

AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION 14th June 2020

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

Jesus had compassion on the ordinary people of his day because he saw that they were like sheep without a shepherd. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, has compassion on us too.

To prepare ourselves for our worship, we reflect on the day and on our relationships.

- *What good things have come from God today?*
- *Where have I fallen short?*
- *What will I try to do differently in future?*

Lord Jesus, you show the path to those who stray.

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy

You bind up hearts that are broken.

Christ have mercy

Christ have mercy

You lead us to the green pastures of eternal life.

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy

May the God of love and power

Forgive us and free us from our sins,

Heal and strengthen us by God's Spirit,

And raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Collect (special prayer for today)

God of truth,

help us to keep your law of love

and to walk in ways of wisdom,

that we may find true life

in Jesus Christ your Son.

Amen

READINGS

Psalm 100

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth.

Worship the LORD with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.

Know that the LORD is God.

It is he that made us, and we are his;
we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise.

Give thanks to him, bless his name.

For the LORD is good;

his steadfast love endures for ever,
and his faithfulness to all generations.

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 9:35 – 10:8

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.'

The Twelve Apostles

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

The Mission of the Twelve

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, "The kingdom of heaven has come near." Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

REFLECTION

Jesus had many disciples. From the ranks of these he picked out twelve whom he called *apostles*, and their names are given in today's Gospel. And many of us could name them, perhaps consider them to be very special; people who make us feel quite inadequate. But who were these men and what were their qualifications to do what Jesus called them to do. How would a firm of consultants called in to screen the candidates actually report back on them?

Peter

A willing candidate who struggles sometimes with his faith, and who admits his own unworthiness. He will take the lead in asking questions, and can be argumentative. He is brash and impulsive, speaks without thinking, and often gets things wrong.

Andrew

No real qualities of leadership. He is always a follower; first of John the Baptist, and then Jesus. He seems to be lacking in self-esteem and happy to hand over the lead to his brother to whom he appears to be subordinate.

James and John

We take these two together; the hot-headed brothers who are ambitious, out for themselves, and not really team players. They come across at times as selfish, forming their own clique – speaking as one, and possibly causing problems among others.

Philip and Bartholomew

Two more who could be taken together. They both seem hard to get to know, although Philip does come across as approachable. Neither of them is convinced that they have what it takes, and their questioning indicates a lack of confidence.

Thomas

His most obvious characteristic is his questioning attitude which could undermine the morale of others, and sow doubt. He appears to struggle with doubt and his pessimistic outlook.

Matthew

We have concerns about the image he would project because he is a tax-collector, a profession held in such contempt. Despite his unquestionable ability, is this the sort of person who would be an asset?

James, Son of Alphaeus and Thaddaeus

Both of these two seem to prefer to stay in the background, and are not possessed of any easily discerned qualities that would make them suitable candidates. We are not sure if they have what it takes.

Simon

Here is a man with extremist tendencies. Because he is a Zealot you should be aware that he could cause unrest. In consideration of this, we would suggest that he is an unsuitable candidate for your mission.

Judas Iscariot

A man with real potential, ability and resourcefulness. He has a keen business mind, although we have noticed certain selfish instincts.

The Apostles were just ordinary people. They came from ordinary walks of life; they had no particular qualifications; and they were far from perfect. They possessed the same human faults and feelings we find in ourselves. But Jesus saw good in each one of them, even Judas. It shows that we do not have to be perfect or possess all the talents in order to be called to Jesus. Jesus didn't work with perfect material; he worked with ordinary material. These are the men Jesus chose; he saw not only what they were, but also what they could be.

Over the last weeks we have all had to reassess who we are and what we can do. We may have undertaken tasks we have never before considered. And in the space that the lockdown has given us perhaps we have heard the call of Jesus to a way of being and to actions that we had never before considered. Despite fears of our own inadequacy or knowledge of our own shortcomings, Jesus calls us, and like the Apostles we must respond positively to that call.

Amen

And so, we pray

**Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples,
'I am with you always'.
Be with us today, as we offer ourselves to you.
Hear our prayers for others and for ourselves,
and keep us in your care. Amen**

Lord, we ask your blessing upon your Church,
that we may show signs of being one in you,
holy and dedicated to being apostolic
as we reach out to all peoples.

Lord, as you have called us,
Hear us and help us.

We pray for all who are called to govern,
for all leaders and for all they work with.
Help us to show our care for the earth
and to respect the individual in all that we do.
We remember all those whose lives are blighted
by the greed or insensitivity of others.

Lord, as you have called us,
Hear us and help us.

We give thanks because you show us your love
through those who love us.
We ask your blessing on our homes and our loved ones,
and we pray for homes where there is stress and distress.
We remember all those who are finding it difficult to cope with the current
situation, and we pray for all who are seeking to help those in need.

Lord. As you have called us,
Hear us and help us.

We ask your blessing upon doctors and nurses,
on all the emergency services, and key workers.
We pray for those who are good neighbours and carers
in their local community.
We remember all who are suffering in body, mind or spirit,
and ask that they might find strength and healing in your ever welcoming
arms.

Lord, as you have called us,
Hear us and help us.

We bring before you, Lord,
those who have died in faith
and will now see you face to face.

**Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour
Jesus Christ. Amen.**

**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**

We give thanks for the saving death and resurrection of Jesus and ask him to be with us now

**Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits you have given me,
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen**

We pray God's blessing on each other

May we live a life worthy of God, who is calling us to share the glory of his kingdom.

May we treat each other in the same friendly way Christ has treated us.

May the Lord watch over us, keep us in his care, and bless us with his peace.