

Sunday 17th October 2021 Trinity 20

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Collect

God, the giver of life,
whose Holy Spirit wells up within your Church:
by the Spirit's gifts equip us to live the gospel of Christ
and make us eager to do your will,
that we may share with the whole creation
the joys of eternal life;
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.

First reading

Isaiah 53:4-12

Surely he has borne our infirmities
and carried our diseases;
yet we accounted him stricken,
struck down by God, and afflicted.
But he was wounded for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
and by his bruises we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have all turned to our own way,
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.
He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,

and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.

By a perversion of justice he was taken away.

Who could have imagined his future?

For he was cut off from the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people.

They made his grave with the wicked

and his tomb with the rich,

although he had done no violence,

and there was no deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him with pain.

When you make his life an offering for sin,

he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days;

through him the will of the Lord shall prosper.

Out of his anguish he shall see light;

he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge.

The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous,

and he shall bear their iniquities.

Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great,

and he shall divide the spoil with the strong;

because he poured out himself to death,

and was numbered with the transgressors;

yet he bore the sin of many,

and made intercession for the transgressors.

lest you dash your foot against a stone.

13 You shall tread upon the lion and adder;

you shall trample the young lion and the serpent under your feet.

14 Because he is bound to me in love,

therefore will I deliver him;

I will protect him, because he knows my Name.

15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him;

I am with him in trouble;

I will rescue him and bring him to honour.

16 With long life will I satisfy him,

and show him my salvation.

Psalm 91:9-16

9 Because you have made the Lord your refuge,
and the Most High your habitation,

10 There shall no evil happen to you,
neither shall any plague come near your dwelling.

11 For he shall give his angels charge over you,
to keep you in all your ways.

12 They shall bear you in their hands,
lest you dash your foot against a stone.

13 You shall tread upon the lion and adder;
you shall trample the young lion and the serpent under your feet.

14 Because he is bound to me in love,
therefore will I deliver him;

I will protect him, because he knows my Name.

15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him;
I am with him in trouble;

I will rescue him and bring him to honour.

16 With long life will I satisfy him,
and show him my salvation.

Second reading

Hebrews 5:1-10

Every high priest chosen from among mortals is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness; and because of this he must offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not presume to take this honour, but takes it only when called by God, just as Aaron was.

So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him,

‘You are my Son,
today I have begotten you.’

as he says also in another place,

‘You are a priest forever,
according to the order of Melchizedek.’

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

Gospel reading

Mark 10:35-45

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to Jesus and said to him, ‘Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.’ And he said to them, ‘What is it you want me to do for you?’ They replied, ‘We are able’. Then Jesus said to them, ‘The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.’ When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. So Jesus called them and said to them, ‘You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.’

Mark 10, 35-45

Jesus first meets the apostles James and John on the beach by Lake Galilee at the very beginning of his ministry. They are brothers, fishermen following in the family tradition. Jesus finds them sitting in their boat mending their nets.

Reflection from Chris

His call is simple; "follow me"! They, along with Peter and Andrew, leave their father behind in the boat and follow Jesus. They become part of the group of twelve disciples, apostles, who are especially close to Jesus. He has taken them up the mountain with Peter when he was transfigured before them.

Today the gospel reading tells us of an incident which happens towards the end of Jesus' ministry. He is on his way to Jerusalem. The twelve chosen disciples are with him. A large crowd follows them. A modern translation describes them as being in a daze.

Jesus has been telling the twelve what will happen to him once they reach Jerusalem; that he will be arrested, scourged and put to death. After three days he will rise again. We are not told of the twelve's immediate reaction, but Mark records the discussion between James and John. They have the cheek to ask a favour of Jesus. They fancy occupying the best seats in heaven, one on each side of Jesus, when He is enthroned in glory!

'What cheek' we think. We might also think that Jesus should give them a 'telling off'! However He asks them a question. It is straight to the point. Do they really think that they can go through the same 'horrors' that he knows are waiting for him?

Jesus is not slow in pointing out the unwelcome implication of their request.

We are not the only ones to be indignant when we hear of this request. The other ten disciples have something to say about it too. Jesus calls them all together. He does not just implicate James and John. He points out that he has come to serve not to be served.

'Anyone who wants to be great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be servant of all'.

The Son of man himself did not come to be served but to serve and to be a ransom for many. The message stands out for us. How grateful are we for God's gift to us in Jesus and the Spirit? How often do we review whether our service to and for Him?