



St Michael & All Angels, Chetwynd

The Collect for the Seventh Sunday after Trinity

(Book of Common Prayer)

Lord of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things: Graft in our hearts the love of thy name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

This collect is another example of one that is also authorised for this Sunday in Common Worship, albeit in “you and your” form. The collect’s background is the Gelasian Sacramentary, and the Sarum Mass; it was translated, fairly loosely, into English from the original Latin for the Prayer Book of 1549.

God is described as being “Lord of all power and might”, ‘power’ and ‘might’ not differing in meaning but enriching the prayer by underlining this aspect of God’s nature whilst enhancing the prayer’s rhythm. He is also “the author and giver of all good things”, the use of the two words ‘author’ and ‘giver’ again moving the prayer with a certain swing. To emphasise that God is the origin of all that is good, the Cranmerian reformers have altered the original Latin preamble to reflect James 1:17a: “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights”.

This is an especially memorable collect because of the four clear petitions it contains, the petitions having a cumulative effect, each led by direct and memorable verbs: ‘graft’, ‘increase’, ‘nourish’, ‘keep us’. The Latin word underlying ‘graft’ can also mean ‘plant’. The collect is thus an extended metaphor of the farmer or gardener: the fruit of good works is brought forth by the grace of God who plants, nourishes, and continues to care for his own.

This metaphor is well suited to this time in the Church’s liturgical year. Following Eastertide and Pentecost, the Sundays after Trinity are designed to help us explore the consequences of Christ’s work and the subsequent gift of the Holy Spirit, and to help us grow in faith both collectively as the Church and as individuals within the Church.

Jesus also used the metaphor of cultivating plants to help his hearers grasp the nature of the kingdom of God he lived and taught.

One example is in Matthew 13: *“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof”* (verses 31b & 32). To open ourselves to God’s gifts of love and mercy will extend his kingdom and will “increase in us true religion”.

James Graham

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