

Tenth Sunday after Trinity

Prayers, Readings, Reflection

“Welcome to another short act of worship for the Parish Church of St Martin. For those who are able to follow it as written, 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

Let your merciful ears, O Lord,
be open to the prayers of your humble servants;
and that they may obtain their petitions
make them to ask such things as shall please you;
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

A Reading 1 Kings 19: 4-8

But Elijah himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors." Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, "Get up and eat." He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. Elijah ate and drank, and lay down again. The angel of the Lord came a second time, touched him, and said, "Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you." He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God.

Gospel Reading, from John 6

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and

mother we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" Jesus answered them, "Do not complain among yourselves. No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All **Praise to you, O Christ**

Reflection

Last week we reflected on the Eucharist – on Holy Communion – as a way into understanding Jesus as the Bread of Life, and I spoke about the way in which the Eucharist creates and curates our community. A community of equals, where position, privilege and purity disappear in the sharing of a simple meal.

This week – as we reflect on the experience of Elijah who fled into the wilderness; and upon the words of Jesus to those sceptical of his teachings – I want to focus in on the personal experience of the Eucharist. What it might mean for you and me to encounter God through participation in the living bread.

We've had to change a few things about receiving communion over the last year. Some remain seated. No one kneels at the rail. And you all have your blessed masks to deal with. But hopefully, beyond all those disruptions, you can still feel in that

moment of approach an encounter with the living God.

I remember very clearly when I first began to distribute communion. I was actually a boy when I first served the chalice. And what I remember are the hands. Every pair of hands that reached out to touch the cup told a story. Young and supple. Old and worn. Fingernails either elaborately painted or else lined with soil. Then later, when I began to distribute the bread (as a priest in training) again it was hands I noticed and the story they told.

And I realised that despite our equality before God, we are also each unique. That day, that week, whatever particular chapter of our lives we are in, we bring that before God when we share in his banquet. The joys and sorrows of our life are woven into the story of God, and united in the grand narrative of salvation.

When Elijah met with the Angel of the Lord at Horeb, the Lord cared deeply for what Elijah was going through. Elijah's story mattered to God, just as do each of our stories, today and every day.

So, as you approach the eucharist – the bread of life – I encourage you bring your story with you. You might feel tempted to empty your mind, forget yourself and focus only on God, but perhaps not. Our encounters with God are never abstract; they are rooted in the physical, emotional reality of our lives.

At our healing service, we say a prayer: *'We come before God with all that we are, parts that are whole and parts that are broken...and we long to our find our rest in you'*.

We bring our brokenness to our encounter with God – not our perfection.

There's another wonderful symbol of this in the Eucharist.

When the I break the bread - the proper name is the 'fracture' – I end up with two pieces, both with ragged broken edges. And yet the broken part of one piece fits beautifully into the broken parts of the other. It is where our broken parts encounter one another, that Christ can work to make us whole.

So, we bring our stories. We bring our brokenness. We receive the bread of life, and we respond. That's a crucial element. We respond.

Of course, at first, we usually respond with words. Some make the sign of the cross. Many say 'Amen'. Which really means 'I agree' or 'I trust', and I think that's a wonderful way to respond. As Jesus proclaimed in our reading today: 'Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life.'

I remember once, when I first presided at the Eucharist, a wonderful lady called Elizabeth received the bread from me, looked me dead in the eye and said 'Thank you Lord Jesus'. That was an amazing experience in many ways. It made me realise (what I should have realised long before) that it is not me (the priest) from whom you are receiving, but Christ himself. In the moment of Elizabeth's encounter with Christ, I personally disappeared. It was both profoundly humbling and deeply satisfying.

However we chose to respond – in words or in the stillness of our hearts – respond we must. When we encounter Christ in the world, in the word, in the sacrament, wherever, it changes the course of our life. Maybe only by a few degrees, but in time that will have most profound of effects.

'Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Jesus.' We come to Jesus – with all that we are, parts that are whole and parts that are broken, and we long to find our rest in him.

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.**