

Our Sunday Service Together

August 27th 2023

12th Sunday after Trinity



An Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
one God, who was, and who is, and who is to come, the Almighty.

Alleluia

Preparation

All: This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
Through the brokenness of Christ, we become one body
as one body we now gather in the name of Christ to offer our praise and thanksgiving, to receive God's
holy word, to pray for the needs of the world,
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins, that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

Our Confession

Let us come to the light of Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

All: Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord, we come to you in sorrow for our sins, and confess to
you our weakness and unbelief.

We have lived by our own strength, and not by the power of your resurrection.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived by the light of our own eyes, as faithless and not believing.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived for this world alone, and doubted our home in heaven.
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

Be still for a moment in confession and in receiving God's Grace in Christ

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

The opening prayer

All: The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept.

All: As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love for you; now and for ever. Amen.

The Psalmody 138

I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart;
before the gods will I sing praise to you.

I will bow down towards your holy temple and praise your name,
because of your love and faithfulness; for you have glorified your name and your word above all things.
In the day that I called to you, you answered me; you put new strength in my soul.

All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord, for they have heard the words of your mouth.

They shall sing of the ways of the Lord, that great is the glory of the Lord.

Though the Lord be high, he watches over the lowly; as for the proud, he regards them from afar.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you will preserve me;

you will stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies; your right hand will save me.

The Lord shall make good his purpose for me; your loving-kindness, O Lord, endures for ever;
forsake not the work of your hands.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Scripture Reading Romans 12.1-8

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

At the end of the reading we say:

All: This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Gloria

All: 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.

The Gospel Matthew 16.13-20

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.' Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

at the end of the reading we say:

All: This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

A Reflection for the day *Revd John Webb writes:*

The last couple of weeks have been an anxious time for our young people (and their grandparents!) as they receive their exam results. After long years of study, they are now getting A level and GCSE results and there have been lots of comments on the media with pictures of delighted or distressed youngsters. These results are important because they could determine what they do next and even for the rest of their lives.

In our Gospel reading the disciples have come to their time of assessment. They have been with Jesus for several years, listening to his teaching and watching him at work. But opposition is growing and he knows that his time with the disciples is limited. So it seems that he wants to know if they have understood who he is and what he stands for – it is their exam time.

We are specifically told that they have moved out of Galilee and into Caesarea Philippi. That relocation is significant for several reasons. Firstly, because it is non-Jewish, gentile territory where Jesus won't be recognised and he can concentrate on the disciples without the pressure of the crowds. Secondly, it seems that Caesarea Philippi is one of those places where generations of people have felt a closeness to God without knowing how to express it.

So Jesus sets the disciples a test to see how much of his teaching they have understood. There is only one question and on their answer will depend the whole future of his mission. It is 'Who do people say I am?'. Their immediate response is that people have been speculating that he is one of the great leaders of the faith come back again; John the Baptist, Elijah or perhaps Jeremiah. But Jesus is not satisfied with that answer and challenges them directly 'But who do you say that I am?'. To which Peter responds with the dramatic reply 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God'. And that is what Jesus is looking for and is worth an A*.

With those words Peter is the first person to acknowledge that Jesus is not just the return of one of the great leaders of the faith – he is something special – he is the hoped for Messiah. And for this he gets the famous response. 'You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church.' It is as if Jesus breaths a great sigh of relief in the knowledge that his disciples have recognised him for who he is and that the future of the faith is safe in their hands. Jesus praised him for saying this but all the indications are that although Peter somehow knew this to be the case neither he nor the other apostles really understood what it meant.

Right up to the crucifixion they seemed to expect some divine intervention to make Jesus a powerful leader in the image of his ancestor David, to purge the temple, give their nation victory over Rome, and bring justice and peace throughout the world. This was an extremely dangerous thing to suggest because it was treason not just against Herod, but also against Caesar. Indeed, that was the very charge on which Jesus was crucified.

It was only after Easter that they began to realise that it was by sharing the totality of humanity, by sharing the suffering of outcasts and sinners by his terrible sacrifice that he could fully show the depth of God's compassion for us all.

We are challenged to face the same question 'Who am I'? Our answer to this will ultimately affect the whole of our lives. Can we answer that he is the Messiah the Son of God? Can we recognise that he has come to build a new temple, and a new Jerusalem, not in stone, but in a community consisting of all those who accept him as God's Son – starting with Peter and the apostles and continuing through the ages to us. Jesus is still asking each of us the same question 'Who do you say that I am?' and our response can be life changing for us as it was for Peter.

The Creed

All: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.

Prayers *We make our intercessions*

O God of peace, who has taught us that in quietness and confidence shall be our strength; help us, as we come into your presence, to be still and know that you are God.

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ let us pray to the Father.

We pray for Bishops Michael and Ruth and all those who seek to serve you in this diocese May they be filled with the Spirit and speak with authority. May they have confident optimism as they preach the love of God. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for world leaders as they seek justice and peace for all people. Especially we pray for the leaders of Ukraine and Russia that a just solution may be found for their dispute, and for the peoples of Ukraine and Russia that they may become good neighbours to each other. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for our King, Prime Minister, members of parliament and local councillors that they may have the Wisdom of Solomon. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for our schools, colleges and universities as they assess their exam results and prepare for the new academic year. And we pray particularly for all young people who failed to get the results they wanted and seek the way forward in their lives. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for our families, friends, and neighbours that we may serve Christ in one another and seek the common good. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for the sick, suffering, dying and those who mourn and we give thanks and pray for those who care for them. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

Rejoicing in the fellowship of all your saints, we commend ourselves and the whole creation to your unfailing love.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and for evermore. Amen.

The Collect

All: God of all mercy, in this Eucharist you have set aside our sins and given us your healing: grant that we who are made whole in Christ may bring that healing to this broken world, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

All: 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.

The Conclusion

All: Christ, as a light illumine and guide me this day.
Christ, as a shield overshadow me.
Christ under me, Christ over me; Christ beside me on my left and my right.
This day be within and without me. Amen