

The Smestow Vale Team Ministry



St Benedict's and the Venerable Bede

Keeping in Touch with our Church Family

Sunday 16th August 2020

Trinity 10

Lord of heaven and earth,
as Jesus taught his disciples to be persistent in prayer
give us patience and courage never to lose hope,
but always to bring our prayers before you:
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah

Thus says the LORD: Maintain justice, and do what is right, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed. And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD, and to be his servants, all who keep the sabbath, and do not profane it, and hold fast my covenant – these I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples. Thus says the Lord GOD, who gathers the outcasts of Israel, I will gather others to them besides those already gathered.

Isaiah 56:1,5-8

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans

I ask, then, has God rejected his people? By no means! I myself am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, a member of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected his people whom he foreknew. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Just as you were once disobedient to God but have now received mercy because of their disobedience, so they have now been disobedient in order that, by the mercy shown to you, they too may now receive mercy. For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may be merciful to all.

Romans 11.1–2a, 29–32

Jesus talks to the Crowd.

Jesus called the crowd to him and said to them, 'Listen and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles.' Then the disciples approached and said to him, 'Do you know that the Pharisees took offence when they heard what you said?' He answered, 'Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit.' But Peter said to him, 'Explain this parable to us.' Then he said, 'Are you also still without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile.' Jesus went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. A Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, 'Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.' But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, 'Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.' He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' But she came and knelt before him, saying, 'Lord, help me.' He answered, 'It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' She said, 'Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table.'

Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.' And her daughter was healed instantly.

Matthew 15.10–20, 21–28

A Reflection for Trinity 10 from Laurie Gainer

One year, when I was teaching, we had a French Assistant - a young man who immediately made friends with the younger male members of staff. It was at the time when the TV show, The Muppets, was at its height, and they gave him the nick-name, "Kermit". Today, that might thought to be in bad taste, but we lived then in more easy-going times and people did not take offence at every careless phrase or at words spoken in jest. I asked the young man if he understood the reference: he said he did, but it did not bother him.

In today's Gospel reading a woman - a foreigner from a Canaanite region - comes to Jesus seeking help for her daughter, who is suffering mental and physical torment. Jesus' response is initially to ignore her, but when she persists he uses a term that in the mouths of many of his contemporaries would have been a racial insult. When we *read* the passage we may be affronted, but the printed word cannot convey the chuckle in Jesus' voice or the twinkle in his eye. (We need to read the Gospels remembering that much of what Jesus said was tinged with humour - the parables are good examples of this.) The woman does not resent his comment, but takes it as a challenge and responds with a sharp retort of her own. Through this banter Jesus is able to see into her heart, realise she is not there to cause trouble, and is able to help her. The woman's daughter is immediately healed of all that troubles her.

Of course, sometimes words are *intended* to hurt, and such attitudes should be condemned with every fibre of our being; but, please God, I wonder if, in these times of political correctness, we sometimes take ourselves too seriously, demanding public apologies for every minor offence. May God give us all the gift of being able to laugh at ourselves and so turn away the sting of badly chosen words, enabling us to forgive rather than to condemn.

Prayer During the Week.

Sunday

"Father, make us slow to take offence, and swift to see the good in others." (Matthew 15: 27)

Monday

Pray for those who still feel the pain of historical abuse - religious, gender-based or racial.

Tuesday

Pray that we may give special care to the weaker parts of our community. (1 Cor. 12: 23-6)

Wednesday

Pray that we may soon see a reduction in Covid 19 in all parts of the world.

Thursday

Continue to pray for the people of Beirut, and that the country may see true recovery.

Friday

Continue to pray for wisdom for national and local leaders in the fight against the virus.

Saturday

Pray that those members who cannot return to Church may be aware of God with them.

Please remember those who have asked for our prayers

Sarah Stephenson, Margaret Ward, Joy Waistell, Sarah Aldridge, Monika, Robert Brooks, Ann and Barrie Taylor.

Please send requests for prayers to the Parish Office.

Those who have died

Julia McCormack, Margaret Hatton, David Kingston, Berenice Pickering, Mitchell Brooks, Brian Jones, Lynne Foxall, Graham Clarke and Edna Conroy.

Sunday Worship at St Benedict's

8.00am Holy Communion

10.30am Parish Communion

Please remember to book **each** week by contacting Hilary on 01902 892856 or by email hilmoore@gmail.com There will be a service led by Paul on Facebook and on YouTube this Sunday.

Facemasks

Please remember that face coverings are now mandatory for everyone in Places of Worship unless you have a legitimate reason to be exempted from this legal requirement (e.g. age, illness, disability).

