

Sunday 3 October 2021

Trinity 18

Hebrews: 1:1-4, 2:5-12;

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. ³He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

⁵ Now God did not subject the coming world, about which we are speaking, to angels. ⁶But someone has testified somewhere, 'What are human beings that you are mindful of them, or mortals, that you care for them?

⁷ You have made them for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned them with glory and honour,

⁸ subjecting all things under their feet.'

Now in subjecting all things to them, God left nothing outside their control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to them, ⁹but we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus

is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, ¹²saying, 'I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.'

Mark 10:13-16;

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. ¹⁴But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. ¹⁵Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.' ¹⁶And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

Reflection

Offered by Sarah

With angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and singing:

*Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,*

*heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.*

What a statement of belief – a song of praise – a Eucharistic Prayer.

The Sanctus has been incorporated in the Eucharist in the Roman Church since the sixth century. It was used even earlier in Jerusalem and Egypt – from about the fourth century.

Now, I haven't asked Hilary if at this point in the service, when we sing the Sanctus, she feels as if she is conducting a choir in heaven as well as the choir before her.....but it is a wonderful image, isn't it?

A host of angels and everyone in heaven in one superb voice singing God's praise.

Forget the Big Sing in the Royal Albert Hall, this is like the congregations of thousands of packed cathedrals and the congregations of thousands upon thousands of tiny churches in one place, in one time, in one voice, singing, with congregations in cathedrals and churches on earth;

*Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.*

This is the Church.

As we approach the seasons in the Church's Year, of All Saints and Advent, we are reminded that we are a part of a Church that is universal, eternal, on earth and in heaven.

The song, “Holy, holy, holy” is the song sung by the seraphim before God’s throne in Isaiah chapter 6. In his vision, Isaiah caught sight of God’s enormous heavenly kingdom that spanned between heaven and earth. A moment when the veil between the two is drawn aside, and Isaiah sees himself and all beings being one around the seat of God. A glimpse of God’s glory.

The writer of Hebrews says that mortal beings, – God made them for a little while lower than the angels. He crowned them with glory and honour.

Another big statement – “lower than the angels” “crowned with glory and honour” (2:9). That’s us – and the people we share our lives with and the stranger.

There is a lot in the world that is wrong. There is a lot that mars the image of the One who created all things. There is much more that is good and reflects the goodness of God.

So often, the acts of kindness, the service of self-sacrifice, lives which bring hope to others are carried out quietly and unseen by the majority. Then we get to hear a story, or we witness something, or we are ones receiving, - and something deeply in us changes. We see the world in a different light – and quite literally a light – the Light of Christ and a glimpse of God’s glory. For it, we give thanks and praise.

The writer of Hebrews tells us God has always spoken to us. In the first,

“He (God) spoke to our ancestors by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son.” (1:1,2)

“He is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being”. (1:3)

In the Incarnation, God’s Word became flesh. In Jesus we see clearly, the nature of God. Divine, Jesus reflects perfectly, the glory of God through the suffering of death.

David Adam, in the introduction to his book of prayers, which he calls “Traces of Glory”, describes the island on which he was living, Holy Island, as the home of many saints. Aiden came and founded a monastery there, Chad, Cedd, Wilfred, Cuthbert all spent times of prayer and dedication on the island. On this patch of earth, Eadfrith wrote the Lindisfarne Gospels to the glory of God and St Cuthbert. Later, the Benedictines built a daughter house to their monastery in Durham. Adam says, “All have left traces of themselves and their work”.

Few places on earth exist where so many well-known transformations take shape – or where well-known saints have stayed and prayed – but there are many places on earth where transformations are brought about by God’s love and grace acting in the lives of ordinary people. The scale is not ours to know – suffice, that ordinary children, women and men, do bring lasting change by the love and presence of God revealed through them. David Adam dedicates his book to Will, who died aged 56, and who in life, showed many traces of glory.

“If life is to have traces of eternal it must have the Eternal with it and around it. Now, in this world, we need to show traces of glory.”

Prayers of Intercession

Prepared by Martin Ounsted

We, as the Body of Christ, are diverse communities in all forms and places. We range from small rural parishes with tiny buildings, or none at all, to prosperous communities in grand metropolitan churches, such as in the city of London.

There are communities in deprived council estates, where priests and their families choose to go and witness in the heart of them.

Other parts of the church are represented by communities of nuns and monks, such as the inspirational community of monks at Alton Abbey, and the brothers and sisters at Mucknell Abbey.

These living, witnessing communities, who proclaim the gospels by the fruits that they produce, demonstrate who they really are.

We give thanks for them all.

We especially pray for those whose ministry is felt to be unsupported by their diocese and the community they find themselves in; may we reach out to them in their perceived isolation.

We thank God that when two or three are gathered together, God is with them.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for our Queen and Royal Family as they try to fulfil a role they did not apply for, and which requires qualities of character and abilities, that some do not possess.

May they be granted the wisdom to hear and follow the advice they receive.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for our government as they attempt to respond to fast moving events. May they be granted the capability to cooperate with all countries and organisations to forward the well-being of all humanity in our common good.

We pray for the approaching Cop26 Conference, that we may leave a world into which our descendants may survive and thrive-because of what we do today.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We give thanks for this Centenary year of The Royal British Legion and rejoice that what started as a tiny acorn-in the form of Fladbury Flow, has so grown into the oak that is expanding exponentially, with engaged knitters and crochet workers, often in the form of people who have never previously been so engaged. This participation helps to reinforce our community.

We rejoice that this building provides the site and facilities to support this initiative. We rejoice too, St James' Bishampton offers welcome to the Brownies who meet there.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for the sick, known and unknown to us.

We give thanks that we have experts who can understand and research issues that we did not previously comprehend.

We thank God that research into Long Covid is serendipitously throwing light onto the origins and mechanisms of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, thus giving an evidence base for this condition, -and new respect for those suffering the double indignity of debility and disbelief, caused by those receiving their reports not accepting-what they could not comprehend.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Today is the second anniversary of the death of our dear friend Philip Hildesley. We pray for Sue, Emma and Mark in their grief.

We pray for the family of Michael Pedley of Lower Moor, who is to be buried in our churchyard on Wednesday.

The same day sees the burial of Ann Champion's ashes, joining John's body at our priest's plot. We pray for her family here, and in Dublin.

We remember Margurite Molyneux who died this week, and pray for Ros and Peter Chatterton.

We pray for all bereaved family and friends as they process the loss of a dear one, we particularly pray for those whose process of grieving is stuck and unable to move on.

May God grant them peace, and acceptance of their loss.

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