

Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

Prayers, Readings, Reflection and Song.

“Welcome to another short act of worship for the Parish Church of St Martin. For those who are able to follow it as written or listen in, I hope it offers some comfort, encouragement and a sense of being together despite the distance between us.” Rev Jonny



*Be still, and draw yourself closer to the God who rests beside you,
before you and within you.*

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All **Amen.**

The Lord be with you

All **And also with you**

My brothers and sisters,
as we prepare to celebrate the presence of Christ
in word and sacrament,
let us call to mind and confess our sins.

Remember, Lord, your compassion and love,
for they are everlasting.

Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions,
but think on me in your goodness, O Lord,
according to your steadfast love.

Christ, have mercy.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

O keep my soul and deliver me;
let me not be put to shame, for I have put my trust in you.

Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon *you*,
pardon and deliver *you* from all *your* sins,
confirm and strengthen *you* in all goodness,
and keep *you* in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Collect for the day

O God, you declare your almighty power
most chiefly in showing mercy and pity:
mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace,
that we, running the way of your commandments,
may receive your gracious promises,
and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure;
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.

All **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Gospel Reading, from Matthew 16: 13-20

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All **Praise to you, O Christ**

Reflection

"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." That statement of Simon Peter's, is the ground of Christian unity, the "rock" upon which the Church of Christ is built; all Christian life begins with that, and hinges upon that. And we who are also followers of Jesus, with Peter, must celebrate and share St. Peter's faith.

But is such a clear and confident assertion really possible for us? Amid all the complications of our lives, amid all the conflicting voices and demands that assail us, from outside us and from within our own souls, can we be so definite as that? Surely, we think, surely it was easier for those *first* followers of Jesus. If we had heard Jesus teaching, if we had witnessed his miracles ourselves, surely faith would be an easy matter. So we tell ourselves.

But, you know, practically every page of the Gospel contradicts that sentiment. Faith did not come easily. The lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the blind received their sight, the dead were raised, and the poor had the Gospel preached for them. The signs of divine presence were all there, first hand. But the people heard and saw as though they had neither eyes nor ears. They were disturbed and cast about for some other explanation. There was great popular excitement, to be sure, but the excitement led only to the rejection of Jesus, not to his worship and praise.

Even his closest friends hesitated when he asked them what they thought. "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah" - some great prophet, risen from the dead. Yes, "but who do you say that I am?" It fell to Simon Peter - Peter the impetuous - to rise

to the great affirmation: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
"And Jesus answered, saying, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah!
For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in
heaven.'"

It wasn't easy and I don't think it became much easier. There at
Caesarea Philippi, we see one side of Peter's faith: the moment of faith's
clear affirmation: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." A little
later, in Jerusalem, on the night of Christ's betrayal, we see another
side. Still, there is the confident assertion: "Lord, I am ready to go with
you, both to prison and to death." But that very night, at the hour of the
cockcrow, there came the moment of denial: "I know him not", said
Peter, as he warmed himself by the fire. And the Lord turned, and looked
on Peter, and Peter remembered how the Lord had said to him, "before
the cock crows, you shall deny me three times." And Peter went out, and
wept bitterly.

All this, you see, **belongs** to Peter's faith: the warm, clear light of
affirmation, the dark cold night of doubt and hopelessness, and then the
tears of penitence. Peter's faith is sorely tried and tested. As Jesus said
to his friend: "Simon Peter, listen! Satan has demanded to sift all of you
like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail."
And, in the end, the faith of Peter does not fail; in the end (when the
risen Jesus meets with Peter and the others on the beach following His
resurrection), Peter's faith is affirmed again, in tears of penitence.

We who share St. Peter's faith must also know and understand the trials
of our faith. We walk by faith, you know, and not by sight. We **see** darkly,
through a glass, as in a clouded mirror; we know only in part. There are,
indeed, the moments of confident assertion: "You are the Christ, the Son

of the living God", but there are also the moments of doubt, the manifold temptations and distractions, the moments of denial and betrayal, the moments of crippling loss when we say, "I know him not." And then Jesus turns and looks upon **us**, and our faith can return, often through our own tears of penitence, too.

Times of faith are always times of trial. Perhaps those trials take different forms in one age or another, and different forms for each of us; but they are always there, and must be there. But doubt and confusion - even the moments of betrayal - do not destroy the soul which is ready for forgiveness and restoration. At the very heart of it all, we are the people of the resurrection.

So we can hold fast to the rock of St. Peter's faith, and "count it all as joy"; As St James wrote in his letter to the church: "My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing." Lacking in nothing, because of the fullness of our faith in Jesus Christ. Our one foundation. That rock that will not fail us. The rock on which we are built.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Pray for one another – those in our church community

Pray for the Parish, the Island and the World

Pray for the sick, the isolated, the anxious and depressed

Pray for the dying, and those who mourn

Pray for yourselves, and for your own needs

Lord in your mercy

All Hear our prayer

The Intercessions may end as follows

Merciful Father

All Accept these prayers

for the sake of your son,

our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen

The Peace

Peace to you from God our heavenly Father.

Peace from his Son Jesus Christ who is our peace.

Peace from the Holy Spirit, the life-giver.

The peace of the triune God be always with you

All and also with you.

Let us pray with confidence, as our Saviour taught us

All Our Father

who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name,

thy kingdom come,

thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our trespasses

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory

For ever and ever. Amen.

The Blessing.

God the Holy Trinity make you strong in faith and love,
defend you on every side,
and guide you in truth and peace;
and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and
the Holy Spirit, be with you and remain with you always.

All **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All **In the name of Christ. Amen.**