

COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 3 September – Trinity 13

COLLECT

Almighty God,
who called your Church to bear witness
that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself:
help us to proclaim the good news of your love,
that all who hear it may be drawn to you;
through him who was lifted up on the cross,
and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Psalm 26.1-8

- 1 Give judgement for me, O Lord, for I have walked with integrity; ♦
I have trusted in the Lord and have not faltered.
- 2 Test me, O Lord, and try me; ♦
examine my heart and my mind.
- 3 For your love is before my eyes; ♦
I have walked in your truth.
- 4 I have not joined the company of the false, ♦
nor consorted with the deceitful.
- 5 I hate the gathering of evildoers ♦
and I will not sit down with the wicked.
- 6 I will wash my hands in innocence, O Lord, ♦
that I may go about your altar,
- 7 To make heard the voice of thanksgiving ♦
and tell of all your wonderful deeds.
- 8 Lord, I love the house of your habitation ♦
and the place where your glory abides.

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans, chapter 12, verses 9-21

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' No, 'if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia! Alleluia!

God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, and has entrusted to us the news that they are reconciled.

Alleluia!

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Matthew, chapter 16, verses 21 to 28

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.

A Reflection from Peter...

Today's Gospel reading is a hinge moment. It comes just a little over halfway through the text of Matthew's Gospel and introduces a different, complicated and puzzling note. After all the excitement of new teaching, healings, outdoor picnics and running rings round conservative religious leaders, Jesus not only speaks openly about his death, but about the fact that it will be violent and unjust. What is more he tells his followers to expect much of the same themselves.

Almost exactly forty years ago a nun from Stanbrook Abbey, Sr Maria, conducted our summer retreat at Mirfield. In one of her addresses, she introduced Jung's insight that human life has two parts: a morning and an afternoon. In the morning part of life we are growing, learning, acquiring skills and practising them; in the afternoon of life there is some time for enjoying what we have learned, but we also notice that we are more passive: things happen to us. As we get older, we need help to do some things. Indeed, we can begin to feel helpless and useless, not least because we have to give up some things that we had earlier worked hard to achieve!

Hearing the Gospel today we are invited to 'join the dots'. Jesus' teaching and healing ministry, together with the gathering of the disciples, his circle of friends, forms the morning of his life; and his passion and death become the afternoon of his life (with the Resurrection being truly the new dawn!). Despite having to submit to the injustice of trials, punishment and crucifixion, Jesus lived in loving response to the call of his Father. His life made sense as a whole. The morning and afternoon were parts one and two. Part three – 'the joy that lay before him' as the letter to the Hebrews has it, led Jesus on to the new creation. Jesus invites us to know for ourselves such meaning and hope.