



All the readings we use each week are set for us in the Common Worship Lectionary. As I listen to them week by week and try to make sense of them, I very often wonder why they were chosen as a set of readings, there so frequently seems to be no obvious link to their themes. Today is a rare week when the link between all three is very clear. There is a great sense of us being told very strongly that it is our responsibility to continue to build God's church here on earth. We are told it will be who we are, how we behave and how we conduct ourselves that others will come, led by our example, to follow God and to build God's church. Isaiah tells us to 'Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug' – is this us looking at the God from where we came from and following his example. In the letter to the Romans, Paul tells them (and us) to 'present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship', this seems to remind us that all our actions should be acceptable to God and it is the way we live our lives that others will see God working in us. Paul also reminds us that we all individually have our own gifts that God has freely given us, when we all come together as one body, we have everything we need to do God's will. In Matthew's Gospel Jesus tells Peter he is the rock on which he must build the church, Fr Rodney message will talk more about that later in the worship.

As we have come to learn over the past months, it is not the building that is the church. Although it is wonderful to be back in there, to share in the Eucharist and to feel the comfort and warmth the building brings, it has been the people who have continued to be the church, worshipping God Sunday by Sunday. It has been the pooling of our individual gifts that God has given us, that has enabled us to do all we have done. When Jesus told Peter he was the rock on which to build the church, he gave the first spark of a flame, a spark that Peter must feed and fan to keep the flame burning. Our intercessions today are going to begin with one of Graham Kendrick's wonderful songs, 'Beauty for brokenness', with the prayers based on the words of the song. The last line of the chorus, 'from a spark to a flame' seemed so perfect for today, as we focus on continuing to build the church, however we have to do it over these coming weeks, to keep God's flame burning brightly for all to see.

### Collect for the day

O God you declare your almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity: mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace, that we, running the way of your commandments, may receive your gracious promises, and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure; 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 forever. Amen

### A reading from the book of Isaiah

Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness, you that seek the LORD. Look to the rock from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were dug.

<sup>2</sup> Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for he was but one when I called him, but I blessed him and made him many. <sup>3</sup> For the LORD will comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and will make her wilderness like Eden, her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song. <sup>4</sup> Listen to me, my people, and give heed to me, my nation; for a teaching will go out from me, and my justice for a light to the peoples. <sup>5</sup> I will bring near my deliverance swiftly, my salvation has gone out and my arms will rule the peoples; the coastlands wait for me, and for my arm they hope. <sup>6</sup> Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look at the earth beneath; for the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment, and those who live on it will die like gnats; but my salvation will be forever, and my deliverance will never be ended.

### A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans

**12** 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. <sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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 judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. <sup>4</sup> For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.

<sup>6</sup> We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; <sup>7</sup> ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; <sup>8</sup> the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

### A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew

<sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” <sup>14</sup> And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” <sup>15</sup> He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> 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.” <sup>20</sup> Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.



**Beauty  
*in the*  
Brokenness**

## Words from Fr Rodney

One of our readings for today from St. Matthew's Gospel includes what is known as the Confession of Peter. Jesus asks his disciples who people think He is, and they come back to Him with a list of significant figures, *'Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets'*. Then Jesus says to them, *'But who do you say that I am?'* Then out of the blue comes Peter, *'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God'*. For a Galilean fisherman this was an amazing declaration, and in what must have amazed the other disciples Jesus recognises that the words have been put in Peter's mouth by God the Father. Jesus then goes on to say *'You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church'* and everything that follows. But the key thing in this reading is the inspired faith of Peter which Jesus recognises. It is not on Peter himself that the Church will be built, but on the faith that is like Peter's, and that of all those who come to believe in every generation. As in all past generations, the Christian faith today is embodied in the hearts and lives of all of us who have put our faith and hope in Our Lord Jesus Christ, and who seek to live out that faith wherever we may be. Perhaps more than any other Gospel story, this gospel is not just about those who have gone before us, it is about us ! Jesus' word to us today is that you are Karen, Rodney, Anthony, Louise, Graham etc etc.....and on our faith Jesus will build his Church today.





### Let us pray

Heavenly Father, you gave a spark to Peter when you asked him to build your church. That spark has been fanned to a flame through the generations; it is now time for us to fan the flame. Give us the courage to take the flame, embrace it and make it shine ever brighter as we move the church forward in these strange and challenging yet exciting opportunistic times as we build the new 'normal' for your church. Amen

Heavenly Father, we thank you that we can now return to church, to worship you in the comfort of the building and are once again able to be part of the Eucharist. We pray for the bishops, archdeacons, clergy and people as they seek ways to get our churches fully open safely. We thank you for the technology and for the many skills of all those who have made it possible for us to keep building on your rock over these past months. We seek your guidance as we look to find a way for everyone to continue worshipping you as they feel most comfortable with. Amen

Heavenly Father, we pray for peace and justice in your world, a world that is affected by prejudice, carelessness, and greed. A world that wants to keep taking from the joys of your creation and draining it of its natural resources; a world where so many have too much yet others have nothing; a world where war tears apart communities and livelihoods and shatters lives. Lord bring your healing peace on the troubled areas of your world and bring harmony where it is most needed. Amen

Heavenly Father, we pray for all the decision makers of our country. Government and politicians trying to juggle the many issues that were already there before the Pandemic broke out as well as trying to keep us all safe in the best way possible. Guide them in the policies they make, may they seek to be fair and just in their actions. May they look to find ways to bring shelter to the homeless and to support those who feel they have no voice. Amen

Heavenly Father, we pray for our families, friends and all who we love, for the comfort and joy they give when we need it most. We give thanks for the many blessings they bring to our lives. We pray for those who are lonely, anxious and struggling to cope, for those concerned for their livelihoods and for our young people who are anxious about the future. Embrace them Lord with your comforting love. Amen

Heavenly Father we pray for all those who are sick at this time, we pray that they, their loved ones and all those who care for them are given the courage, faith and strength they need to get them through the darkest times, surround them with your healing love. We pray for the doctors and nurses caring for covid patients and for all who are working on vaccines and treatments for the virus. Amen

Heavenly Father, we pray for all who have died recently especially those known to us, we remember those whose anniversaries fall at this time. We give thanks for the good times we shared with them and the memories they leave with us. We pray for all those who have been saddened by the loss of someone close to them, may they take comfort in the knowledge that they know will rest in peace and rise in your glory. Amen

*In a moment of silence we bring your own prayers to God*

The Lords prayer

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, forever and ever.  
Amen.



## Words of Graham Kendricks – Beauty for Brokenness

Beauty for brokenness, Hope for despair  
Lord, in your suffering, This is our prayer  
Bread for the children, Justice, joy, peace  
Sunrise to sunset, Your kingdom increase!

Shelter for fragile lives, Cures for their ills  
Work for the craftsman, Trade for their skills  
Land for the dispossessed, Rights for the weak  
Voices to plead the cause, Of those who can't speak

God of the poor, Friend of the weak  
Give us compassion we pray, Melt our cold hearts  
Let tears fall like rain, Come change our love  
From a spark to a flame

Refuge from cruel wars, Havens from fear  
Cities for sanctuary, Freedoms to share  
Peace to the killing-fields, Scorched earth to green  
Christ for the bitterness, His cross for the pain

God of the poor, Friend of the weak  
Give us compassion we pray, Melt our cold hearts  
Let tears fall like rain, Come change our love  
From a spark to a flame

Rest for the ravaged earth, Oceans and streams  
Plundered and poisoned, Our future, our dreams  
Lord, end our madness, Carelessness, greed  
Make us content with, The things that we need

God of the poor, Friend of the weak  
Give us compassion we pray, Melt our cold hearts  
Let tears fall like rain, Come change our love  
From a spark to a flame

Lighten our darkness, Breathe on this flame  
Until your justice, Burns brightly again  
Until the nations, Learn of your ways  
Seek your salvation, And bring you their praise

God of the poor, Friend of the weak  
Give us compassion we pray, Melt our cold hearts  
Let tears fall like rain, Come change our love  
From a spark to a flame