



**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

***The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity / Holy Cross Day / Creationtide***

## **Gospel Reading**

### **John 3:13-17**

<sup>13</sup>No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. <sup>14</sup>And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, <sup>15</sup>that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

<sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

<sup>17</sup>Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

**Other Readings: Numbers 21:4-9      Psalm 22:23-28      Philippians 2:6-11**

## **Homily**

"The cat has brought in another mouse!" How many of us have heard that familiar phrase? Picture the scene. There it is - a small grey bundle of fear tucked trembling behind the cooker while the sleek, black cat prowls around and licks its lips in anticipation. Children cluster around, shooing the cat away, eyes wide with concern and pleading that the mouse be saved. "Okay" you say, "we'll catch it and put it back outside where it belongs." And then there follows 10 minutes of planning to find a way of safely removing the terrified mouse. "Okay mouse", you say hopefully, "you just sit quietly and we'll get you back outside", and carefully, oh so carefully, you try and catch it in your hands. But of course, the mouse is having none of it. He is as distrustful of you as he is of the cat. Then, as the effort and frustration increase, you ask yourself if the trouble is really worth it, and why the mouse won't let you help it.

How is a cat and mouse story such as this related to you and me? The truth is that we can be like that mouse when God in his goodness and compassion tries to save us. Sometimes we seem to have the idea that God is out to get us - that he is the judge, who sees all our dark and secret sins which we would rather no one knew about, and who is just waiting to trip us up if we go wrong. If we are anxious in this way, it is because we are letting false notions of God take over - we are forgetting the Gospel.

God does see all we do, but his response is not to condemn us. He sees sin for what it is, the damaging and wounding force that causes us so much misery and distress, and God's response is to look on us with great tenderness and compassion. Jesus did not come to damn us, but to free us, to liberate us from all that makes us less than what we really are, from everything that makes us less human, less loving.

This is why the Gospel today asks the exasperated question: why on earth do people continually resist God's effort to save the world when he is only trying to help? "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him".

That seems the hardest thing in the world for us to believe, and even religious people seem to find it just as hard to accept that God really does not condemn us. He wants to rescue us. He offers us love.

But people clearly do resist the love of God. We still watch the news broadcast full of war and greed and violence, of rich and poor, the well-fed and the hungry. We are still unable to do very much in the face of the rising tide of poverty at home and abroad. We still hurt our children, our mothers and fathers, our brothers and sisters. We still lash out at our friends and bully and torment those we don't like. We can look at our own hearts and see that there is a mixture of good and bad within us. All of us live ambiguous lives, sometimes living the life of God, sometimes destroying the vision that we are trying so hard to build. We are still in need of the healing grace of God if we are to fulfil our purpose.

It does seem a hopelessly difficult task. In fact, if we depended solely on our own efforts, it would be impossible and we might as well give up right away. But thank God it is not by our own efforts that we can start to live the life of the kingdom of God. God reaches in to pluck us out of our sin and fills us with his grace so that we are transformed. He takes away our sin and gives us his own life. He encourages us to nourish that life with word and sacrament. All we need to do is accept it and allow ourselves to change as we grow.

Giving ourselves up to the love of God can appear to be a frightening process. But if we can only let go of our fears and trust him, then we will not be disappointed. God is truth and his truth sets us free.

### **Conversation Questions**

1. Are we able to fully trust in God's promises?
2. In Philippians verses 6-8 Jesus and God are one in human form being humble and obedient finally leading to his sacrifice on the cross. What does the cross mean to you?
3. Is there anything else from the passage not already discussed that speaks to you? What is it?
4. What will you do this week in your Monday-to-Saturday ministry in response to what you have heard today? #everydayfaith

### **Prayer**

Spend some time in prayer, responding to what you have heard today and listening to what God might be saying to you.

### **Collect of the day**

*Almighty God,  
who called your Church to bear witness  
that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself:  
help us to proclaim the good news of your love,  
that all who hear it may be drawn to you;*

*through him who was lifted up on the cross,  
and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.*

*(or)*

*Almighty God,  
you search us and know us:  
may we rely on you in strength  
and rest on you in weakness,  
now and in all our days;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

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