

# Sunday Morning Resources

Sunday 4 August 2024 - The Tenth Sunday of Trinity

**Lectionary Readings** (depending on the kind of service you are leading, you may use one or more of the following readings – however, you **must** use the gospel reading, as this is what the homily is based on)

Exodus 16.2-4 and 9-15; Psalm 78.23-29; Ephesians 4.1-16; John 6.24-35

## Homily

**Today's homily has been written by the Revd Sarah Tan, Chaplain, HMP Littlehey**

How many of us are enjoying the Olympics? I am writing this in the week with the opening ceremony of Paris 2024 at the end of it. How many of us will be cheering on our athletes as they give it their all to win medals and we hope plenty of them! We cheer on the stars don't we, but we so often forget that sport at whatever level even the individual events is only possible with a team. Athletes are not top of their field by acting alone but only because they come with a whole team of coaches, dieticians, sports therapists, and motivational coaches to name but a few. When success comes it is felt by the whole team just as the bitter disappointment of defeat is too, as I think all England fans know after a certain football match a few weeks ago. Enough said about that!

Church, Christian community means that we are never in the Christian faith alone. We can have our own individual relationships with God but ultimately the fullness of faith and belief is lived out in community, in doing what Paul exhorts the Ephesians to do in one of the readings set for today.

“I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

How many of you are thinking let's pack up and go home now? Paul sets high expectations of someone who believes in Jesus. Humility and gentleness are hard enough without getting to patience and bearing with one another in love. We all meet people in life who rub us up the wrong way, colleagues who are really irritating or who you feel don't do their job properly. People no matter how hard you try just get right on your nerves. People that even though you are going out of your way to get along with, it just never gets beyond being hard work. Those are the people we are called to bear within love.

We are asked to do the same with people we don't agree with, people we don't always feel comfortable with and in a spirit of love (which remember is different from liking!) live and work alongside them. We are called to do this because we are Christians, members of the body of Christ and we are called to live as Christ did – loving those we meet, even those we

don't find easy and looking for the best in everyone. Jesus did that – no one was unworthy of his time, love, patience, or his teaching. Jesus had compassion for those who were regarded as the outcasts of society – people with leprosy, adulterers, women who were ritually unclean and he treated them no differently to how he treated those who were respectable and accepted. Indeed, he often had more time for those on the margins, those who felt excluded. Jesus came to show us how to live the Gospel – how to include everyone and how to love all those we meet. We should meet people and not judge, be humble and kind, treat people with gentleness and patience. A high bar indeed. Thankfully, we have not been left without sustenance.

When we gather for worship, we are meeting with God, and we are gathering to offer our worship but also to be sustained by him. Sometimes that is round the altar at Mass, Eucharist, Communion, the Lord's Supper – whatever you want to call it. When we worship, we are meeting with a God who wants to sustain us and nurture us to be people worthy of the calling he has set on our lives. He wants us to be people who are loving, joyful, kind, generous, patient, have self control and who are peaceful. In a very particular way when our worship includes receiving bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ we are being given the chance to truly feed on the living bread which gives life to us and to the world.

Worship in all its forms is not one way traffic – we need to be willing to let God meet with us as we seek to meet with God. We need to allow ourselves to be open enough to let God change us or nurture us or challenge us or reassure us (whatever it is that we need most today) and in doing that we also meet with one another. We don't celebrate communion or worship as individuals do we? We celebrate as a community which means that something transforming can and does happen when we worship together. Holy Communion isn't about the priest it is the work of the whole of God's people. It is about the gathered community, wanting to meet with God and being willing to let God work with us and change us both as individuals and as a group of Christians. We need to let God help us to be the people in our particular place who lead lives worthy of the calling he has made on each of us.

It takes courage to be that open, it takes courage to be willing to be that vulnerable. It takes courage to admit that we need to rely on God because we can't live a Christian life on our own. We need the challenge, the support, the love of fellow Christians and we need the sustenance which God alone can give. That in turn allows us to be a church that can support one another through good times and bad and can offer that support, that welcome to those who are not yet part of this community but who live next door to us, across the road from us, work at the desk in the next office or play on the same sports team.

If each of us can be willing to be changed, challenged, reassured, and sustained then that can only help us to be a better Christian community, a better Church striving to be worthy of the life that we have been called to live. None of us has got living the Christian life entirely right (indeed we never will until we stand in the presence of God in heaven), and it doesn't matter whether we have been members of church for five weeks, five months, five years or five decades. We all can do better and give it our all, just like the Olympic athletes, to be

the best that we can be and to live the best life that we can. To do that we need to be sustained by one another and the God who says to each of us:

“I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

### ***Ways to Engage all Generations***

When different generations are gathered together in worship there is an opportunity to build relationships and to encounter God in our conversations as we build relationships and learn from each other no matter what our ages, stage of life or faith and for all present to feel included. Adding some wondering questions to the service at an appropriate moment can help to do this.

Wondering Questions: Some wondering questions that may help to engage all generations to ponder and explore during the talk, service or during the week may include (three or so) of the following style of questions:

I wonder what helps you feel close to God?

I wonder what things you like and don't like about worship and why?

I wonder how you understand Jesus as the 'bread of life.'

### ***Suggested intercessions***

Loving God,

We pray for the Church in this place and throughout the world. We pray for your Church to bear witness to your love for all people and we pray for those who lead us for Bishop Dagma and all bishops, priests, and deacons. We pray for all those with roles of leadership in our local churches and communities and we pray for your guidance and wisdom for them,

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Loving God,

We pray for your world. We pray for the leaders of the nations, for those in local government, those whose job involves making decisions that affect us all. We pray for a spirit of fairness and a desire for peace and true flourishing for all people.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Loving God,

We pray for those we know who are sick or suffering in body mind or spirit. We pray for all those in caring professions and those whose care for loved ones is unseen and unpaid. We pray for all who are housebound, all who are fearful and all who are anxious. We pray too for those who feel they have no one else to pray for them,

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Loving God

We pray for those who are near to death and for those who will die today. We remember those who we have loved but see no longer and we trust in your promise of eternal life. We pray for comfort for those who mourn and for peace for all whose earthly life is almost complete.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

In a moment of quiet we bring before our loving God our own thoughts and prayers.

(silence)

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Or

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

***Suggested hymns/songs***

Brother Sister let me serve you

The Church's one foundation

Guide me O Thou Great Redeemer

Glorious Things of Thee are Spoken

Come Let us Join our Cheerful Songs

We Have a Gospel to Proclaim

Lead Us Heavenly Father Lead Us

Christ is Made the Sure Foundation

A New Commandment

I am the Bread of Life

**Activities to accompany the service:**

If you are looking for resources to accompany the service for engaging younger children, then there are lots of online resources. The following free to access/download resources may be useful starting points:

- <https://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/>
- <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/>
- <https://www.faithinkids.org/>
- [reflectionary.org](https://www.reflectionary.org/) – lectionary-based resources
- [engageworship](https://www.engageworship.com/) – in particular 'Area 52' for lectionary-based material
- <https://www.bdeducation.org.uk/product-category/primary-age-5-11/>  
(weekly@ lectionary resource)