

Our Sunday Service Together

September 1st 2024

14th 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 15

Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle?

Who may rest upon your holy hill?

Whoever leads an uncorrupted life and does the thing that is right;

Who speaks the truth from the heart and bears no deceit on the tongue;

Who does no evil to a friend and pours no scorn on a neighbour;

In whose sight the wicked are not esteemed, but who honours those who fear the Lord.

Whoever has sworn to a neighbour and never goes back on that word;

Who does not lend money in hope of gain, nor takes a bribe against the innocent;

Whoever does these things shall never fall.

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

Scripture Reading Deuteronomy 4.1-2 and 6-9

So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. ²You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the Lord your God with which I am charging you.

⁶You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!' ⁷For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is whenever we call to him? ⁸And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today?

⁹But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children.

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 Mark 7.1-8, 14,15 and 21-23

Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, ² they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. ³ (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; ⁴ and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) ⁵ So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, 'Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?' ⁶ He said to them, 'Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, "This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; ⁷ in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines."

⁸ You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.'

¹⁴ Then he called the crowd again and said to them, 'Listen to me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵ there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.'

²¹ For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, ²² adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. ²³ All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.'

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

Much has been featured in the news this week about shop lifting which, it seems has become endemic and almost accepted as a social norm. I suspect for most of us it is something we do not directly see or think about, however it impacts all of us. It impacts us through the higher prices shops charge to cover the cost of their losses, but I wonder if it also impacts us as part of the society we live within. Punishment is called for, but the legal system has no time and little recourse to use, it would seem, to prevent these crimes.

Galilee in Jesus time, was known as 'Galilee of the gentiles'. The Jews who lived there were in a minority and had two main options: to live like the gentiles, or to do all they could to be 'good Jews', to be faithful in their calling to live by the 'ordinances and statutes' received from God (see our reading from Deuteronomy above).

Within such a context it is easy to see why the Pharisees have concerns about Jesus, and how his disciples are acting; to some they must have looked as those who had given up on the 'ordinances and statutes' of God. But the people were saying Jesus was from God, possibly the Messiah, how could this be so when he is not calling all to have a strict adherence to the Law, and even seems open to Gentiles?

Many have taken the conversations Jesus held with the Pharisees as a condemnation by God of all they represented, including the Law, however I wonder if that is too simplistic a conclusion! Jesus does not come to do away with the Law but to fulfil it, so he can't be saying to the Pharisees you have to abandon everything you have learnt and be, well lawless just like one of the Gentiles. The Law has had a purpose through the ages, to enable folks to live out their faith. However, Jesus announces a new age of God, what might be the place of the law in that new time of God?

All the calling for arrests and sentencing of shoplifters will arguably do very little to stop the epidemic. In the end society has to say this is not how we live, this is not who we are; it has to be unacceptable and folks of all ages, children especially have to learn you do not do these things. Imposition of laws and regulation on people is never the answer, a change of heart is what is required.

This is the core of any critique Jesus offers to the Pharisees! It isn't that adherence to the ways of God, the ordinances, the statutes, the laws, is a bad thing. What is necessary is a change of heart because, as Jesus says, it is from the heart, from the core 'being' of a person that bad things or good things come. Jesus is not come to do away with the Law but to enable it to be fulfilled in every person's life; be they Jew or Gentile – this is indeed a new age of God!

Conversations elsewhere in the gospels about the Law see Jesus asked what is the most important of all the Laws. You get the sense that the question is nonsense in Jesus' eyes; he replies that what matters is the heart, mind, and soul of the adherent. And more, how they let what is in their heart, mind and soul to be animated in their lives – it is about the application of everything. It is then about letting our hearts animate our entire being with all our strength, to love both ourselves (God loves each of us, so we should love ourselves) and our neighbour.

Jesus does not condemn the Pharisees, he hopes for their hearts, for them to be free of a burdensome yoke under the Law; and he likewise hopes this will be so for each of us. I wonder if we will again today take his yoke!

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*

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

We pray for Michael our bishop and all the clergy in this diocese. May they be filled with the Spirit and serve you as the first disciples. We give thanks for all those who have spread the good news throughout the ages.
Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.

We Pray for our King and government, that they may have the wisdom and courage necessary to guide our nation. *Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.*

We pray for the victims of war, injustice, prejudice and abuse that they may find peace and reconciliation. May we never forget that all people are loved and valued by God regardless of differences. *Lord in your mercy. Hear our prayer.*

We pray for our use of the gifts of God entrusted to us, that we may use them responsibly for the good of all. Especially we pray for those returning to school, college or university. *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 and dying and we give thanks and pray for those who use their skill to 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.

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

The Collect

All: Almighty God, whose only Son has opened for us a new and living way into your presence: give us pure hearts and steadfast wills to worship you in spirit and in truth; through 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

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