

Diocese of Chester Cycle of Prayer
Sunday, 18 July to Saturday, 14 August 2021



Sunday, 18 July 2021

Seventh Sunday after Trinity

Jesus had sent his disciples out on their first mission. They return tired and with so much to talk about. 'Come away to a desert place, let's take time to talk, to think.' But no, the crowd are there again. There is no deserted place, no quiet space for them.

I used to work with a professor called Bernard. I would go to his office for a meeting and sit down, but before you I could get a word out, a knock would come at the door. It was a student with some question, problem, or need of advice. Bernard would get up from his chair, answer the door and the problem. It happened over and over and over again. 'How do you get any work done with so many interruptions?' I asked. He replied, 'I used to resent it, the continual interruption of my work, but then one day it dawned on me that the interruptions were my work.'

He could have locked himself away, but he didn't. And he was very popular with students. An unselfish sharing of self – to set aside our feelings and plans is often a real sacrifice.

Jesus too had to cope with those surprising interruptions – received people in their time. Aren't we who are following Jesus to be like that too?

A rabbi tells the story of two men doing the daily prayers whilst at work. One spends twenty minutes in his office behind a closed door and afterwards feels refreshed and uplifted, like he had just had a therapy session. The other is so busy he can squeeze in only a five-minute prayer session between phone calls. He recites his prayers superfast in a stationery cupboard! 'Who has done the better thing?' asks the rabbi. His disciple replies, 'The first.' 'No' says the rabbi, 'the second. He was doing it only for God. He was sacrificing his time at no benefit to himself.'

That great defender of the poor, Helder Camara, wrote: 'Accept surprises that upset your plans, shatter your dreams, give a completely different turn to your day -- who knows? – to your life. It's not chance. Leave God free to weave the pattern of your days.'

Eglise Anglicane du Rwanda

Monday, 19 July 2021

0408 Latchford St James

C: Michael Ridley, Robert Icke. LM: Frances Ireland.

South Dakota, The Episcopal Church, USA

Tuesday, 20 July 2021

0411 Lymm

C: Bev Jameson, Jill Elston. LM: Derek Buckthorpe, Ian Bundy, Heulwen Smith, Carole Riley.

Please pray for Reverend Jill Elston as she explores the gifts and opportunities God has placed before her as she joins St Mary's as curate. Please pray that we can (subject to COVID) relaunch our children and families' Crafts and Worship in September, building relationships and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. Also pray as we explore the formation of a children's choir with local schools in the autumn . Hold in your thoughts and prayers all those still anxious about returning to church due to COVID infection rates.

Dallas, The Episcopal Church, USA

Wednesday, 21 July 2021

0412 Stockton Heath

C: Michael Ridley, Robert Icke. LM: Christine Chapman, Joanna Woodward, Julie Brown, Olu Olojugba.

Damaturu, The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)

Thursday, 22 July 2021

Mary Magdalene

0413 Stretton

C: Alan Jewell. LM: Linda Buckley, Alan Hibbert, Sheila Goulston.

We are just having a kitchen installed at St Matthew's as part of our 'Big Welcome' project, which is about hospitality and welcome. Obviously, this is a difficult time to be offering space for people to socialise, but as things start to ease, we will have the facilities to host gatherings for church and community. We would welcome prayer for this mission and ministry.

Dar-es-Salaam, The Anglican Church of Tanzania

Friday, 23 July 2021

0414 Thelwall

C: Douglas Black. LM: Pip Horne, Colin Horrabin, R Lester.

Davao, The Episcopal Church in the Philippines

Saturday, 24 July 2021

0415 Walton

C: Anita Raggett. :LM: Ian Jerrard-Dinn, Stephen Clague, Keith Fletcher, Gill Povey-Robins.

Please pray for us as we mourn the death of a well loved and respected member of our community and congregation. Please also pray for our community and congregation as we adjust to life after 19 July and for guidance and wisdom as we consider different projects to help us use our church building as a place of outreach and care for God's world.

Saint Davids, The Church in Wales

Sunday, 25 July 2021

James the Apostle

'He had James, the brother of John, killed with the sword', the very brevity and starkness of the phrase makes the point – this was an act of senseless violence perpetrated at the whim of a person of power. James stands as but one amongst the huge number of those who have been tortured and murdered at the whim of the powerful across the centuries. Too many to number, the cruelly annihilated ones are the bloodied river that runs through the whole of human history. We are all shamed by it flowing waters. Acts makes it plain that Herod was encouraged by the popular response to this outrage. Spurred on by public approval, he extended his brutality towards other members of the Church and Peter soon found himself chained and in prison.

The odd thing is that Peter is not swiftly murdered. Power's abuse is somehow stayed for a while and a trial is envisioned instead of summary execution. And then miraculously Peter is delivered to freedom from his prison cell the very night before the planned trial. We are told that even Peter himself couldn't make sense of what had happened to him. He, like them all, knew exactly how the story of the powerful's abuse of their power usually ends.

Salome, the mother of James and John, isn't mentioned but she also must surely have not been able to make sense of what had happened. Why had Peter been delivered when her beloved son had died? A heart-wrenching question that is seemingly endlessly repeated in one way or another. We have no easy answer to that, but we do know that

the one before whom she had knelt those years previously had told them all very plainly the outcome of faithful servanthood in his name. That James' name lives on in us signifies his witness to that.

The Scottish Episcopal Church

Monday, 26 July 2021

0417 Aston by Sutton, Little Leigh and Lower Whitley

C: Collette Jones. LM: Philip Littlemore, Jean Davies, Joan Sears.

Delaware, The Episcopal Church, USA

Tuesday, 27 July 2021

Sir Thomas Boteler CofE High School

Delhi, The (united) Church of North India

Wednesday, 28 July 2021

Congleton Deanery

Derby, The Church of England

Thursday, 29 July 2021

1301 Alsager St Mary Magdalene

C: Michelle Goodrich, Jim Britcliffe. LM: Christine Redstone.

Derry & Raphoe, The Church of Ireland

Friday, 30 July 2021

1302 Alsager Christ Church

C: Daran Ward, Heather Kemball. LM: Keith Davies, Dave Fidal, Andrew Warren.

Dhaka, The (united) Church of Bangladesh

Saturday, 31 July 2021

1303 Astbury

C: Anne-Marie Naylor.

Please pray for the vocations of all God's people here, and our development as a place known for hospitality, welcome and spiritual flourishing.

San Diego, The Episcopal Church, USA

Sunday, 1 August 2021

Ninth Sunday after Trinity

Maybe the health food marketers are on to something. Didn't it all begin with a humble fruit in the Garden of Eden? When in their rebellion our forebears Adam and Eve grabbed the superfruit, which was the only thing denied them, the consequence was banishment. They were cut off from the life-giving tree by a flaming sword. It's as if we've been trying to get back to that fruit ever since. The wonder diet, the super-food, the therapeutic rehydration glug, are they a searching for the fruit of the Tree of Life rewritten? How may we find the fruit of that tree which we may eat and live forever?

And the Gospeller John, in the highly symbolic language he so loves, points us to another tree. For John the tree of life is the tree of the cross, whose fruits are the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. Eat this food and you will live.

Jesus speaks of bread – the Bread of Life, true and living Bread sent from the Father which gives life to the world. Here is the only Bread on earth which a person may eat and not die; a bread that gives the eater eternal life – the promise of being raised up on the Last Day. This is bread that has no equal, a bread superior to any other. It's even superior to the heavenly manna that fed the people of Israel in the wilderness for forty years. As Jesus will say later in the chapter, 'Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that a person may eat of it and not die.'

This is highly symbolic language for sure. For Jesus to say that He is the Bread of Life is to say that no one can live without him, at least not forever. And that's the point of it all. Just as you draw on bread for daily life, so you must draw on Jesus for eternal life. It is a symbolic but simple way of speaking. If the language stayed there – stayed with symbol and metaphor and parable – it would have been fine. But there comes a moment when the picture language assumes a power beyond these things: metaphorical speech gives way to the real thing. Bread talk must give way to flesh and blood talk. But for now, the lectionary stays with the metaphor.

Church of the Province of South East Asia

Monday, 2 August 2021

1304 Barthomley

C: Peter Ennion.

Dogura, The Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea

Tuesday, 3 August 2021

1305 Brereton

C: Sandi Fisher. LM: Roy Ashton.

Doko, The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)

Wednesday, 4 August 2021

1307 Holmes Chapel

C: Rob McLaren.

Dominican Republic, The Episcopal Church, USA

Thursday, 5 August 2021

1308 Congleton St James

C: Colin Sanderson. LM: Kenneth Hill.

Dornakal, The (united) Church of South India

Friday, 6 August 2021

The Transfiguration of Our Lord

1309 Congleton

C: Ian Enticott. LM: Mike Hutchison, Geoff Scott, Lesley Murray-Smith, Eileen Walker.

Please pray for our mission and witness across the town. Nic Blackmore, our Children and Families Missioner, has recently begun a new group for parents, carers and pre-school children on a Monday morning called 'Shine'. We are about to begin a new pattern of Sunday services with the weekly 'One Service' specifically aimed at being inter-generational and we are working with an architect to draw up plans for St Peter's church. Chris Downes-Ward is currently training as a Pastoral Worker and will be running some 'Grave Talk' sessions in one of our community centres.

Down & Dromore, The Church of Ireland

Saturday, 7 August 2021

1311 Eaton with Hulme Walfield

C: Ian Arch. LM: Howard Lawton, Douglas Wisener, Diane Wisener.

Dublin & Glendalough, The Church of Ireland

Sunday, 8 August 2021

Tenth Sunday after Trinity

Jesus takes his listeners from earthly bread to heavenly bread, from barley loaves to himself and he pushes the ideas and the language in disconcerting ways. Whereas early on he said 'bread,' he will later say 'flesh.' Where he said 'eat,' he will say 'feed,' and he will speak of his blood. Literally saying, 'Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.' You won't hear it translated that way in most English versions, I guess because translators think it too 'in your face,' too direct, and too unsubtle. After all it is a pretty shocking way to put it. Don't we all prefer language that makes the metaphor plain and not too scary?

We can easily talk of 'feeding on the Word.' This is an eating that takes place by faith whenever we hear Christ's words and by faith take them to heart. In this way the Bread of Life in the sense of Jesus' teachings and intentions are incorporated into our thoughts and intentions – made part of us. Saint Augustine wrote somewhere, 'Believe and you have eaten.' It's symbolic language alright, but a quite comfortable and easily accommodated way of talking about Christ and how we can come to close to him in our living. These weeks of readings from John's Gospel, however, take a different direction.

They give us a more difficult picture: the eating of Christ's flesh and the drinking of his blood. The language is all too physical and made worse by the fact that we must actually use our mouths – this is ingestion we're talking about. Biting and chewing and tasting and swallowing.

The flesh talk, from the mouth of Jesus, can't be side-stepped. The eternal, divine Word became human flesh. In him God became human, and our reason, and our hesitations, and our disbelief mustn't drive a wedge between the Word and the flesh of Jesus, or for that matter between our believing and our eating, our faith and our mouth. Jesus says, 'Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever.' Believing and eating, faith and mouth, the Word and Christ's flesh, – these things must be held together.

The Church of South India (United)

Monday, 9 August 2021

1312 Elworth

C: David Page, Anthony Rigby. LM: Kate Page, Michelle Walker, Steven Coppenhall, Sue Yarwood.

Duk, The Province of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan

Tuesday, 10 August 2021

1313 Goostrey

C: Heather Buckley.

Praises to God for his faithfulness in the answers to prayer, giving thanks for our pastoral team, the deeper connections we have and the new opportunities. Prayers for Andy Gill and Martin Corbishley in our work together leading the church forward, the development of the church extension and the effective use of our AV equipment.

Dunedin, The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia

Wednesday, 11 August 2021

1315 Church Lawton

C: Steve Clapham. LM: John Atkins, Bev Boulton, Margaret Cruyton.

Dunkwa-on-Offin, The Church of the Province of West Africa

Thursday, 12 August 2021

1317 Odd Rode

C: Philip Atkinson. LM: Robert New.

Durgapur, The (united) Church of North India

Friday, 13 August 2021

1318 Sandbach

C: Bee Boyde. LM: Joan Plowman.

Durham, The Church of England

Saturday, 14 August 2021

1319 Sandbach Heath with Hassall Green

C: Bernard Sword. LM: Alan Warburton.

Pray for wisdom, discernment and strength as we look to the mission of St John and St Philip's as we seek to discern the Lord's opportunities to reach our parish communities. To be empowered by the Holy Spirit in our future outreach activities.

Dutse, The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
