

Proper 17 – 30th August 2020 – 12th Sunday after Trinity

Rainbow over Seahouses Harbour



In our gospel reading today Jesus is starting to prepare his friends for what we now know to be the events at the end of Holy week and Easter. The thought of Jesus suffering and dying doesn't go down too well especially with Peter, who appears to receive a bit of a telling off from Jesus for allowing his heart to rule his head. Peter cannot bear to think of what Jesus is talking about actually happening. He was thinking of his own earthly feelings and not about what Jesus knew was the way of God. Jesus then tells his disciples, for those who want to be true followers of His they should deny themselves, take up their own cross and then follow Jesus. By following Jesus they would need to relinquish control of their own lives to fully follow Jesus, allowing God to work within them. Sometimes in life we find God seems to have mapped out a path for us we were not expecting to take and sometimes that path is far from smooth. At the start of 2020 nobody expected us to be taking the path we have taken over the last 5 months. For many people, for many reasons this has been a bumpy ride, yet in other ways there has been so many positives. Statistics show during the pandemic many more people have indeed taken up their cross and become followers. In the words of Jesus 'those who lose their life for my sake will find it'. God appears to have taken the church down a path that was a few months ago totally unimaginable, thanks to the wonders of technology we have been able to continue to worship week by week in the ministry of the word. Yet now we can go back into church, for those who feel they can go back to church there is something special about being among friends and again sharing in the Eucharist. Finding a balance between worship online and being in church is beginning to become somewhat of a juggling act. As the summer turns into autumn, the holidays come to an end and schools return, we may begin to see workers returning to workplaces, I am guessing we are going to move into the next stage of opening up. Next Sunday will be the first, first Sunday of the month since church reopened and if all goes to plan our service next Sunday will be in church at 10.45. This will be either live streamed or recorded and then available online to watch later in the day. As we

move forward as a church we are going to need Gods guidance to lead us down the right path and pray it will be a smooth ride.

Collect for the day

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we are to pray and to give more than either we desire or deserve: pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask but through the merits and mediation of 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 Jeremiah

O LORD, you know; remember me and visit me,
and bring down retribution for me on my persecutors.

In your forbearance do not take me away; know that on your account I suffer insult.

Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart; or I am called by your name,
O LORD, God of hosts.

I did not sit in the company of merrymakers, nor did I rejoice;
under the weight of your hand I sat alone, for you had filled me with indignation.

Why is my pain unceasing, my wound incurable, refusing to be healed?
Truly, you are to me like a deceitful brook, like waters that fail.

Therefore thus says the LORD:

If you turn back, I will take you back, and you shall stand before me.
If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless,
you shall serve as my mouth.

It is they who will turn to you, not you who will turn to them.

²⁰ And I will make you to this people a fortified wall of bronze;
they will fight against you, but they shall not prevail over you,
for I am with you to save you and deliver you says the LORD.

²¹ I will deliver you out of the hand of the wicked, and redeem you from the grasp of the ruthless.

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans

⁹ Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; ¹⁰ love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. ¹¹ Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. ¹⁷ Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ 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." ²⁰ 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." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew

²¹ 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. ²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." ²³ 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."

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. ²⁶ 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?

²⁷ "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. ²⁸ 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."

Words from Fr Rodney

An old priest once told me that one of the things that he had encouraged members of his congregations to do was to learn off by heart some of the old prayer book collects as they would be a great source of help and comfort to them. I imagine that in the modern world learning things off by heart is something people no longer do, and that's a shame as there are so many occasions in life in which we can find ourselves where they can be a great strength and comfort to us. The collect for today is one of those prayers that is worth learning off by heart.....

***Almighty and everlasting God,
you are always more ready to hear than we to pray
and to give more than we desire or deserve:
pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy,
forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid
and giving us those good things we are not worthy to ask
but through the merits and mediation
of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.***

These are wonderful words of the reassurance of God's presence in our lives, and of His willingness to be there for us in whatever circumstances and situations we find ourselves. It is a prayer worth learning off by heart for all those occasions where we find ourselves at a loss for whatever reason, and where we just need the reassurance of God's presence with us.

Let us pray

Heavenly Father we ask for the courage to take up our cross and to follow you. Keep us focused on the path where you lead and the resilience to keep going even when the journey is far from smooth. We give thanks that we have been able to embrace technology, allowing us to worship week by week. Guide us as a church to make the right decisions as we look to move forward, to find the right ways to bring worship to all, to meet the needs of all your people. Amen

Heavenly Father, we thank you that you are the light of the world, guiding our steps on your path. You have given us the gift of the church, a community that you have gathered together to worship, serve, pray and love. Give us strength to live as your ambassadors in the world. Lord, bless your church and make your light shine upon us and help to give us peace. Amen

God of love, show us our place in this world as ambassadors of your love. Enlighten those who possess power and money that they may avoid the sin of indifference and to care for the world in which we live in a positive way. So many people do not have food to eat, water to drink or somewhere to sleep in safety. We have all misused the planet and Covid 19 has made us all reflect on our values and responsibilities.

Open our eyes Lord to the world outside our front door and look at poverty and waste through the eyes of those whose lives we cannot even imagine. God of the poor friend of the weak, give us compassion we pray. We do not presume to tell you what to do, or how and when to do it, we

simply bring before you people who need your love, and needs that only your love can fulfil. Amen

Father we bring to you our family, friends and community, those who have been by our side during this time and those who have been only a phone call away. We pray for those in our community that are alone at this time, please give them strength. We come to you in this time of need, please continue to give us the guidance to guide others. Amen

Heavenly Father, we pray for all who are sick at this time, we pray for any known to usSurround them with your healing love. We pray for family and friends who care for them and for the doctors and nurses dedicated to their treatment. We pray especially for all in care homes who have been unable to have visitors for so long and where the pandemic has hit hard. Amen

Heavenly Father we pray for all who died recently especially those known to us, we remember those whose anniversaries fall at this time..... We give thanks for the time we shared with them and the memories they leave with us. We pray for all who mourn the loss of a loved one, may they take comfort that they rest with you in your eternal kingdom. May they rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen

In a moment of silence 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.