



**COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION**  
**SUNDAY 10 MAY 2026 – Sixth Sunday of Easter**

**COLLECT**

God our redeemer,  
you have delivered us from the power of darkness  
and brought us into the kingdom of your Son:  
grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life,  
so by his continual presence in us he may raise us  
to eternal joy;  
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.

**Psalm 66. 7-18**

- 7 Bless our God, O you peoples; ♦  
make the voice of his praise to be heard,
- 8 Who holds our souls in life ♦  
and suffers not our feet to slip.
- 9 For you, O God, have proved us; ♦  
you have tried us as silver is tried.
- 10 You brought us into the snare; ♦  
you laid heavy burdens upon our backs.
- 11 You let enemies ride over our heads;  
we went through fire and water; ♦  
but you brought us out into a place of liberty.
- 12 I will come into your house with burnt offerings  
and will pay you my vows, ♦  
which my lips uttered  
and my mouth promised when I was in trouble.
- 13 I will offer you fat burnt sacrifices  
with the smoke of rams; ♦  
I will sacrifice oxen and goats.
- 14 Come and listen, all you who fear God, ♦  
and I will tell you what he has done for my soul.
- 15 I called out to him with my mouth ♦  
and his praise was on my tongue.
- 16 If I had nursed evil in my heart, ♦  
the Lord would not have heard me,
- 17 But in truth God has heard me; ♦  
he has heeded the voice of my prayer.
- 18 Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer, ♦  
nor withheld his loving mercy from me.

**A reading from the first epistle of Peter, chapter 3, verses 13-22.**

Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight people, were saved through water. And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

***At Morning Prayer, the Gospel is simply the second reading, people sit to hear it and is introduced in the same way as the first:***

The second reading is from John, chapter 14, verses 15-21.

***and then at the end:***

For the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

***For Eucharists/ Communion people stand to hear the Gospel. Everywhere except Fitz introduces it with an Acclamation (the blue bit), and then we all use the introduction and ending (the green bit):***

Alleluia. **Alleluia.**

This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.

**Alleluia.**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John, Chapter 14, verses 15-21.

**Glory to you, O Lord**

***And then at the end:***

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

'If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

'I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.'

## ***A Reflection from Hannah***

'Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence.'

This verse, which in other translations reads 'always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have' is an encouragement to us to be ready to explain our faith. I wonder what we might say if asked why we go to church, or why we believe in God? It's a phrase that was very precious to me when I was a young mum and encountering all sorts of people in different toddler groups, at the school gates etc. If asked about faith, or hope, how would I answer? Weirdly, now that I wear a dog collar, far fewer people ask me this question!

St Peter is writing to a church community who are being persecuted for what they believe. They are suffering, and he is encouraging them to hold fast to their faith, even in the face of cruelty from the Roman authorities. That business of what we say when asked, is a really important one. Our faith, our values are lived out in our actions- moment by moment, as we choose to take the good paths, be kind, generous, loving and see the humanity in another. But sometimes, words are required- we are asked to explain ourselves. Like that quote attributed to St Francis, 'Preach the Gospel at all times, use words if necessary'.

And words can be hard to find. At Bicton and Oxon WI this week, we had a talk about pilots from WWII. It was brilliantly delivered, 'in character', and the silences spoke as much as the words. Afterwards, many of us commented that so many who had served in the armed forces and seen active conflict speak very little about what actually happened. It runs too deep, and goes beyond articulation. But certainly for those who served in WWII, they developed an 'understated' vocabulary to give an account of events, as a way of filling out their hope that such things would never happen again.

Words can be hard to find when talking about faith too. It is at the very centre of our being, is so precious and profound, and when we talk about the experiences of God at work in our lives, it can bring us to the brink of tears quickly. But the good news is that in this (indeed, in all things), we don't need to speak in our own strength. Our Gospel reading reminds us that the Holy Spirit lives in us to help us become more and more like Jesus. In that reading from John's Gospel, Jesus promises that the 'Advocate' will come- the Spirit of truth. That word 'Advocate' is translated as 'Comforter' in the King James version, and it is one of those words that's difficult to get a one-to-one match with. The original word is 'Paraclete'- a beautiful, rich word, that can mean one who defends, one who comforts, one who speaks up for a weak person, one who helps and one who answers the call. What encouragement! The Holy Spirit in us enables us to do the very thing St Peter asks- to give a reason for the hope that we have in the living God, in whom we live and move and have our being. So as we move towards Ascension and Pentecost, let's pray for the Holy Spirit to dwell richly in us, and give us the words we need.