

We are enclosing with this pack a very simple form of Prayers for the beginning and the end of the day. They come from the CofE Common Worship services from a format provided by Sue Knowles. A church she was involved with put them together and Sue uses them every day and even takes them on holiday with her.

These meditations will fit well at the Psalm/Bible Reading point. Reading them in the morning and looking at them in the evening may help you to review how they have been with you during the day.

8th – 13th June *Compiled by Canon Janet Chapman (Rector)*

Monday 8th June

Psalm 121

Matthew 5 : 1-12

This week we start to read through Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount. Our psalm encourages us to 'lift up our eyes to the hills.' Begin by picturing Jesus on the hillside speaking to the gathered crowd of which you are one. Hear again all the 'blessed be' sayings. Which ones comfort you, which surprise you, which disturb you? Notice which come back to you during the day.

Tuesday 9th June

Psalm 4

Matthew 5 : 13-16

Remind yourself how salt tastes either literally or in your imagination. Picture St Laurence Church in the dark with the inside light bringing the stained glass to life. How is the church being salt and light at this time? What needs to be thrown out or trodden underfoot or may need to be in the future? How is God prompting you to be salt and light today?

Wednesday 10th June

Psalm 16 : 1, 6-end

Matthew 5 : 17-19

How do you think these words would have been heard by the original audience? Would their mood have changed as Jesus continues speaking? Can you recite the 10 Commandments (you can check them in Exodus 20.) Are they all equally important today? Pray that God will reveal to you how his kingdom can flourish for you today.

Thursday 11th June (Day of Thanksgiving for Holy Communion/Corpus Christi)

(Holy Communion at 10am)

Psalm 116 : 10-end

1 Cor 11 : 23-26

Most of us have not physically received Holy Communion for some months now. If you had been told that this would be happening in advance how do you think you would have re-acted? Are you missing it and if so what aspects about it are you missing?

Friday 12th June

Psalm 27 : 8-16

Matthew 5 : 27-32

Adultery certainly breaks the social distancing rules! We've heard quite a bit recently about keeping the 'letter of the law' and keeping the 'spirit of the law.' What is Jesus saying to you about this distinction today? Pray for those who are having to write the laws and guidelines in this changing situation – it isn't an easy task. And maybe for a bit of humility for when you have 'bent' the rules.

Saturday 13th June

Psalm 16 : 1-7

Matthew 5 : 33-37

Is there anything you want to swear about today? God is as open to frustrations as well as to our sins and longings! Of course, this passage isn't about that type of swearing but about trustworthiness. What sort of vows have you taken in the past or what sort of vows are implied by being a member of an organisation? Many of us will have made Guiding/Scouting promises in the past – I don't think they have an end date! How can we 'do our best' today? Listen out for the Spirit's promptings.

15th – 20th June *Compiled by Fr John Richards*

Monday 15th June

Psalm 5. 1-5

Matthew 5 : 38-42

All of us carry memories of wrongs we have endured over the years. It is hard to let go of those times when others have said or done horrible things. However difficult it may seem, we need to forgive, otherwise the wrong stays with us and eats into our soul. Read the words of Jesus and pray for a new beginning.

Tuesday 16th June

Psalm 51.1-9

Matthew 5 : 43-end

Continuing yesterday's theme we are told by Jesus to love our enemies. What an ask!!! Pause for a moment and ask yourself if you have any enemies? Hating our enemies does us no good. Let us try and think of ways we can put aside those times when we have been separated from God's love and given in to our own anger and bitterness. It may be a good idea to read the whole of the Sermon on the Mount, and to let Jesus' words really sink in.

Wednesday 17th June

Psalm 31.21-end

Matthew 6 : 1-6, 16-18

This passage is partly about getting our priorities right. What are your priorities at the moment? And a more difficult question, what is your motive? The Christian way of life is never easy, but it is worth striving for. In this passage, Jesus is saying, "if your one aim is to get yourself the world's rewards, no doubt you will get them.... but you must not look for the rewards which God alone can give."

Thursday 18th June

Psalm 97.1-8

Matthew 6 : 7-15

How often do you pray? Where do you pray? During these strange times our time of prayer is probably a little haphazard . Some people with more time on their hands may find it easier. Others, busy people, may find it difficult to fit it in. Thinking of those first two questions, there are no right answers. The important thing is that we do pray. I think a lot of my conversations with God are when I am gardening. When do you talk to God?

Friday 19th June

Psalm 132.1-5, 11-13

Matthew 6 : 19-23

“For your heart will always be where your treasures are.” Although that is probably true of all of us, it’s good to think seriously about our “treasure”. During lockdown most of us have found out how important the natural world is to us. Let us thank God for our treasure and for the treasure we so often take for granted. Life, well being, and faith.

Saturday 20th June

Psalm 89.25-33

Matthew 6 : 24-end

All of us worry at times even though it doesn’t achieve very much. What worries you presently? Can you change anything? Do you feel able to share your worries with someone else? Do you share them with God? If so, do you listen for the answers? Jesus has some wonderful words for us ‘do not worry about tomorrow; it will have enough worries of its own.’

22nd – 27th June *Compiled by Fr David Pycock (Associate Priest)*

Monday 22nd June

Psalm 60 : 1-5, 11-end

Matthew 7 : 1-5

Make this meditation before you read the passage. In your mind’s eye go for a walk up a hill. Not to a familiar place but to a place created in your imagination. Picture the scene: Is this an isolated peak or one of many rolling hills. Are the hillsides populated with trees, are there sheep or goats browsing, are there lakes? Walk on breathing deeply: smell the air, feel the sun on your back, see the plants around. After a while find a rock on which to rest, and admire the view. After a while someone approaches walking down the hill. They sit nearby. They introduce themselves as a shepherd and talk to you about the hills, They are not well dressed and look as though they have been sleeping rough for a week or more. How do you feel? Do you engage with this person in conversation or are you uneasy, and anxious to move on?

Now read the passage and take time to reflect.

Tuesday 23rd June

Psalm 48 :1-2, 8-end

Matthew 7 : 6, 12-14

Again make this meditation before you read the passage. Return to the hillside. As you walk on you discover someone having a tea party at the top of the hill. There are servants, a table laid with silver, rich fayre to eat and drink. You try to skirt around the gathering but a servant is sent to offer you a few scraps of food and a glass of water. How do you feel when this happens? Do you feel thankful or offended? Is there anything that you would like to say to the person sat proudly at the picnic table?

Now read the passage and take time to reflect.

Wednesday 24th June (The Birth of John the Baptist)

Psalm 85 : 7-end

Luke 1 : 57-66, 80, Isaiah 40 : 1-11

Imagine being at the circumcision of Elizabeth's child. Were you surprised that she had a child at her age? What was the talk around the guests? How did you discover that Zechariah could not speak? Did you try to talk to him before you knew? Were you surprised that he could not speak? There was confusion about the child's name. Was it to be Zechariah or John? Why John? The child's name was not clear until the point in the service when he was named ... John. How did the guest react to this and to Zechariah being able to speak again. How did you describe these events to your friends?

Thursday 25th June

Psalm 79 : 1-9, 12

Matthew. 7 : 21-28.

Imagine yourself to be in the crowd listening to Jesus. Why have you gone to hear this self-styled Rabbi? Were you passing by or had you heard that he was around and went looking for him? Does he look as you expected? Are you outside any town or city or in a market square? You meet some regular followers of Jesus who tell you how he speaks with authority, they give feeling that they know Jesus. There are some in the crowd whom you know are healers. How do they and others in the crowd react when Jesus says "I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers". Why do you think Jesus says this? Do you, does the crowd understand better after Jesus has told the parable? Watch how different people in the crowd react. Have they all heard the same message?

Friday 26th June

Psalm 137 :1-6

Matthew. 8 : 1-4, (and if you wish, for background Lev. 14:1-40).

Why do you think Jesus had been up the mountain? You are in the crowd that follows after him. Have you been searching for Jesus or did you not want to go up the mountain? Do you keep your distance from the leper; fearful that you might catch the disease? Do you cringe or feel warm when Jesus reaches out and touches the leper? Picture the transformations as the leper's skin becomes clear. Do people give him water in which to wash? Where will he get two live birds, cedar wood, scarlet and hyssop? What is it like to see the leper healed? Does it feel like a time for celebration or is it turned into an embarrassing spectacle?

Saturday 27th June

Psalm 74 : 1-3, 21-end

Matthew 8 : 5-17

How do you feel when the Centurion comes up to Jesus? Are you fearful that he will arrest Jesus? The Centurion is respectful and calls Jesus Lord. You know exactly what he means about how he can order his servants. How does the crowd react? How do they react when Jesus says that he has never seen such faith from the people of Israel?

29th June – 4th July *Compiled by Claire Whitmore (Ordinand)*

Monday 29th June Peter and Paul, Apostles

Psalm 125

Matthew 16:13-19

This week the Church remembers three apostles: Peter, Paul, and Thomas (later this week). These were people whose lives were profoundly changed by meeting Jesus, and who lived their lives as messengers of God's Good News. Spend some time reflecting on how your life is changed through knowing Jesus. Are you a messenger of Good News?

Tuesday 30th June

Psalm 5:8-end

Matthew 8:23-37

Have you got little faith, or lots of faith? Maybe your answer changes day by day. Jesus may rebuke his disciples for their lack of faith, but he still saves them from the storm. Ask God to increase your faith today.

Wednesday 1st July

Psalm 50:7-14

Matthew 8:28-end

In today's gospel, Jesus encounters demoniacs who are preventing people passing through. Jesus releases the afflicted people, and opens up the route. Are there things which are holding you back or blocking you from living a life fully open to Jesus?

Thursday 2nd July

Psalm 19:7-10

Matthew 9:1-8

In this story, Jesus forgives the sins of the paralysed man, and then, when he is doubted, he demonstrates his power further through healing him. Do you sometimes doubt that your sins are forgiven? Offer to God those things that are on your heart, in the comfort of knowing that we are already forgiven.

Friday 3rd July (Thomas the Apostle)

Psalm 31:1-6 John 20:24-29,

Picture yourself in this room. Where do you find yourself? Perhaps you are watching the interaction quietly. Perhaps you are one of the disciples who has already seen Jesus risen, and are delighted in seeing your brother experience this too. Or perhaps you, like Thomas, needed to see in order to believe. Notice that Jesus does not shame Thomas, but instead recognises what he needs and gives it to him. Take some time to talk to Jesus about what you need today.

Saturday 4th July

Psalm 85:8-end

Matthew 9:14-17

At the beginning of this week, we reflected on what it meant to be an apostle. How do you feel as a messenger of Good News? Are you feeling old and tired? Or like new wine in fresh wineskins? Try not to judge yourself for how you feel, but to recognise it and take it to God.

6th July – 11th July *Compiled by Janice Wones (Lay Reader)*

Monday 6th July

Psalm 145 : 2 - 9

Matthew 9 : 18 - 24

Can you think of anyone who is ill at present? Is it a chronic illness that has lasted a long while? Is it a sudden illness which has taken them close to death? Pray for them.
Can you think of anyone who has recovered from a serious illness? Thank God and proclaim his great deeds.
"I will proclaim your great deeds."

Tuesday 7th July

Psalm 103 : 8 - 12

Matthew 9 : 32 - end

Do you find it difficult to speak of your faith? Are you able to put into words what you believe and what God has done for you? Do you know people who have good hearts, but seem to be uncertain what is right or wrong? Pray for them and, if you feel you have the right words, speak to them. "The Lord is abounding in love."

Wednesday 8th July

Psalm 115 : 3 - 10

Matthew 10 : 1 – 7

The Church is made up of so many different individuals. Do you remember someone who used to come to church – who used to belong to St. Laurence's – but has now drifted away? Pray for them. If you still have their contact details, write to them or phone them and ask how they are coping. "Their idols are made by the hands of men."

Thursday 9th July

Psalm 105 : 1 – 7

Matthew 10 : 7 – 15

Are there people that you avoid? Are there those among your acquaintances that you are not sure about? Pray for them. You have received God's love and peace undeservedly. Give to those you know or meet the benefit of the doubt. They may respond positively. "Seek his face always."

Friday 10th July

Psalm 80 : 1 - 7

Matthew 10 : 16 – 23

Do you sometimes feel as though you are going against the flow of all around you, as they exert themselves to get more and better things and try to make more money? Pray for yourself. Pray that you will know the certainty of God's love and truth. Pray that you will have the words to answer the disparaging comments of others. "O God, make your face to shine upon us."

Saturday 11th July

Psalm 51 : 1 – 7

Matthew 10 : 24 – 33

Consider where you have failed God. What is your weakness? What do you keep doing that you shouldn't? What do you keep avoiding that you should do? It is not a secret from God. Admit it. Say you are sorry. Ask for guidance to help you avoid temptation in future. God loves you and will help you. "You teach me wisdom."