

# Twelfth 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**

As God's beloved children, we are invited to come to our God with the fullness of our lives, to admit our love and our hate, to admit our faith and our fear. Trusting in God's mercy, let us make our confession, first in silent prayer.

You raise the dead to life in the Spirit:

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

You bring pardon and peace to the sinner:

Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

You bring light to those in darkness:

Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

May almighty God have mercy on us,  
forgive us our sins,  
and bring us to everlasting life.

**Amen.**

*The Collect for the day*

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.

*All*    **Amen.**

**THE LITURGY OF THE WORD**

*First Reading, Romans 12: 9-end*

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are. Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." No, "if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink;

for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

This is the word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God**

*Gospel Reading, from Matthew 16: 21-end*

From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.” But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

Then Jesus told his disciples, “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 will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

“For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**All Praise to you, O Christ**

## Reflection

It was Winston Churchill who said, 'if you're going through hell... keep going.'

Here was a man who had faced more adversity than many of us could imagine – a man who had a front row seat for the immense suffering on a global scale inflicted by two world wars. For all his critics and detractors, what is undeniable is that he did not absent himself when the country needed him, and who persevered even when the odds against him – against us all – seemed insurmountable.

And it was not just in the affairs of war and politics that Churchill endured such hardship – beneath the bravado and the rhetoric was a vulnerable man, a husband and a father held captive to a world of excruciating inner pain. Churchill's depression – what he called his black dog – haunted him for much of his life, and there were times when his self-belief and will to carry on were at a desperately low ebb. This – more than anything else – was the hell of which he spoke. The Hell through which he must journey, and through which he must keep going.

Jesus, too, was facing seemingly insurmountable odds. The time had come for Jesus to *show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering ... and be killed*. He knew that his suffering - his passion – was before him, and that there would be no other way to realise the fullness of the Kingdom of God.

Peter – once again the impetuous Peter – cannot countenance that his friend and Lord would need to suffer. Peter is not having any of it. '*God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.*' I love you, says Peter, and I cannot let you suffer.

We've all been there, I'm sure. When someone you love is suffering – going through hell, as Churchill would say – and you think you would do anything to take their pain away, to make the suffering stop. When a relationship is breaking down; when a woman is giving birth; when a child is growing up and breaking out into the world. We would do anything to whisk them safety, to ease the pain, and to wrap them in cotton wool, safe from harm.

But ultimately, we can't. And ultimately, perhaps we shouldn't. As Jesus said to Peter: it is *'those who want to save their life [that] will lose it.'*

Great suffering is the path to transformation. It is not the only path, but it is the way that most of us will have to go. Only if we are transformed will we be at one with God. Jesus knew that. As he said to the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus that first Easter Day, *“Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?”*

Suffering was the path – it is the way, and we must take up our cross and follow Jesus.

But there is more to transformation than great suffering and sorrow. It is a crucial part of the picture, but there is another part as well.

Think of that word for suffering that the Gospel writers use – Passion. The Passion of Christ. From *passion* we get the word *com-passion*: to suffer with. This is the imprint that suffering leaves, when it is pressed into the reality of our lives. Passion and compassion. Suffering and love. Sorrow and Joy.

St Paul put it another way in his letter to the Romans: *love one another with mutual affection.... Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer....Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.*

Great joy and great sorrow are the path to transformation, to being at one with God. Not one, not the other, but both together.

When those whom we love suffer – indeed when our enemies suffer as well – we abide with them. We suffer with them, we have com-passion. We weep with those who weep, that we might rejoice with those who rejoice.

Our soon-to-be-bishop in Salisbury, Nick Holtam, has an old African proverb which he loves to use. *‘If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.’*

There is no fast path to transformation, there is no way to be at one with God on your own. We travel together. In tears and in laughter, in sorrow and in joy, we travel together.

Churchill was almost right, but he forgot one important thing. *‘If you’re going through hell, keep going together.’* **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*

Christ came and proclaimed the gospel,

peace to those who are far off

and peace to those who are near.

The peace of the Lord 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.*

Christ the good shepherd,  
who laid down his life for the sheep,  
draw you and all who hear his voice,  
to be one flock within one fold;  
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.**