



Connection

Sunday 26th September 2021
Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity



Collect

Almighty God,
you have made us for yourself,
and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you:
pour your love into our hearts and draw us to yourself,
and so bring us at last to your heavenly city
where we shall see you face to face;
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

James 5: 13-end

Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest. My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

Mark 9: 38-end

John said to Jesus, 'Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.' But Jesus said, 'Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterwards to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will

by no means lose the reward. If any of you put a stumbling-block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched. For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.'

Post Communion Prayer

Lord, we pray that your grace
may always precede and follow us,
and make us continually to be given to all good works;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Reflection

The sermon this week is from Adam Hadley, Priest in Charge at St Mary, Kingswinford and the Ascension, Wall Heath.

You can listen to the podcast at www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/your-faith/prayer-worship/sermon-podcasts



In last week's Gospel reading we had the disciples arguing over who was the greatest and it would appear that they didn't really learn the lesson because today in our Gospel reading from St Mark we have John basically being exclusive. He informs Jesus that someone had cast out a demon in his name but that the disciples told the man to stop because he was not following them. And this made me think about how often I come across situations where someone is prevented from doing something because they aren't one of the prevailing group.

I'm a fairly nostalgic person and one of the things I occasionally choose to do is watch old children's TV on YouTube. So if you're a child of the 80s or a parent or grandparent of a child growing up in the 80s you may remember a TV show called the Raggydolls. And the concept of the show was that dolls were being made on the production line and some of them had faults and so they got chucked into the bin. And the opening lines in the theme tune were:

It's not much of a life when you're just a pretty face
Just to be whoever you are is no disgrace
Don't be scared if you don't fit in
Look who's in the reject bin!

And whilst this might seem a bit of random aside, the thing I've found when revisiting my childhood TV programmes is that there's often a strong moral message seeping through. Messages of toleration, acceptance, of being a community. In many ways the messages given to children are often the ones then forgotten as adults when new expectations of being realistic rather than idealistic seem to seep through. But this completely goes against what Jesus tells the disciples in the Gospel today. He reminds them that actually they should be like the "little ones" because it is there, in their idealistic views of toleration and acceptance where Jesus is found and not in the world of the powerful and the tough and so called realism.

And this encouraged me to think about my own response to people and situations and whether I still have a child like idealism or whether I've been bogged down in false but prevailing concepts of adult realism? Do I find myself welcoming people who have otherwise been rejected? Do I venture out to the raggy doll bin and build a community where everyone is welcome? Because where God is concerned there are no boundaries, there are no people more important or special than others. In God's Kingdom everyone is amazing, special and not beyond redemption or forgiveness.

So coming back to John's response in the gospel. And the key quote for me is "he was not following us". John was wanting to control access to Jesus. To create a club where some had access and some did not. And to be honest that's fairly typical of a lot of clubs where some people are welcome because they fit a criteria and others don't. Whether that's right or wrong it's the way of the world. But those who follow Jesus aren't called to be create a club or a holy huddle but instead help form a community of faith where all people can truly find a welcome.

And you may then be asking but what will all this achieve. If we give this welcome, if we create this community, if we include rather than exclude. And this is where the Gospel and reading from the letter of James come together. At first glance this bit of the letter could almost read like prayer being a magic wand, that if we pray enough we can work through our shopping list of prayers and wants and get them all nicely – thank you very much God. But this isn't what prayer is about, although that's a whole other talk, but instead I think this final part of James' letter is more about what a community of faith can achieve. Of what it is there to do. So as well as giving welcome, a community of faith can offer prayers for healing, it can offer mutual challenge to behave according to the Gospel and receive forgiveness and where people wander into sin then the community is there to guide the person back to God. And this isn't available to a clique but open to everyone.

I was also reading a book recently which really struck a chord with me and the book was discussing being a Christian and never going to church and how actually as Christians we need church, we need to belong to a community of faith in order to receive healing, challenge, forgiveness and prayer just as James describes in his letter.

As I said today, two densely packed, difficult and challenging lessons. Both where we are shown that Jesus is challenging, that to truly follow him, to be his disciples, is to open ourselves to scrutiny and challenge, to find Jesus in the weak and the vulnerable, and to create a community where true inclusion is lived even when it would be easier to fall back into a nice, tidy club with like minded people. We are called to avoid the holy huddle. Amen.

Harvest Time



Collect

Eternal God, you crown the year with your goodness
and you give us the fruits of the earth in their season:
grant that we may use them to your glory,
for the relief of those in need and for our own well-being;
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

Joel 2: 21-27

Do not fear, O soil; be glad and rejoice, for the LORD has done great things! Do not fear, you animals of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness are green; the tree bears its fruit, the fig tree and vine give their full yield. O children of Zion, be glad and rejoice in the LORD your God; for he has given the early rain for your vindication, he has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the later rain, as before. The threshing-floors shall be full of grain, the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. I will repay you for the years that the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and the cutter, my great army, which I sent against you. You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, who has dealt wondrously with you. And my people shall never again be put to shame. You shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I, the LORD, am your God and there is no other. And my people shall never again be put to shame.

Matt 6: 25-33

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?—And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Post Communion Prayer

Lord of the harvest, with joy we have offered thanksgiving for your love in creation
and have shared in the bread and wine of the kingdom:
by your grace plant within us a reverence for all that you give us
and make us generous and wise stewards of the good things we enjoy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Requests for Prayers

Please pray for those who are vulnerable and homeless across the Diocese. Give thanks for those who work to protect and support them.



We pray for all those who are sick everywhere and for those who have asked for our prayers and for their carers: Roy and Margaret Putnam, Brian Bolam, Yvonne Seward, Laurence Alexander, Ros and Rob, Jo Gunner, David Fenton, Michael Leven and his wife Allison and daughter Sophie, Matt Oliver and his family, Andrea Randles and her husband and daughter, Frances Fairclough and her husband Robin and their children and grandchildren and also for Sky Redfern, aged 17, who is having a major life-changing operation.

We continue to pray for: Percy and Sharon Blizzard, Jackie Pickford, Clive Hunt.

We pray for those who are in residential care: Barbara Milton, Rita Sheppy and David Wilkinson.

We pray for those who have died everywhere: John Morrison (Alstone) and his family; Nicola Whitehouse and her husband, two sons, daughter and grandchildren who will miss her; Pru Dowson (Elmley) and her family; John Monks (Defford) and his family. And also for those whose anniversary of death falls at this time.

If there is someone or something that you would like us to pray for, please email eckingtonvicarage@hotmail.com and we will include them on the prayer list



Church Services

The church services this week will be at:

9.00am Defford Harvest – Rev Allison
10.30am Bredon Harvest – Rev Allison
10.30am Alstone Harvest – Rev Katryn
4.00pm Great Comberton Harvest – Rev Katryn



Midweek Communion at 10am

13th October – Overbury – Reverend Katryn Leclezio
20th October – Little Comberton – Reverend Allison Davies
27th October – Defford – Reverend Katryn Leclezio

Rota for October 2021

Date	Time	Place	Presiding
3 rd October	9.00am	Bredon's Norton (Harvest Service)	Reverend Allison
	9.00am	Little Comberton (Harvest Service)	Reverend Katryn
	10.30am	Eckington (Harvest Service)	Reverend Allison
	10.30am	Beckford (Harvest Service)	Reverend Katryn
10 th October	9.00am	Bricklehampton	Reverend Katryn
	9.00am	Besford	Bishop Michael Hooper
	10.30am	Elmley Castle (Harvest Service)	Reverend Katryn
	10.30am	Ashton Under Hill (Harvest Service)	Reverend Catherine Lack
	4.00pm	Overbury (Harvest Service)	Reverend Katryn
17 th October	9.00am	Eckington	Reverend Allison
	9.00am	Overbury	Reverend Katryn
	10.30am	Bredon	Reverend Allison
	10.30am	Great Comberton	Reverend Katryn
24 th October	9.00am	Elmley Castle	Reverend Katryn
	10.30am	Bredon	Reverend Alison Maddocks
	10.30am	Defford	Reverend Allison
	10.30am	Teddington	Reverend Katryn
31 st October United Service	10.30am	Eckington	Reverend Allison and Reverend Katryn



Prayers and diocesan news can be found at www.cofe-worcester.org.uk



Rev Allison Davies



Rev Katryn Leclezio

