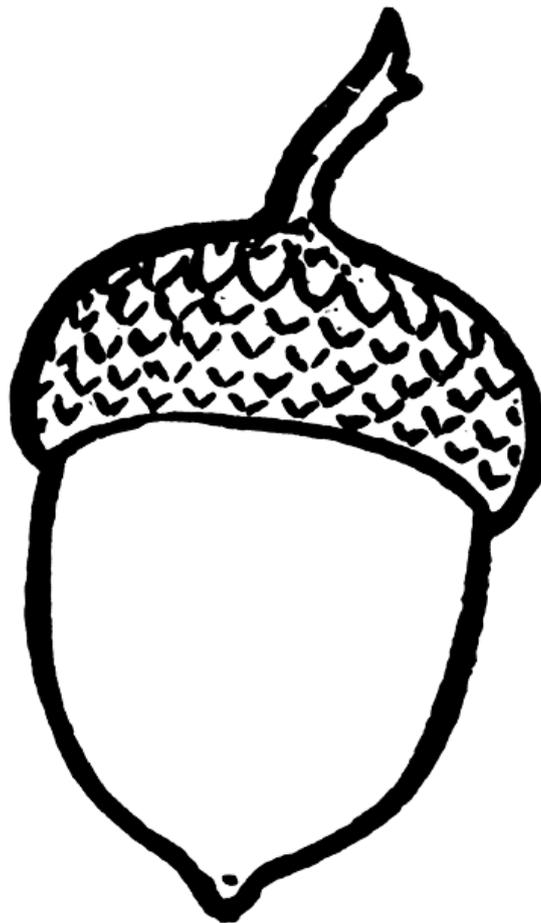


Seventh Sunday after Trinity

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

Generous God,
you give us gifts and make them grow:
though our faith is small as mustard seed,
make it grow to your glory
and the flourishing of your kingdom;
through Jesus Christ 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 13

Jesus put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

“Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
All Praise to you, O Christ

Reflection

The good disciple must bring out of their storehouse things that are new and things that are old. That is the challenge of our faith. It is old and it is new. It is ancient and it is relevant. It is grounded in yesterday, alive today and hopeful for tomorrow.

That is why the images (the parables) of Jesus swirl and scatter about. The Kingdom is like this, and this, and this. Mustard seeds, pearls, treasures, fish. Do you understand? Says Jesus. YES! Cry out the disciples – though perhaps more through exhaustion than comprehension.

Our faith is rooted in the deep truth of God’s love, but it is always growing, always seeking, always becoming something new, always seeking new meaning.

Like my sweet pea plants, which are now taller than I am, with their grasping tendrils fixing like grappling hooks to every twig they can find, throwing flower after flower into full bloom, reaching higher, and smelling sweeter with every passing day, but always rooted back to that same deep spot where I planted the seed in the distant, cold, short days of January.

They are old and they are new. They are rooted and they are growing.

This is the substance of our faith.

We are rooted in deep and ancient truth, and we are called to live our faith afresh in each generation.

What deep truths are we rooted in? And how are we living our faith afresh?

Now is a good time to be asking ourselves these questions. The pandemic and lockdown have given us an incredibly rare opportunity to pause. A sort of enforced Sabbatical. We don't often get such a chance, and we would be wise to take this opportunity to reflect.

Because not everything that is old is good. Not all that is ancient is wise. And likewise, not everything modern is right. Not all progress leads to fruitfulness.

Christians have struggled with this tension since the beginning.

St Paul was constantly wrestling with both the Jews and the Gentiles about the importance of their heritage. Did Gentiles need to become Jews before they became Christians? Did Jews need to renounce their Judaism before they could be accepted as members of the Christian Church?

What do we keep of the old way? They were saying.

Who are we now, in the new?

Many wanted to take the next steps in their personal journey of faith – they wanted to follow the way of Jesus, but they just couldn't let go of the identity they knew. It's scary, when you stand on the threshold of change – do I take that leap of faith into a new identity?

The truth is, you never really leave the old behind – it's never as black and white as that. When a woman marries, they often take their husband's name – but they are still grounded in the person they were. Their story has evolved, but the past is not lost. When someone we love dies, our lives will never be the same; but in time we must accept the new reality, or else we live a life of hopelessness and regret.

We can transcend the past – especially when it has been a time of hurt and pain – but we can never erase it. To do so often causes more damage than learning to accept the past, and putting it in its rightful place.

Do you remember – just a few years ago – when we saw the fighters of the so-called Islamic State destroying the ancient city of Nineveh – pulling down statues and ransacking museums. They hoped they could wipe the peoples and cultures of those lands from the map – erase the memory of the old and replace it with the new.

When you remember that, it puts a different spin on the images we see today of protesters toppling the statues of slave owners and colonialists. In the name of progress, we must be careful what we write out of the history books. Better, surely, to examine the past, learn from it, try not to repeat the mistakes of the past, and dedicate ourselves to living better lives in the days ahead.

Because we must move forward. Faith, like life, is not static. In our energy to move with the times we will of course ask questions of the past, we cannot ever believe that the past set in stone.

However, we cannot live in this violent tension between the old and the new for long. We have to find a different way.

Jesus did not come to erase the past. "I do not come to abolish the law and the prophets", he said, "but I come to fulfil them."

Jesus asks us not to forget the past – not even our own past, our own personal life story – but he does come to transform our stories, to fulfil them. Jesus came to transform all our stories, our histories, our cultures and our lives – Jesus came to put them into the context of God's story. When we follow the way of Jesus we see our lives today woven into the fabric of the ancient story of God's generous and compassionate love. Our 'now' becomes one with God's 'always'.

At baptism, weddings, and funerals especially, but also every time we gather around the altar to celebrate the Eucharist, we are weaving just a little more of the thread of our lives into the great tapestry of God's purpose for creation.

We give thanks for the new life that he has always created when a child is baptised.

We bless the new love that God has always sustained when a couple marry.

We commend the one who has just died into God's eternal arms at a funeral.

We share afresh the bread of eternal life each time we gather together.

The new and the eternal. The now and the always. They can never be separated, never be opposing forces, because God is at work in all things, yesterday, today and tomorrow.

So now, as we go forward as a church and begin to rebuild the pieces of our lives together, there are going to be some changes. Things will seem different for a good long while to come.

But we must remember, whatever changes we may meet, we are always rooted in the love of God. As we seek to live our faith afresh in these new and unpredictable times, we will never be abandoning the past, for we always live and move and have our being in the eternal goodness of God.

Amen

Song

**One more step along the world I go,
One more step along the world I go;
From the old things to the new,
Keep me travelling along with you:**

***And it's from the old I travel to the new;
Keep me travelling along with you.***

**Round the corners of the world I turn,
More and more about the world I learn;
All the new things that I see
You'll be looking at along with me.**

**As I travel through the bad and good,
Keep me travelling the way I should.
Where I see no way to go,
You'll be telling me the way, I know.**

**Give me courage when the world is rough,
Keep me loving though the world is tough;
Leap and sing in all I do,
Keep me travelling along with you:**

**You are older than the world can be,
You are younger than the life in me;
Ever old and ever new,
Keep me travelling along with you:**

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.**