

Virtual Worship
22 August – 12 September 2021

*Please use this material with the order of Virtual Service for
the Linton Team of Churches Ordinary Time*

Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

Collects

Almighty and everlasting God,
you are always more ready to hear than we to pray
and to give more than either we desire or deserve:
pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy,
forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid
and giving us those good things
 which we are not worthy to ask
but through the merits and mediation
of 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.**

Or

God of constant mercy,
who sent your Son to save us:
remind us of your goodness,
increase your grace within us,
that our thankfulness may grow,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Readings

Joshua 24:1-2a; 14-18

The Tribes Renew the Covenant

Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said to all the people, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Long ago your

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ancestors—Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor—lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods.

‘Now therefore revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.’

Then the people answered, ‘Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods; for it is the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; and the Lord drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God.’

John 6:56-69

Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever.’ He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

The Words of Eternal Life

When many of his disciples heard it, they said, ‘This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?’ But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, ‘Does this offend you? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But among you there are some who do not believe.’ For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. And he said,

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‘For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.’

Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So Jesus asked the twelve, ‘Do you also wish to go away?’ Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.’

Reflection

Together With God service 22 August 2021

John 6:56-69

The Bread of Life

“I am the bread of life”

Here we have in the Gospel of John, the first of the 7 “I am” statements Jesus made. This is intrinsically linked to how God revealed his name to Moses in the Old Testament “I AM WHO I AM”.

“I am the bread of Life”

In John 8:12 Jesus states “I am the light”

In John 10:7 & 9 Jesus States “I am the door”

In John 10 “I am the good shepherd”

In John 11 “I am the resurrection and the life”

In John 14 “I am the way, the truth the life”

And In John 15 “I am the true vine”

“I am the bread of life”

In our passage this morning Jesus continues to try and explain to his rather befuddled group of disciples what he means.

A few passages earlier we read about Jesus feeding the five thousand, the story we explored at our last TWG service. Jesus speaks to the

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crowd again, this time offering them a different kind of bread. The statement Jesus makes is, of course, entirely symbolic. This bread of life is not a physical loaf, but a bread which feeds our soul. A bread which sustains a spiritual connection with God.

Bread is one of the most basic of essential foods of many cultures all around the world. For centuries it has been one of the most accessible foods for both rich and poor. This is the case in biblical times too, bread would have been a nutritional necessity. Jesus chose bread as his metaphor entirely intentionally.

So, I have some images of some different kinds of bread, I wonder if you recognise any and can guess from which country they originate? (Go through slides)

So many variations! In each country there are lots of other kinds too, in India there are over 30 different types of bread!

So, for Jesus to say “I am the bread of Life” is an incredible statement, by equating himself with bread, Jesus is saying he is essential for life. Jesus is trying to help the Jews to understand the spiritual realm. To open out the symbolism a little, I am going to suggest that there are four meanings we can extrapolate:

Jesus is the **source** of all life

He **satisfies** our every need

He offers **salvation**

He is the **sustaining** power

Four 'S's', source, satisfies, salvation and sustaining.

As the **source** of all life. Jesus wants to fill our our empty hearts. We may have food in our tummies, but spiritually, we would have nothing without him. We can all read our bibles, go to church, pray and serve others, but it is when we are spiritually full when we have connection with God and real purpose in what we do. He is the source, he is what makes life meaningful.

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Jesus **satisfies** our longing for answers and satisfies the longing in our hearts. We find only temporary satisfaction in material things, but we all know that they don't last. Without 'things' and all the trappings of our secular society, what are we left with? Jesus satisfies us with a love beyond any other love, his love is where we find comfort and peace.

Jesus came to earth in order that each and every one of us can be saved. Jesus died on a cross, bore our wrong doings and therefore put an end to punishment. We can now seek **Salvation** through Jesus. As bread, essential food, can save lives, so Jesus, the bread of life, symbolised as the flesh of Jesus, when we celebrate taking communion, saves our souls.

Bread is **sustaining**. We need to be constantly filled, constantly reminded who we serve. Sometimes we feel broken, spiritually weak or tired and de-motivated. It has been a difficult time for most recently, but we find comfort in God. We come back to him again and again, we need to keep asking, continually refresh our supply of the bread of life to give us hope, belief and the power to keep going. Jesus is our spiritual fuel and we want keep ourselves topped up! As we have been taught to pray, we can pray every day - 'Give us this day our daily bread'.

In this passage, Jesus is inviting us to 'come' and to 'believe'. Coming to Jesus involves making a choice to forsake the world and follow him. Believing in Jesus means placing our faith in Him that... He is who He says He is, that He will do what He says He will do and that He is the only one who can.

Understand the message that God so desperately wants you to hear this morning. You may find, like the disciples in our passage, that you find this teaching difficult or that there may be something getting in the way of truly believing God's assurance and promise for yourself. Remember how Simon Peter was enlightened and understood Jesus, when he says, "You have the words of eternal life, we have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God".

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With this loaf of bread, we have a pictorial reminder of what the bread of life means. The spiritual significance of what it means to have a relationship with Jesus. Jesus said,

“Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me and I in them”

‘I am who I am’

Come and believe.

Because we have the assurance that He, I Am, God is the one true God, and in him, we need never go hungry. Amen.

Nicola Collard

Lord, enthroned in heav'nly splendour

1 Lord, enthroned in heav'nly splendour,
first begotten from the dead,
thou alone, our strong defender,
liftest up thy people's head.
Alleluia, alleluia,
Jesu, true and living bread.

2 Here our humblest homage pay we,
here in loving rev'rence bow;
here for faith's discernment pray we,
lest we fail to know thee now.
Alleluia, alleluia,
thou art here, we ask not how.

3 Though the lowliest form doth veil thee
as of old in Bethlehem,
here as there thine angels hail thee,
Branch and Flow'r of Jesse's Stem.
Alleluia, alleluia,
we in worship join with them.

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4 Paschal Lamb, thine off'ring finished
once for all when thou wast slain,
in its fullness undiminished
shall for evermore remain.
Alleluia, alleluia,
cleansing souls from ev'ry stain.

5 Life-imparting heav'nly manna,
stricken rock with streaming side,
heav'n and earth with loud hosanna
worship thee, the Lamb who died.
Alleluia, alleluia,
Ris'n, ascended, glorified!

CCLI Song # 7007404

George Clement Martin | George Hugh Bourne

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I am the Bread of life

1 I am the Bread of life.
You who comes to me shall not hunger;
and who believes in me shall not thirst.
No-one can come to me
unless the Father beckons.

*And I will raise you up,
and I will raise you up,
and I will raise you up on the last day.*

2 The bread that I will give
is my flesh for the life of the world,
and if you eat of this bread,
you shall live for ever,
you shall live for ever.

Chorus

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3 Unless you eat
of the flesh of the Son of Man,
and drink of his blood,
and drink of his blood,
you shall not have life within you.

Chorus

4 I am the resurrection,
I am the life.
If you believe in me,
even though you die,
you shall live for ever.

Chorus

5 Yes, Lord, I believe
that you are the Christ,
the Son of God,
who has come
into the world.

Words: Suzanne Toolan (b.1927)
Music: Suzanne Toolan arr. Colin Hand (b.1929)
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Shout To The Lord

My Jesus my Saviour
Lord there is none like You
All of my days I want to praise
The wonders of Your mighty love
My comfort my shelter
Tower of refuge and strength
Let every breath all that I am
Never cease to worship You

Chorus

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*Shout to the Lord
All the earth let us sing
Power and majesty
Praise to the King
Mountains bow down
And the seas will roar
At the sound of Your name
I sing for joy
At the work of Your hands
Forever I'll love You
Forever I'll stand
Nothing compares to the promise
I have in You*

CCLI Song # 1406918

Darlene Zschech

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Guide me, O thou great Redeemer,

1 Guide me, O thou great Redeemer,
pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
Hold me with thy pow'rful hand:
bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
feed me now and evermore,
feed me now and evermore.

2 Open now the crystal fountain,
whence the healing stream doth flow;
let the fiery cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through:
strong deliv'rer, strong deliv'rer,
be thou still my strength and shield,
be thou still my strength and shield.

3 When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside;

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death of death, and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side:
songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to thee,
I will ever give to thee.

John Hughes | Peter Williams | William Williams

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Closing Prayer

God of all mercy,
in this eucharist you have set aside our sins
and given us your healing:
grant that we who are made whole in Christ
may bring that healing to this broken world,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord **Amen.**

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Collects

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. **Amen.**

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. **Amen.**

Readings

Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 6-9

Moses Commands Obedience

So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the Lord your God with which I am charging you. You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!' For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is whenever we call to him? And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today?

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But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children.

Mark 7:1-8; 14-15; 21-23

The Tradition of the Elders

Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, 'Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?' He said to them, 'Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,

"This people honours me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me;
in vain do they worship me,
teaching human precepts as doctrines."

You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.'

Then he called the crowd again and said to them, 'Listen to me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.' For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.'

Reflection (This will appear at a later date) (Revd Michael Wilcockson)

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All my hope on God is founded

1 All my hope on God is founded;
he doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance he guideth,
only good and only true.
God unknown,
he alone
calls my heart to be his own.

2 Human pride and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray his trust;
what with care and toil he buildeth,
tow'r and temple, fall to dust.
But God's pow'r,
hour by hour,
is my temple and my tow'r.

3 God's great goodness aye endureth,
deep his wisdom, passing thought:
splendour, light and life attend him,
beauty springeth out of naught.
Evermore
from his store
new-born worlds rise and adore.

4 Still from earth to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son.
Christ doth call
one and all:
ye who follow shall not fall.

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Teach me, my God and King

1 Teach me, my God and King,
in all things thee to see;
and what I do in anything
to do it as for thee.

2 A man that looks on glass,
on it may stay his eye;
or, if he pleaseth, through it pass,
and then the heav'n espy.

3 All may of thee partake;
nothing can be so mean
which, with this tincture, 'For thy sake',
will not grow bright and clean.

4 A servant with this clause
makes drudgery divine;
who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
makes that and the action fine.

5 This is the famous stone
that turneth all to gold;
for that which God doth touch and own
cannot for less be told.

CCLI Song # 7015093

Words: George Herbert (1593-1633). Music: traditional English Carol from William Sandys' Christmas Carols (1833)

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Lord of all hopefulness

1 Lord of all hopefulness,
Lord of all joy,
whose trust, ever childlike,
no cares could destroy,
be there at our waking,
and give us, we pray,
your bliss in our hearts, Lord,
at the break of the day.

2 Lord of all eagerness,
Lord of all faith,
whose strong hands were skilled
at the plane and the lathe,
be there at our labours,
and give us, we pray,
your strength in our hearts, Lord,
at the noon of the day.

3 Lord of all kindness,
Lord of all grace,
your hands swift to welcome,
your arms to embrace,
be there at our homing,
and give us, we pray,
your love in our hearts, Lord,
at the eve of the day.

4 Lord of all gentleness,
Lord of all calm,
whose voice is contentment,
whose presence is balm,
be there at our sleeping,
and give us, we pray,
your peace in our hearts, Lord,
at the end of the day.

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ng # 4778835

Jan Struther

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Praise to the Lord

1 Praise to the Lord,
the Almighty, the King of creation;
O my soul, praise him,
for he is thy health and salvation:
all ye who hear,
now to his temple draw near,
joining in glad adoration.

2 Praise to the Lord,
who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth,
shieldeth thee gently from harm,
or when fainting sustaineth:
hast thou not seen
how thy heart's wishes have been
granted in what he ordaineth?

3 Praise to the Lord,
who doth prosper thy work and defend thee;
surely his goodness and mercy
shall daily attend thee:
ponder anew
what the Almighty can do,
if to the end he befriend thee.

4 Praise to the Lord,
O let all that is in me adore him!
All that hath life and breath,
come now with praises before him!
Let the Amen
sound from his people again:
gladly for ay we adore him.

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CCLI Song # 43073

Text: Catherine Winkworth | Joachim Neander. Music from Praxis Pietatis Melica (1668)

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Closing Prayer

God our creator,
you feed your children with the true manna,
the living bread from heaven:
let this holy food sustain us through our earthly pilgrimage
until we come to that place
where hunger and thirst are no more;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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Collects

Almighty God,
whose only Son has opened for us
a new and living way into your presence:
give us pure hearts and steadfast wills
to worship you in spirit and in truth;
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.**

or

Merciful God,
your Son came to save us
and bore our sins on the cross:
may we trust in your mercy
and know your love,
rejoicing in the righteousness
that is ours through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Readings

Isaiah 35:4-7a

Say to those who are of a fearful heart,

‘Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you.’

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;
the burning sand shall become a pool,

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and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

Mark 7:24-37

The Syrophenician Woman's Faith

From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, 'Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' But she answered him, 'Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.' Then he said to her, 'For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.' So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

Jesus Cures a Deaf Man

Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, 'Ephphatha', that is, 'Be opened.' And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. They were astounded beyond measure, saying, 'He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.'

Reflection (This will appear at a later date) (Canon James Reveley)

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Breathe on me, Breath of God

1 Breathe on me, Breath of God
fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love
and do what thou wouldst do.

2 Breathe on me, Breath of God
until my heart is pure:
until with thee I have one will
to do and to endure.

3 Breathe on me, Breath of God
till I am wholly thine,
until this earthly part of me
glows with thy fire divine.

4 Breathe on me, Breath of God
so shall I never die,
but live with thee the perfect life
of thine eternity.

CCLI Song # 4773517

Charles Lockhart | Edwin Hatch

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For The Healing Of The Nations (Alleluia Dulce Carmen)

1 For the healing of the nations
Lord we pray with one accord
For a just and equal sharing
Of the things that earth affords
To a life of love in action
Help us rise and pledge our word

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2 Lead us forward into freedom
From despair Your world release
That redeemed from war and hatred
All may come and go in peace
Show us how through care and goodness
Fear will die and hope increase

3 All that kills abundant living
Let it from the earth be banned
Pride of status race or schooling
Dogmas that obscure Your plan
In our common quest for justice
May we hallow life's brief span

4 You Creator-God have written
Your great name on humankind
For our growing in Your likeness
Bring the life of Christ to mind
That by our response and service
Earth its destiny may find

CCLI Song # 5939570
Fred Kaan | Samuel Webbe Sr.
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Immortal love, for ever full

1 Immortal love, for ever full,
for ever flowing free,
for ever shared, for ever whole,
a never-ebbing sea.

2 Our outward lips confess the name
all other names above;
love only knoweth whence it came
and comprehendeth love.

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3 O warm, sweet, tender, even yet
a present help is he;
and faith has still its Olivet,
and love its Galilee.

4 The healing of his seamless dress
is by our beds of pain;
we touch him in life's throng and press,
and we are whole again.

5 Through him the first fond prayers are said
our lips of childhood frame;
the last low whispers of our dead
are burdened with his name.

6 Alone, O love ineffable,
thy saving name is giv'n;
to turn aside from thee is hell,
to walk with thee is heav'n.

Words: John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892)
Music: Probably by Jeremiah Clarke (c.1674-1707). Public domain

O for a thousand tongues to sing

1 O for a thousand tongues to sing
my dear Redeemer's praise,
my dear Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of his grace,
the triumphs of his grace,
the triumphs of his grace!

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2 Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
that bids our sorrows cease,
that bids our sorrows cease,
'tis music in the sinner's ears,
'tis life and health and peace
'tis life and health and peace
'tis life and health and peace.

3 He breaks the pow'r of cancelled sin,
he sets the pris'ner free,
he sets the pris'ner free,
his blood can make the foulest clean;
his blood availed for me
his blood availed for me
his blood availed for me.

4 He speaks and listening to His voice
New life the dead receive
New life the dead receive
The mournful broken hearts rejoice
The humble poor believe
The humble poor believe
The humble poor believe

5 Hear Him ye deaf His praise ye dumb
Your loosened tongues employ
Your loosened tongues employ
Ye blind behold your Saviour come
And leap ye lame for joy
And leap ye lame for joy
And leap ye lame for joy

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6 My gracious Master and my God
Assist me to proclaim
Assist me to proclaim
To spread through all the earth abroad
The honours of Thy name
The honours of Thy name
The honours of Thy name

CCLI Song # 863569

Charles Wesley | Thomas Jarman

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Closing Prayer

Lord God, the source of truth and love,
keep us faithful to the apostles' teaching and fellowship,
united in prayer and the breaking of bread,
and one in joy and simplicity of heart,
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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Collects

God, who in generous mercy sent the Holy Spirit
upon your Church in the burning fire of your love:
grant that your people may be fervent
in the fellowship of the gospel
that, always abiding in you,
they may be found steadfast in faith and active in service;
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.**

or

Lord God,
defend your Church from all false teaching
and give to your people knowledge of your truth,
that we may enjoy eternal life
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Readings

Isaiah 50:4-9a

The Lord God has given me
the tongue of a teacher,
that I may know how to sustain
the weary with a word.

Morning by morning he wakens—
wakens my ear
to listen as those who are taught.

The Lord God has opened my ear,
and I was not rebellious,
I did not turn backwards.

I gave my back to those who struck me,
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;
I did not hide my face
from insult and spitting.

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The Lord God helps me;
therefore I have not been disgraced;
therefore I have set my face like flint,
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;
he who vindicates me is near.
Who will contend with me?
Let us stand up together.
Who are my adversaries?
Let them confront me.
It is the Lord God who helps me;
who will declare me guilty?
All of them will wear out like a garment;
the moth will eat them up.

Mark 8:27-38

Peter's Declaration about Jesus

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that I am?' And they answered him, 'John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.' He asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered him, 'You are the Messiah.' And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the

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gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

Reflection (This will appear at a later date) (Revd Jeremy James)

Christ Whose Glory Fills The Skies

1 Christ whose glory fills the skies
Christ the true the only Light
Sun of righteousness arise
Triumph o'er the shades of night
Dayspring from on high be near
Daystar in my heart appear

2 Dark and cheerless is the morn
Unaccompanied by thee
Joyless is the day's return
Till thy mercy's beams I see
Till they inward light impart
Glad my eyes and warm my heart

3 Visit then this soul of mine
Pierce the gloom of sin and grief
Fill me radiance divine
Scatter all my unbelief
More and more thyself display
Shining to the perfect day

CCLI Song # 808926

Charles Wesley | Johann Gottlob Werner | William Henry Havergal

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All Heaven Declares

1 All heaven declares
The glory of the risen Lord
Who can compare with
The beauty of the Lord

Chorus 1

*Forever He will be
The Lamb upon the throne
I gladly bow the knee
And worship Him alone*

2 I will proclaim
The glory of the risen Lord
Who once was slain
To reconcile man to God

Chorus 2

*Forever You will be
The Lamb upon the throne
I gladly bow the knee
And worship You alone*

CCLI Song # 120556

Noel Richards | Tricia Richards

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O Jesus I Have Promised (Wolvercote)

1 O Jesus I have promised
To serve Thee to the end
Be Thou forever near me
My Master and my friend
I shall not fear the battle
If Thou art by my side
Nor wander from the pathway
If Thou wilt be my Guide

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2 O let me feel Thee near me
The world is ever near
I see the sights that dazzle
The tempting sounds I hear
My foes are ever near me
Around me and within
But Jesus draw Thou nearer
And shield my soul from sin

3 O let me hear Thee speaking
In accents clear and still
Above the storms of passion
The murmurs of self will
O speak to reassure me
To hasten or control
O speak and make me listen
Thou guardian of my soul

4 O Jesus Thou hast promised
To all who follow Thee
That where Thou art in glory
There shall Thy servant be
And Jesus I have promised
To serve Thee to the end
O give me grace to follow
My Master and my friend

5 O let me see Thy footmarks
And in them plant mine own
My hope to follow duly
Is in thy strength alone
O guide me call me draw me
Uphold me to the end
And then in heaven receive me
My Saviour and my friend

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John Ernest Bode | William Harold Ferguson

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Will you come and follow Me (The Summon)

1 Will you come and follow Me
If I but call your name
Will you go where you don't know
And never be the same
Will you let My love be shown
Will you let My name be known
Will you let My life be grown
In you and you in Me

2 Will you leave yourself behind
If I but call your name
Will you care for cruel and kind
And never be the same
Will you risk the hostile stare
Should your life attract or scare
Will you let Me answer prayer
In you and you in Me

3 Will you let the blinded see
If I but call your name
Will you set the prisoners free
And never be the same
Will you kiss the leper clean
And do such as this unseen
And admit to what I mean
In you and you in Me

4 Will you love the you you hide
If I but call your name
Will you quell the fear inside
And never be the same
Will you use the faith you've found
To reshape the world around
Through My sight and touch and sound
In you and you in Me

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5 Lord Your summons echoes true
When You but call my name
Let me turn and follow You
And never be the same
In Your company I'll go
Where Your love and footsteps show
Thus I'll move and live and grow
In You and You in me

CCLI Song # 5413285

Christopher Tambling | Graham Maule | John L. Bell

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Closing Prayer

Keep, O Lord, your Church, with your perpetual mercy;
and, because without you our human frailty cannot but fall,
keep us ever by your help from all things hurtful,
and lead us to all things profitable to our salvation;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Reflections 8 August and 15 August 2021

Sunday 8 August 2021

Trinity 10

How glorious you were, Elijah in your wondrous deeds! Whose glory is equal to yours? (Ecclesiasticus 48:4)

Two days' ago we celebrated one of the major festivals in the Church's year, the Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord. In the vision when the disciples experience Jesus' glory as the God's son, there also appear two other figures – Moses and Elijah, traditionally associated with the law and prophets.

Most of us know about Moses but how much do you know about Elijah?

Unlike the usual prophets of his day in the 9th century BC, Elijah was not a member of a professional guild of prophets whose job it was to make predications for the king and interpret omens. Uniquely he was a lone prophet, the first prophet in Israel to work solo because he felt called by God to touch the conscience of the king and the people.

His name tells us a great deal; 'elijah' means 'My God is Yahweh'. You will perhaps remember his great contest with the prophets of the Canaanite god, Baal when he challenged them to call on Baal to set light to the sacrifice they had prepared. After much shouting and waving of hands and other antics Baal fails to do anything, but Elijah's God, Yahweh, *does* respond to his words. 'My God is Yahweh' because he is the living God, who responds to us in prayer and faith.

But this is only a start. In the passage we heard this morning, we see a much more authentically human figure and not the wonder worker who calls on God to send fire from heaven. Elijah is on the run escaping his nemesis, Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab. Jezebel is furious with Elijah because he has destroyed the prophets of her religion in the contest at Mount Carmel. The Elijah we see now is not

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the cocky wonder worker but a frightened man on the run, in fear of his life, alone and overwhelmed by his sense of hopelessness.

In the vision which follows the cake and a jar of water symbolise his spiritual renewal; he is told to eat and drink twice because it is not sufficient merely to feel spiritually fulfilled but to act and carry out God's commands in sustained action. It is shortly after this that Elijah experiences God not in the storm, or breaking of rocks, or earthquakes, or fire, but in 'sheer silence', the still small voice as the hymn puts it, of God.

So, the next time we meet Elijah, his contest against Ahab and Jezebel is not fought using supernatural might but moral courage. Egged on by Jezebel's cunning, King Ahab has stolen Naboth's vineyard by trumping up charges which have resulted in Naboth's death allowing Ahab to take the vineyard. In his judgement of Ahab, Elijah famously says to him, 'In the place where dogs licked up the blood of Naboth, dogs will also lick up your blood' (1 Kings 21:19). The same fate also awaits Jezebel.

And so we come to the final scene of Elijah's life. The man of God whom Ahab called the 'troubler of Israel', who has challenged the king, his wife, the very institution of the cult religion, now passes on his prophetic mantle as the voice of conscience to Elisha before being taken up into heaven in a fiery chariot (2 Kings 2).

No wonder, therefore, that this pioneering man of God should become the inspiration of the great writing prophets who followed him: Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah and in particular Malachi. The very last verse of Malachi and indeed the last verse of the Old Testament pays tribute to Elijah, the model of prophecy:

⁵ Lo, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. ⁶ He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their

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parents, so that I will not come and strike the land with a curse.
(Malachi 4:5-6)

The hope for the return of Elijah and his message of reform, judgement and spiritual transformation is of course the foundation of the man who modelled himself on Elijah, even down to wearing the same clothes and challenging the authorities, namely John the Baptist.

Today in every Jewish home at the festival of Passover, the table is laid with two cups of wine. One cup is used to toast the four covenant promises God made to Israel, the other – filled to the brim – is left untouched. This cup is for Elijah to drink, as it were, on his return and therefore is a symbol of spiritual fulfilment and the renewal of the world. In some Jewish households, children are invited to open the door to let in Elijah's spirit, and miraculously when they look again at the Elijah cup the wine appears to have been consumed by Elijah!

It is not so very far removed, therefore, for us when receiving bread and wine at the Eucharist to imagine how the spirit of Christ is passed on to us in faith, just as Elijah passed on the mantle of prophecy to Elisha, which then passed on to the prophets of Israel, then to John the Baptist to find its fulfilment in Christ.

In some Jewish traditions the return of Elijah is a prelude to the coming of the messiah. That is certainly the way our Gospels understand the role of John the Baptist as the Elijah figure. In many ways Jesus' life of teaching and action owes a great deal to Elijah's message of social reform and love of God as the intimate voice from within. No wonder, therefore, that Elijah should appear with Jesus at his transfiguration.

But that is where the connection ends. For whereas Elijah's message was temporary, Jesus, as we heard from the Gospel passage today, is

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the bread of life who satiates our hunger for spiritual fulfilment so that we might find life eternal.

Nevertheless, we owe Elijah, the 'troubler of Israel', a great deal as a man of great integrity who stood up to authority and paved the way for others to prepare for God's kingdom on earth.

Michael Wilcockson

15 August 2021 Trinity 11

Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary

It is perhaps not surprising that so many churches are dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary as she is often considered to be the most significant and important of all the saints. For many Christians she is the Queen of Heaven, Regina Caeli, for as her son is king of Israel and king of the universe, she is the queen mother of Israel and therefore queen of heaven.

When I taught at Eton College, every day I would walk by a tower and look up to see a statue of Mary, surrounded by golden angels, with a crown on her head being taken up or assumed into heaven. The statue embodies words we heard read from Isaiah, 'as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with jewels...' (Isaiah 61:10). It's significant that when King Henry VI founded his college for boys in 1440, he should dedicate it to a woman, and that she should be looking down, as it were, over six centuries on thousands of men. It's a reminder that consciously or not the role of Mary retains the female presence in worship and in our relationship with God.

There is no mention in the New Testament of Mary's assumption into heaven, but in the OT others such as Enoch, Moses and Elijah

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had all been assumed, body and soul, into heaven as a symbol of their continuing significance in the lives of the faithful. And of course Mary's assumption echoes Christ's resurrection, as a symbol of the victory of justice, love and grace over injustice, hatred and arrogance.

Eton, like our church in Linton, was founded before the Reformation, when the church in England was Catholic and at a time when devotion to Mary as the mother of Christ was at its peak. Go into any traditional art gallery and just see how many pictures there are of Mary and the symbolism associated with her: lilies – a symbol of her purity; roses – love and beauty; as a mirror – of purity of wisdom; crown – Queen of Heaven; - to name but a few. And of course, for millions of Christians today, especially Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians, devotion to Mary is as strong and as powerful as it was for the medieval church.

But perhaps you, like many members of the protestant churches, find this kind of devotion of Mary uncomfortable. Luther and the reformers did and although they were content to respect Mary, as the young girl called by God to bear His son Jesus, who showed her devotion to Jesus when standing at the foot of the cross and who played a special role in establishing the earliest Christian community, ideas such as that Mary had been conceived immaculately without sin, that even in child birth her virginity remained intact and finally that she was assumed into heaven, were unbiblical and consequently rejected. You might also feel that veneration of Mary detracts from the worship of Christ.

But let me suggest another way of venerating Mary which has emerged from the poor of Latin America and which I think may help us to think about ourselves as a Christian community in Linton.

For the poor, the marginalised and exploited people of Latin America their devotion to Mary is because Mary as a young mother with a

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child born out of marriage, later as a single mother, felt called by God to represent all but especially women – who as mothers have had to hold families together and fight for survival. Mary's Song, the Magnificat, (itself based on the song of another biblical (Old Testament) strong woman, Deborah) is a manifesto for the poor, a song of hope that the deepest structures of an unjust society will be reversed: God will bring 'down the powerful from their thrones' and fill the hungry with good things.

Oscar Romero, the Roman Catholic archbishop of El Salvador who championed the poor and was shot for this whilst celebrating mass in 1980, said:

'The true homage a Christian can pay the Virgin is to strive with her to make God's life incarnate in the vicissitudes of our fleeting history'

For the marginalised Latin American these vicissitudes or sufferings are the racial injustices caused by colonisation, the excessive wealth and power of the rich landowners and invisibility of gender identity and lack of rights.

Increasingly today in the visualisation of Mary by the marginalised, Mary is not presented as the pure white virginal submissive woman of the western tradition but, especially in her form as Our Lady of Guadalupe, she is portrayed variously as an indigenous Indian girl, a strong independent resourceful woman and a black woman.

We should not underestimate the artistic power of and devotion to these images – despite our protestant reluctance to place too much devotion on statues and icons. But we might bear in mind these words of one Latin American woman scholar: 'the growing devotion to [the Virgin of the Guadalupe] plays an important part in the restoring to an exploited people a religious identity that will help construction of a new national identity.'

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So, as we at St Mary's strive to be a more inclusive church, let us reflect on the place of the Virgin Mary our patron in our worship, our prayer and our community and what she could mean to us as we embrace the vicissitudes of our own moment in history, society and culture.

Michael Wilcockson