

Please share this bulletin as far and wide as you can – thank you

## 14<sup>th</sup> June 2020 – First Sunday after Trinity



### View from a Vicarage

Welcome to this week's Bredon Hill Group Bulletin, and it marks a turning point as Monday sees the beginning of the journey towards the reopening of our church buildings, following the government's guidance to allow people to come into the church buildings once again for private prayer. Hopefully, this will be one more step towards the end of the lockdown we have endured for the last few months, and the easing of so many restrictions on our lives.

The observant of you will notice that I have therefore changed the title of this message to celebrate this change, from "view inside a vicarage" to "view from a vicarage", reflecting that we are not now so confined to our homes that we cannot go outside and visit many of the places we love; And for those of you who are connected to me on Facebook, will know that this week I shared a photo of my daughter holding a takeaway coffee in Upton on Seven, celebrating my first, and much yearned for, café latte (one of my guilty pleasures) since the start of Lockdown. It will therefore also be a relief that

from 15<sup>th</sup> June many of our shops will be reopening, and I feel that given this, it is good that the government have at last appreciated the need for people to visit their places of faith and worship in order to pray and reflect on what is happening in the world around us in these unprecedented times, to enable people to enter a church for personal prayer. Some of you however, may feel church leaders have been over cautious in keeping church buildings closed for so long, but rightly or wrongly, we can now at last see those first shoots of returning to whatever will be the new normal. It is for this reason that the word **hope** has been very much in my mind this last week, because as things begin to look a little more optimistic in terms of controlling the virus, and as many of us do resume a degree of normality in our lives, we start to look beyond the difficulties and challenges of the last few months and see the hope of a brighter future.

The epistle reading for this week is one of my favourite passages in the bible, for the reading from Roman's talks about suffering producing character and character, hope, and hope does not disappoint us. It is a passage which has brought me much personal strength and comfort when things in life have been tough and challenging, as it is in these times that we have the opportunity to rely on our faith; in fact sometimes it is only that faith which gives us something to cling onto. However, through these circumstances, our characters are subtly remoulded by God, and we gain that hope which only God's presence can give, that of an assurance and affirmation of who God is. It is then that we are able to boast in the hope of the glory of God.

As we reflect on the challenges we have faced over the last few months, some of us still living through the direct pain and consequences of the pandemic, and many of us still uncertain of what the future will bring, it is hope that we need to cling onto. For hope offers release from pain to give peace, it offers a sense of security and stability to feelings of uncertainty and it offers the opportunity to boast of a love by God which is so strong, that not even death can defeat it.

Last weekend, although the celebrations were very muted, I was moved by the pictures on television of the commemorations which took place in France and Belgium to mark the anniversary of D Day. Some veterans who had planned to visit the places where the landings had taken place could obviously not go because of the pandemic; However, residents of the villages in Belgium and France did not let the date and anniversary go unmarked. Instead they planted white roses on the beach, as well as laying some ceremonial wreaths. For them, the dedication and sacrifice of what many British servicemen did to protect the people of those villages was so great, that it had to be acknowledged: and in the planting of roses there was an expression of a hope that conflicts, wars and hatred between people would never happen again.

This is a hope that is shared as we have witnessed the riots in America highlighting the discrimination and unequal treatment between people of different coloured skin, race and religion; And the many international protests which have followed in the wake of the death of George Floyd, highlights the hope that attitudes and practices can and must change, if we are prepared to recognize the mistakes of past prejudices and inequalities. It is in the sight of people kneeling in sympathy with the disadvantaged,

that we see that suffering can produce hope, and hope will not put us to shame or disappoint us.

Let us therefore look forward with hope. Hope that we may be moving towards a greater amount of flexibility and freedom, hope that we may be able to enjoy some of the former pleasures we have been denied for the last few months and hope that our church buildings can soon be used again for the purposes for which they were built, the worship and prayer to God.

However, I do need to express a word of caution, for although it is good that some of our buildings may soon open again, due to the ongoing position of shielding and the risk of the spread of infection, it may be that not all churches will open at once; Nor that those opening will be open all the time. For this initial opening needs to be carried out in a measured way, to enable our church communities to ensure the safety and protection of everyone entering the buildings. Churchwardens are therefore currently undertaking risk assessments and putting in measures, such as cleaning arrangements and hand sanitisers, to make sure everyone is protected as much as possible from the potential risk of spread of the virus. Please therefore be patient, especially if your church is not one of the first churches to open on 15<sup>th</sup> June – we will get there, but it may just take a bit of time!

I would also like to reiterate my welcome to Bishop Martin and his family who did move into Bredon Rectory last week, and to apologise to Katharine for spelling her name wrongly. I understand that their move went well, and we look forward to having them join our worshipping community, as and when they have fully settled in.

Finally, there will be another recorded service of Holy Communion next Sunday, and I gradually hope to record these services from several of the churches across Bredon Hill, as and when they can be opened; And to make these services more representative of our church communities I am looking for volunteers who would be happy to read the lesson and/or do the intercessions for that or a future service, and record it and send it through to me. If you are someone who would like to do this, then please do let me know and I will add your name to the list of people who have agreed to do this. To this end I would like to thank Rev. Catherine Lack from Bredon for writing and recording our reflection this week and to Heather Smith from Eckington for reading the lesson.

As always, please feel free to contact me if you wish anything to be publicised within the Bulletin and to end, I pray you may all experience the hope of God, and have a blessed and enjoyable week ahead.

*Allison*

**Reverend Allison Davies**

Vicar of Eckington, Defford with Besford and Associate Priest for the churches of the Bredon Hill Group



## **Principal service based on Holy Communion for the First Sunday after Trinity Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

### **Collect**

O God,  
the strength of all those who put their trust in you,  
mercifully accept our prayers  
and, because through the weakness of our mortal nature  
we can do no good thing without you,  
grant us the help of your grace,  
that in the keeping of your commandments  
we may please you both in will and deed;  
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.

**Amen**

### **Reading:** Romans 5: 1-8

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

### **Reading:** Psalm 116: 1, 10-17

I love the LORD, because he has heard  
my voice and my supplications.  
I kept my faith, even when I said,  
"I am greatly afflicted";  
I said in my consternation,  
"Everyone is a liar."

What shall I return to the LORD  
for all his bounty to me?  
I will lift up the cup of salvation  
and call on the name of the LORD,  
I will pay my vows to the LORD  
in the presence of all his people.  
Precious in the sight of the LORD  
is the death of his faithful ones.  
O LORD, I am your servant;  
I am your servant, the child of your serving girl.  
You have loosed my bonds.  
I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice  
and call on the name of the LORD.

**Reading:** Matthew 9: 35 – 10: 8 (9-23)

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him. These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

**Post Communion Prayer**

Eternal Father,  
we thank you for nourishing us  
with these heavenly gifts:  
may our communion strengthen us in faith,  
build us up in hope,  
and make us grow in love;  
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord

**Amen**



## Reflection for the First Sunday after Trinity 2020 Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June

*God, give me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;  
The courage to change the things I can;  
And the wisdom to know the difference.*

All my dogs were named after saints. All were rescue dogs, so being named after saints was not necessarily the intention of the original owners. “Judy” – quickly became known as Jude, who is Patron saint of lost causes. She lived up to that! My second dog, Polo, was of course named after Polycarp, an early bishop who according to the Penguin dictionary of saints “must have been an important figure in the early church” ie We don’t know much about him. My third dog, whose name was Foxy, defeated me for a while. Is there a saint called Fox or Foxy? Er... Then a friend of mine came up with St Francis Xavier, written St FX, and one can imagine the “O” in there...

Why am I saying all this? Because this week there have been 2 saints who are important, to me and to many. The first is Columba. He undoubtedly existed, and we know a fair amount about him. He came over from Ireland in 563 and settled on the island of Iona, off Mull on the west coast of Scotland. He went about preaching the good news, no doubt at all. He may even be responsible for bring Christianity to mainland Britain. When at school, I along with many others, learned about how Augustine brought Christianity to Britain, by landing “correctly” in Kent, and making his way to Canterbury, I learned that it was he who “brought Christianity to this country”. That was in 597, which just happens to be the year Columba died. Columba was quite a lot earlier than that. He came with friends, about 12 of them, and they built a monastery on Iona, the first place from which he “couldn’t see Ireland” (he was fleeing, from a possible court case – we don’t really know), and set about a) living the Christian life as he saw it; and b) spreading the good news as far as he could travel. He followed Jesus. Little or nothing of his monastery remains on the island of Iona (the main remains you see are Benedictine monastery formed 600 years or so later, and restored in the 20<sup>th</sup> century). But his influence remains today.

The second saint this week is Barnabas. He is mentioned in the New Testament – as a companion of Paul. He wasn’t one of the original 12 disciples we hear of this gospel reading, but he’s described in Acts 11:24 as “a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith”. That sounds OK to me. We know he was a Cypriot Jew, and that he was sent to the growing centre of Antioch, and he fetched Paul to help him. He is known as the “encourager”, and I know gives hope to many.

This gospel reading says basically “Go out. Preach the good news”. I am sending you out. Into the world. You don’t know what you’re going to find there. But go anyway. That’s what Columba did – very obviously. That’s also what Barnabas did – in a more encouraging way.

I’m writing this on St Columba’s day, early in the week. And so far this week the news has been dominated by the “Black lives matter” campaign, demonstrations, pulling down the statue in Bristol, the response of various authorities. One reaction that I liked particularly was “It’s not enough not to be racist; you must be anti-racist”. And I’m sure that’s right. It’s similar to what was said about the Nazi Holocaust – All it takes for bad things to happen is for good people to say / do nothing. But that is SO challenging.

Much of the time I stay happily below the parapet. Just occasionally I emerge, and say something. Sometimes it’s heard, other times it’s not, and I retreat again back into the relative security of my own 4 walls, my own family. But J says “Go!” “Proclaim the good news”. That doesn’t necessarily mean we need to be politicians knocking on people’s doors before an election “Are you going to vote for me? – Please do” (or “You’d be a fool not to!”). It does mean that we pray and ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers, including us, into his harvest. It means we are called to stay in touch with God enough, and with what is going on in the world, that we are equipped to speak out when the moment comes. It means we take notice of what goes on in the world enough that we can comment in depth when asked, rather than a superficial comment that will either get forgotten or ridiculed. We can’t do that on everything – that’s OK –

but we can do it on some issues. But it means that I, as a preacher, try always to preach with the bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other. It means that I, as a Christian, try always to live with the bible in one hand (metaphorically!) and the newspaper in the other. Sometimes one will get more emphasis than the other; other times the other way around; but always the challenge is to relate the gospel to today's situations.

So the gospel this week says "Go. Preach the good news". It's challenging – but sometimes we are called to speak out; and at other times to encourage. The wisdom, it seems to me, is to know the difference.

Two prayers come to mind, one well-known, the other should be better known. I invite you to use them this week. The well-known one is the "Serenity prayer":

God, give me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;  
The courage to change the things I can;  
And the wisdom to know the difference.

That's a wonderful prayer! In so many ways it's what we all want, and what we hope and pray that our leaders have.

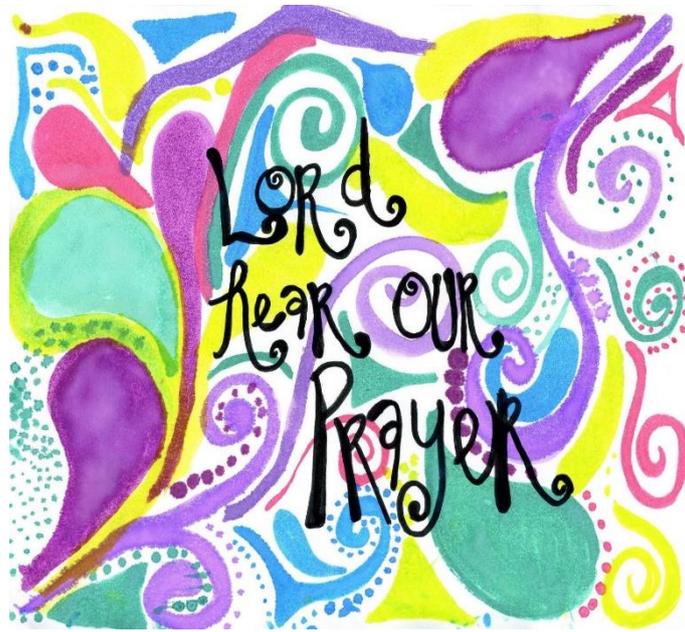
That's a wonderful prayer! In so many ways it's what we all want, and what we hope and pray that our leaders have.

And the less well-known prayer, one which I've loved since being a teenager, comes from an unknown source in Bangladesh:

*O Saviour Christ,  
in whose way of love lies the secret of all life,  
and the hope of all people;  
We pray for quiet courage to match this hour.  
We did not choose to be born or to live in such an age;  
but let its problems challenge us,  
its discoveries exhilarate us,  
its injustices anger us,  
its possibilities inspire us, and its vigour renew us.  
For your Kingdom's sake.*

**Amen**

Revd Catherine Lack  
(retired Minister – St Giles', Bredon)



### **Intercessions for the First Sunday After Trinity**

Loving God be in our midst as we pray for our world, for our church, and for ourselves.

We pray for the places in our world where there is conflict of any kind, and we remember especially the current tensions across the United States following the death of George Floyd; We pray for those who are the victims of inequality and unfair social justice, and we bring you now all those countries where people are disadvantaged and live in oppression.

We pray that there will be people there who show your love, your compassion, to all who are in need, regardless of their colour, their nationality, their religion or lack of it, and ask that there will be people there who will witness to that love.

We pray for our Queen, for the Duke of Edinburgh who celebrated his 99<sup>th</sup> birthday this last week, for our government and all leaders in positions of authority and responsibility. May their decisions be based on your wisdom and understanding, such that they be fair and equitable to all people.

Lord, in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer**

We pray for the needs of the church worldwide, especially Christians in places where there is acute poverty or unrest and where peace is but a dream.

Lord, we give thanks that from Monday some of our church buildings will be open for personal prayer, and we look forward to the time when we can come together once again for wider acts of public worship. We pray for protection and safety on all who enter our buildings and ask that You hear the prayers of all who enter your house.

We pray for our churches in the Diocese of Worcester and especially those in the area of Bredon Hill. We give thanks for our Bishops, John of Worcester, Martin of Dudley, for Archdeacons Robert and Nicki, for the Evesham deanery and Rural Dean, Richard Thorniley and for their Lay Chair, Liz Booth; And in the wider Anglican Church, we pray for the Diocese of Argyll and the Isles in Scotland, for Connor in Ireland, for Myanmar in Burma and Lolland Falster in Denmark. Bless and inspire their bishops and send your Holy Spirit on all who worship and who give witness to your Good News in those communities.

Lord, in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer**

As many activities and businesses start to reopen this week, we pray for all people whose livelihoods have been adversely affected by the lockdown of the last few months, and ask that your guiding Holy Spirit brings hope to the many people who now face uncertain futures.

We continue to pray for all essential services and for those whose work puts them in unsafe situations; We remember particularly those in our hospitals, hospices and care homes. We pray for creative and technical skills for all those seeking to find a vaccine to the virus, and ask that through continued faith in You, we may find that certainty that there will soon be an end to the suffering it has caused.

We pray also for the teachers and non-teaching staff in our local schools and colleges, as they try to find ways to ensure that the children and young people in their care, and they themselves, stay safe, whilst providing education and learning. We bring before you all young people who are at the end of their education and are now looking towards the next steps in their life journeys. We pray that they will find direction and live in the knowledge that You have their futures safely in your hands. We give thanks for all who put themselves at risk for the benefit of others and pray that they may know your blessing through their sacrifices.

Lord, in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer**

We bring before loving Father all those people who are sick or in pain, especially those known to us personally. We remember today all those suffering from the Corona virus, and all those who have suffered mental ill health because of the implications of lockdown. We thank you that You are a God of healing, and ask that you bring them comfort, strength and relief from all their suffering, and that they maintain that hope and trust in Your unfailing love and compassion.

Lord, in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer**

We remember too those who have died recently, or who are facing death, especially those known to us. We pray too for people who die alone or in great pain, and for all whose death is untimely. We pray particularly for everyone who has lost someone they love but were unable to go to their funeral. May all who grieve know the comfort of Your Holy Spirit, and may we, with those who have gone before, live in the hope of Your eternal Kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy,  
**Hear our prayer**

Loving God, we commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray, to your love and mercy. Make us people of compassion; make us people who see you at work and who point to all that you are doing in our midst. When we falter or lose hope, remind us that the disciples were also just ordinary people who got it wrong, yet through the Holy Spirit they changed the world. Give us the power of the Holy Spirit to be their successors, your eyes and hands and feet and voice in our time, in our community.

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



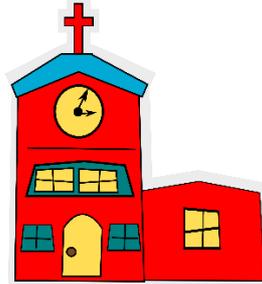
**Please pray for** the ill and isolated, hospital and medical research staff, all those working on the frontline and those who have died. We pray for all whose anniversary of death falls at this time and for all who have been bereaved.

**Those on the frontline:** Alison Herbert a nurse who has been working with the DART (Disaster and Relief Team) and the Mercy Ships in Italy

**Those who are sick:** David Hardy, Joan Green

**Those in residential care:** Barbara Milton

**Those who have died and their families:** Jon Doney, Barbara Howell, John Bennett, Charles Bigland-Gibbons, John Bolton



## **Church and Village News**

As our churches begin to open and events are planned it would be useful to keep everyone informed. If you have any details that you would like to share within the Bulletin, please email us at [eckingtonvicarage@hotmail.com](mailto:eckingtonvicarage@hotmail.com)

St Faith's in Overbury will be pleased to open next week. We propose to do so as follows in the first instance:

Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> – 9.30 – 12

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> – 2 – 4

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> – 10 – 12

To begin with at least while people get used to the system, these times will be supervised with somebody on hand to welcome and direct. A one-way system will be operated with people coming in at the small North door and leaving by the main one. Notices, sanitisers and washing facilities will also be in place.

**Daily Hope offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line.**

The line – which is available 24 hours a day on 0800 804 8044 – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind.



*“With many in our country on lockdown, it’s important that we support those who are feeling lonely and isolated, whatever age they are.”* Archbishop Justin Welby

Options available include materials also available digitally by the Church of England’s Communications team such as [Prayer During the Day and Night Prayer](#) updated daily, from Common Worship, and a recording of the Church of England [weekly national online service](#).

A section called Hymn Line offers callers a small selection of hymns, updated daily. An option entitled ‘Hymns We Love’, provides a hymn and reflection and is based on an initiative by the Connections group.

Downloadable resources include logos and posters to help publicise this free service to those who need it most. The link for this is <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-parishes/daily-hope-phone-line>

## News from the Diocese

### Churches reopening for private prayer

7 Jun 2020 By [Bishop John](#)



You will have seen that the government made known last night that churches will be allowed to open for private prayer from 15 June. I see this as good news which establishes an important principle in that, as the BBC put it, ‘the government was persuaded that if the public is ready to re-engage in retail therapy then people of faith ought to be allowed to enter places of worship.’

That having been said, it is vital to be clear that not all churches can or should open at present. There are many which cannot yet safely do so and no-one should feel bounced or pushed into this. Indeed, it is not straightforward to reopen the Cathedral even for limited access and the Chapter will be taking a very careful view about the date on which this will become possible.

The archdeacons have already pointed you towards guidance on risk assessments to determine whether not it is safe for particular churches to open for private prayer. In the next day or two they will be inviting churchwardens to briefings/consultations on Zoom together with Mark Carter to give input and advice and take questions. As bishops and archdeacons, we are here to support you in the decision you reach after careful consideration and consultation.

It is worth observing that the entry into lockdown was simple and straightforward but opening up is likely to continue to be more ragged and contentious. I hope that we shall be able to set a good example to society in remembering that not all things that are lawful are beneficial (cf 1 Corinthians 10.23).

Thank you for your continuing ministry in these stressful times and God bless you in it.

+John



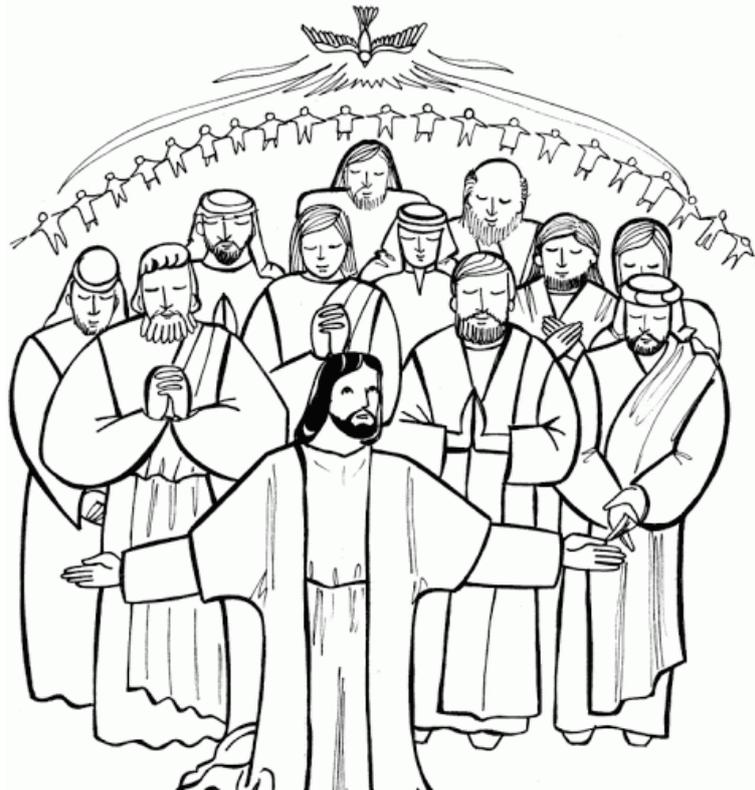
Prayers and diocesan news can be found at [www.cofe-worcester.org.uk](http://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk)

## The Holy Trinity

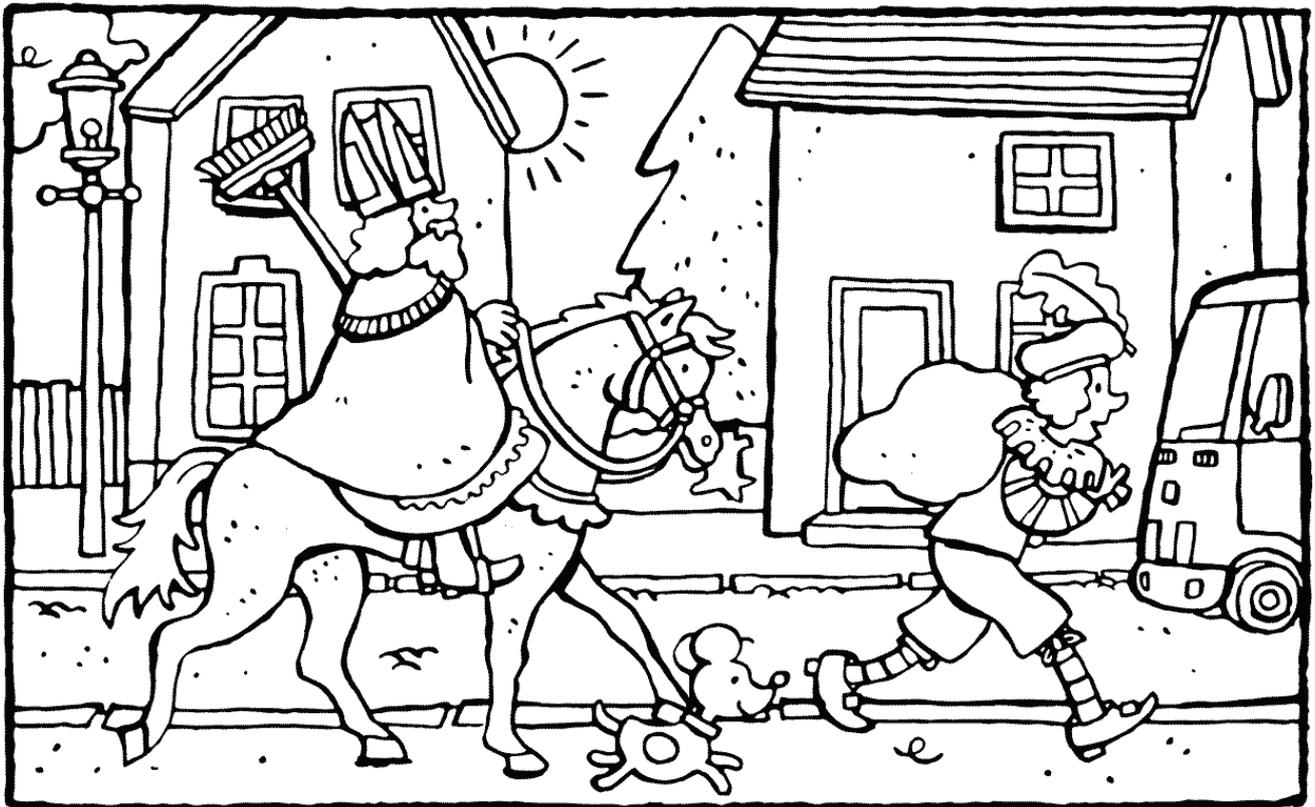
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GOD  
RESURRECTION  
BELIEF  
TOGETHER  
JESUS  
HOLY SPIRIT  
STRONG  
INCARNATION  
SON  
FATHER  
DIVINE  
IMMORTAL

Play this puzzle online at : <http://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/1162/>



Spot the differences and colour in



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