

Our Sunday Reflections

May 17th 2026

Easter 7

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 Psalm 68.1-10 *We say the psalm aloud*

Let God arise and let his enemies be scattered; let those that hate him flee before him.
As the smoke vanishes, so may they vanish away;
as wax melts at the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.
But let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; let them make merry with gladness.
Sing to God, sing praises to his name; exalt him who rides on the clouds.
The Lord is his name; rejoice before him.
Father of the fatherless, defender of widows, God in his holy habitation!
God gives the solitary a home and brings forth prisoners to songs of welcome,
but the rebellious inhabit a burning desert.
O God, when you went forth before your people, when you marched through the wilderness,
The earth shook and the heavens dropped down rain, at the presence of God, the Lord of Sinai,
at the presence of God, the God of Israel.
You sent down a gracious rain, O God; you refreshed your inheritance when it was weary.
Your people came to dwell there; in your goodness, O God, you provide for the poor.
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 Acts 1.6-14

So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.'

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

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 John 17.1-11

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed. 'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

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

Who likes waiting for something to happen? What is the famous saying, 'a watched pot never boils'; well all the disciples can do is watch and wait – with trust, hope, expectation.

In the gospel today John offers us Jesus' prayers to the Father for what he anticipates as the result of his crucifixion and resurrection. In 'real time' these words are spoken with the disciples present, 'after Jesus spoke these words he looked up to heaven'. The call to glory the Son suggests this was in the 'upper room' of the last supper, for it is the crucifixion and resurrection that glorify the Son, whilst others suggest it must be just before the ascension, which to others is the point of glory as the Son takes his seat at the right hand of the Father.

In 'theological time' we find ourselves with a sense of things already realised as well as to come into reality, and there is a paradox 'now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you'. How, if Jesus with the disciples, either in the upper room or on the hillside just before the ascension, can he 'no longer be in the world'? Surely, in still coming to the Father he must still be in the world?

Maybe Jesus could have used metaphor rather than riddle. But I wonder if that would have helped those who have to wait, and watch, and hope for the preferred promise of God to materialise. Jesus sees the concrete reality of the kingdom of God, but this will take time to materialize – and this takes waiting and watching. Jesus knows he has indeed switched realities from 'life impacted by the fall, separated from God with death as its end', to resurrected life, life beyond the power of death, eternal and 'with' God. Jesus is no longer of the world, even though he is in the world, and as the ascension approaches he knows he is coming to the Father.

'As they were watching, he was lifted up and a cloud took him from their sight'. The cloud, the shekinah glory of the presence of God envelopes Jesus and he is taken from their sight, Jesus comes to the father. The disciples return to Jerusalem, to the 'upper room' where they were staying. There is no sense of loss or grief – they did all of that at the crucifixion. There is no sense of fear or hiding away, they did all of the that before the resurrection. Now, they go with purpose, with hope, with expectation; Jesus being out of their sight does not mean he is gone and all is over and finished. They devote themselves to prayer as they watch and wait and seek the materialization of the kingdom of God.

I am sure there are any questions still racing through their hearts and in their conversations;

- What will happen when we pick up the mantle of ministry that Jesus left to us?
- How is the 'power and authority' that is Jesus' come to us as well?
- Will we be ready to receive it?

It would be a big spoiler alert if we jumped to Acts 2 and Pentecost; that is next week's festival. We have to wait, just as the disciples waited, in hope, with expectation, prayerfully watching the pot to see it boil. May it be that this week we too devote ourselves to prayer, maybe in a set aside space like the 'upper room'. Maybe on our own or with a fellow disciple. Whichever, may we spend this week in prayer filled anticipation for Pentecost and ready ourselves to receive the mantle of Jesus' ministry he passes to each of us, and His Spirit to guide and strengthen us in His work for the father's glory.

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*

Strengthen Michael our Bishop and all laity and clergy who seek to serve us in this diocese May they be filled with the Spirit and serve with a mutuality of love and grace. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We Pray for Our King, Prime Minister, and all World leaders, that they may have the Spirit of wisdom to lead us such that we would see the Kingdom of God come on earth as in in heaven. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for peace and the end of death and destruction in Ukraine, Russia, Sudan, Yemen, Israel, Gaza, Iran, Lebanon. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

We pray for the hungry and starving, that the available food of the world may be used for the benefit of all. *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 our schools, the children, teachers, and support staff. We pray for all those responsible for religious education that they may inspire those they teach. *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 and risk their lives to care for them. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

Hear us as we remember those who have died..... According to your promises grant them a share in your eternal kingdom. *Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.*

The Collect

O God the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:
we beseech you, leave us not comfortless, but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before,
who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. 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