

Sunday 20 October 2024

Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity



Sermon © Lucie Reilly.

Liturgy © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Prayers of intercession © Katharine Smith (adapted)

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration are included at the end.

The hymn can be accessed via a YouTube link. Please click on the links.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,

<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 [Take my life and let it be](#) (please click on this link to hear the hymn)
[Blessèd assurance](#) (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, to be our advocate in heaven, and to bring us to eternal life. Therefore, let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

All Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The 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 Collect for the Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity

Grant, we beseech you, merciful Lord,
to your faithful people pardon and peace,
that they may be cleansed from all their sins
and serve you with a quiet mind;
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.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

Surely he has borne our infirmities
and carried our diseases;
yet we accounted him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
and by his bruises we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have all turned to our own way,
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

By a perversion of justice he was taken away.

Who could have imagined his future?

For he was cut off from the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people.

They made his grave with the wicked
and his tomb with the rich,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain.

When you make his life an offering for sin,

he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days;
through him the will of the Lord shall prosper. Out of his anguish he shall see light;
he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge.

The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great,

and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;
because he poured out himself to death,
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

Isaiah 53:4-end

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews

Every high priest chosen from among mortals is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness; and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not presume to take this honour, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him,

‘You are my Son,
today I have begotten you’;

as he says also in another place,

‘You are a priest for ever,
according to the order of Melchizedek.’

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek. *Hebrews 5:1-10*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 [Glorify your name \(instrumental\)](#) [\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

All **Glory to you O Lord.**

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, 'Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.' And he said to them, 'What is it you want me to do for you?' And they said to him, 'Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.' But Jesus said to them, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with?' They replied, 'We are able.' Then Jesus said to them, 'The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptised, you will be baptised; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.'

When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. So Jesus called them and said to them, 'You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognise as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.'

Mark 7:24-37

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All **Praise to you O Christ.**

Sermon

James and John want to be on top. They want to sit on either side of Jesus in his glory. The other ten disciples are fuming about this. I picture them looking at James and John and saying, 'WOW! Really... who do you think you are?' It could be said that James and John are pretty full of themselves. Their egos are inflated and they are living with an exaggerated sense of self-importance. They want to sit in glory and be great. But, who among us doesn't want that?

Don't we want to be great too? Don't we want to be great throughout our lives, great at work, and the things we do; great in our friendships, marriage, and parenting; great in our community and among our peers; great in our faith and prayer? Don't we want to be great in the eyes of God, in the eyes of others, and in our own eyes? Don't we want to sit in the glory of greatness so we never have to worry or wonder if we are enough?

I think most of us will have been told or taught that we're not supposed to want that. And yet, haven't there been times in our life when we got a bit too big for our boots? That seems to be what's going on with James and John in today's gospel. They've gotten too big for their boots. But maybe that's not such a bad thing.

I wonder, what is it we that are really seeking when we get too big for your boots? Maybe it's attention, recognition, approval, applause. Maybe it's power or control. Maybe that's how we deal with your fear or hide our insecurity and self-doubt. It might be those things but it could be more than that.

Maybe the problem isn't that James and John have gotten too big for their boots. Maybe they just need bigger boots. What if they've outgrown their current life and identity and they're trying to connect to a larger, fuller, more complete life and identity? Maybe that's what's going on with us too when get too big for our boots.

Have you ever wanted to be like someone else? Who was it and what attracted you to her or him? What qualities did she or he have that you wanted for yourself?

Maybe it was a teacher, a family member or friend, a colleague or boss, an author, a hero, or maybe it was just someone who seemed to have it all together. My guess is that it was someone who was his or her own person. There was a wholeness about them. They were grounded in daily life but not stuck in it. They lived large but they weren't full of themselves. They were deeply centered in themselves but always had space for you in their lives.

I'm sure we all have people like that in our lives. They attract and draw us to them. Their lives speak to us of love and friendship. They show us something about ourselves. They help us to see new possibilities. Their presence changes who we are. They bring out in us the best part of who we are.

In them we catch a glimpse of something sacred and sacramental, meaningful, and life giving. They show us the possibility of being something. And we want to get as close to them as we can. Whatever it is that they've got, we want some for ourselves.

What if that is what has led James and John to say to Jesus, 'Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory?'

It's a bold request. But is it wrong? What if we're all intended for greatness and glory? Didn't Jesus say to the disciples, 'The one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these' (John 14:12) Might that not be true for you and me as well?

I wonder if James and John are right in what they seek but, wrong in how they are seeking it. Maybe they need to realise that glory and greatness are not about all the many ways we 'lord it over' another: for example, power, rank, position, beauty or accomplishments. Maybe glory and greatness are not something we are

given, but something into which we are transformed. Maybe they are not something we have but something we become.

Jesus doesn't say no to James and John and he doesn't dismiss or judge their request. He doesn't ridicule or belittle them. Instead, he says, "You do not know what you are asking." You could hear that as a criticism, but what if it's a warning? What if Jesus is making sure they understand where this path will take them and what it will ask of them? He doesn't deny that greatness and glory can be theirs. Instead, he tells them what greatness and glory look like. And they don't look like what most of us have been told they do. They don't look like what usually gets recognised and rewarded. They don't look like the things most of us strive for. They look like a cup and a baptism.

That cup is the cup of self-surrender, the cup of Gethsemane. It's a choice between the will to power and the will to meaning and life. It's listening for a call in each of our lives that is more than simply choosing individual preference. It's setting aside a smaller and known quantity of life for a larger and unknown quantity. It's putting the well-being of another on level ground with our own wellbeing. It's letting go of an exaggerated sense of our own importance—not as diminishment but as a way of recovering ourselves and being more authentic. It's giving up the need to prove myself because I finally realise that I don't have anything to prove, and neither do you.

That baptism means allowing ourselves to be immersed in a life that is larger and beyond ourselves. It's living in a world of reversals in which the first shall be last, the last shall be first, and the great ones are those who serve and care for others. It means being connected to a life source and force that is more than we can generate for ourselves. It happens when we love our neighbour as ourselves, and our enemy. It means turning the other cheek, being peacemakers, hungering and thirsting for justice, and offering forgiveness. It's letting the waters of compassion flow as we reach out and care for 'the least of these' or offer welcome to the stranger. It's respecting the dignity of every human being.

What if this cup and baptism are about losing something of ourselves? And what if that's really how we get bigger britches? Let me explain. When I get a bit too big for my boots I have a choice—I can get a larger size or I can lose something of myself. Either way the boots are bigger. With the first, however, nothing has changed but with the second everything has changed. I have changed. My life is different and that has the power to change my relationships and world. So, which will it be for you?

Are you able to drink the cup of surrender and drown in the waters of baptism? That's Jesus' question to James and John and each one of us here today.

'We are able,' James and John answer. Yes, they are, and so are you and I. We are all able. But are we willing?

So, the questions I will leave you with are:

What is the cup in your life today? And how much are you willing to drink? What is the baptism awaiting you today? And how deep into those waters are you willing to dive?

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
the source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Prayers of intercession

We pray for all who are disciples of Jesus today. We pray that God's Holy Spirit will pour into our hearts a love for others that transcends human pride, ambition and selfishness. Help us be true to the example of selfless giving and service shown by Jesus who sought always to heal and restore the broken people of our world.

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

We pray for the places in this world torn apart by greed, illness, war and terrorism. We pray that where power is used to oppress and control, God's Holy Spirit will redeem that power to bring freedom to captives and justice for the downtrodden. Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

We pray for our families and friends, our colleagues and neighbours. We pray that in loving and serving those around us we may be working with God to make the kingdom of heaven a reality in this community.

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

We pray for all who bear the burdens of pain, bereavement, anxiety and need. We pray that they may have an awareness of God bearing those burdens with them and always working towards their healing and wholeness.

Lord, hear us.

All Lord, graciously hear us.

Heavenly Father we thank you that you are always ready to hear our prayers and to respond to them in ways that sometimes we cannot imagine. We offer ourselves to be part of your response through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour who gave himself in love to serve and redeem us.

All Amen.

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The Peace

The peace to this house from God our heavenly Father.
The peace to this house from his Son who is our peace.
The peace to this house from the Holy Spirit, the life-giver.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All And also with you

HYMN 3 Holiness is your life in me (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you.

The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you

and give you his peace;

and the blessing of God the Almighty:

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 Just as I am

(please click on this link to hear the hymn)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ.

Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

Father, you made the world and love your creation.
You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour.
His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death.
And so we gladly thank you,
with saints and angels praising you, and saying,

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us. Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

Father of light,
in whom is no change or shadow of turning,
you give us every good and perfect gift
and have brought us to birth by your word of truth:
may we be a living sign of that kingdom
where your whole creation will be made perfect
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.