual way, we can be the presence of Christ in our homes and communities and we can be a praying presence wherever we are.

### **Hymn 314: Immortal invisible**

#### **Closing Prayer:**

Lord God, we thank you for this time of worship; may your love and peace remain with us in the coming days. Be with us in all that we will think, say and do so that our lives may reflect your glory. We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord  
**In the name of Christ. Amen**

**If you have any prayer or pastoral needs, please don't hesitate to contact**  
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