

Trinity 12 Reflection John 6.56-69

Phil Baker

We hear much these days about dwindling congregations in our churches. Today's Gospel brings home the fact that we have a choice; to follow Jesus or not to do so. It's one place where we are definitely told of many people who turn back and no longer went about with Jesus. He is preaching about them eating his flesh and drinking his blood; a complete anathema to the Jews. It sounds like cannibalism. But of course he is talking of himself as the bread of life. This is John's gospel where there is no actual last supper narrative, the concept of the Eucharist is initiated in Jesus teaching in this section. "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them." He goes on to say that those who who eats this bread will live for ever. We are told about those who fall by the wayside. Jesus teaching is hard for many to hear and many of them question it and fall away. Dwindling congregations even existed for Jesus!

But when Jesus asks the Twelve if they also want to leave him and go away, Peter gets it really right for once. "Lord to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life." Is Jesus the one to whom we go? Is he the Bread of Life for us? We do need to ask ourselves as Christians, whether we are getting the good news over to other people, that Jesus is the bread of life that really sustains us for ever.



Codes for the Zoom worship at 6pm

These are codes for Sundays from 04.07.21 until the end of August

Meeting ID: 859 7288 7300

Passcode: 605760

Telephone numbers (unchanged) 0203 051 2874, 0203 481 5237, 0203 481 5240, 0131 460 1196

NEXT SUNDAY 29.08.2021 13th Sunday after Trinity

SERVICES 10.30am in Church, 6pm by Zoom

READINGS OT Deuteronomy 4: 1-2, 6-9
NT James 1: 17-27
GOSPEL Mark 7: 1-8, 14, 15, 21-23



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St Thomas, Exeter

Sunday 22nd August 2021

12th Sunday after Trinity

10.30am Mass in Church

6pm via Zoom

I am delighted to say that just as we have re-started our wedding ministry, so we are now receiving quite a few requests for **Baptism**, so don't be surprised to see families and children over the next few weeks and months—this is a delightful ministry and a reminder about the future of our Church. More details in due course.

We are looking at how we go forward with our worship on **Sunday evenings**. Please do think about coming to our Zoom services, currently at 6pm, but also, watch this space!

This week is the feast of **St Bartholomew** (24 August). He was born at Cana and brought to Jesus by the apostle Philip. He is listed among the Twelve in all three synoptic Gospels. After the Lord's Ascension, the tradition is that he journeyed to India and preached the Gospel, before suffering martyrdom.

Fr David



Collect

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**

Joshua 24: 1-2a, 14-18

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 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.'

Ephesians 6: 10-20

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be

able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak

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

Post Communion

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

NOTICES

Just to underline the new pattern of Sunday worship: Mass in Church at 10.30, and an online Zoom service of Evening Worship at 6pm, codes overleaf.

BCP Holy Communion on Wednesday mornings in Church at 10am.

Mask wearing is still advised by the Church of England for services in church.

Coffee and tea will be offered after the 10.30am Mass. It will be served from the Servedy in the North Transept. If the weather is good, there will be seats outside the North Transept to gather for fellowship. If the weather is poor, we will serve in the Nave.

House Group. On holiday until September!

Community Larder The Community Larder will be collecting on **Tuesdays** from 10am-12noon. The collecting point is in the Choir Vestry via the Tower door. Please continue to be generous.

Knit and Natter Update for August 2021

We have decided unanimously to meet weekly on Thursdays in St Thomas Pleasure Ground, from 10.30 to 12 noon. If it's wet, at 19 Maple Road. All details from Jenny on 01392 498725.

200 Club If you would like to join the 200 Club there is a Standing Order form on the website (or ask the churchwarden).

Young at Hearts 25th August 2-4pm Natter or Cream Tea.

Ladies Lunch 28th August 12.30pm at The Royal Oak, Okehampton Street.

Mailing the Pew Sheet Over the next few weeks we will be progressively reducing the mail-out in the ordinary post. Pew Sheets will be still be available on Sunday mornings.