

## Psalm 138

When we pray we often ask God to do things for us, to help us, but how often do we thank Him afterwards? In Psalm 138 the psalmist praises God for His help, believing the Lord God hears us when we call to Him. This psalm is his thank you note afterwards.

The psalmist praises 'The Lord'. 'The Lord' was the special title the Jews used for God. God's name was sacred and could not be mentioned, even in worship. Instead, they addressed Adonai, the Lord God or Sovereign Lord. This was the "covenant" name for God. God continually made covenants or agreements with his people. He did so with Abraham, Noah and Moses, for instance. The formula was always the same: 'I will be your God and you will be my people.' God always kept His side of the agreement, of course, but Israel did not. When Israel was invaded, their prophets reminded them it was because they had broken their side of the agreement. The reference to the kings of the earth praising God reminds us that praise is not to be exclusive to Israel but includes gentiles, too.

Despite Israel's unfaithfulness, the psalmist recognises in this psalm that God's love for His people never ends and He will always send help to us. A God whose name is too awesome to be mentioned still recognises those in need of help from Him. God also sees the proud who think they are too good to need help. But the right hand of God – His strength – lasts for ever, because God will keep His covenant promise and always hears and helps those who call to Him.

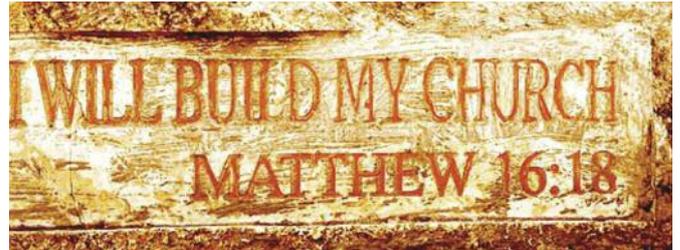
## Saints and Heroes

St. Augustine of Hippo is the patron saint of brewers because of his conversion from a former life of loose living, which included parties, entertainment, and worldly ambitions. His complete turnaround and conversion has been an inspiration to many who struggle with a particular vice or habit they long to break. This famous son of St Monica was born in Africa. Though he was one of the most intelligent men who ever lived and though he had been brought up a Christian, he turned away from the Faith. Through the prayers of his mother and the preaching of St. Ambrose, Augustine finally became convinced that Christianity was the one true religion. He was baptized, became a priest, a bishop, a significant theologian, founder of a Religious Order, and one of the greatest saints that ever lived. He became very devout and charitable, too. On the wall of his room he had the following sentence written in large letters: "Here we do not speak evil of anyone." St. Augustine overcame strong heresies, practiced great poverty and supported the poor, preached very often and prayed with great fervour right up until his death." A famous quote from Augustine is worth pondering this week as we approach his feast day (28th August): "God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you."



23rd August 2020 The Eleventh  
Sunday after Trinity  
21st Sunday  
of the Year

## You are the Messiah



The Messianic Secret is a thematic exposition which derives from Mark's Gospel but is repeated again in Matthew's Gospel. There are numerous times when Jesus has either performed some miracle or delivered a teaching or a parable – but then commands whosoever is there not to tell anyone. To a leper who has been cleansed Jesus says, 'Go straight to the priest but tell no-one on the way!' Needless to say, the man tells anyone who will listen!

On more than one occasion Jesus tells His Disciples not to tell anyone of what they have witnessed until after His death and He has left them. The paradox of Jesus' words and instructions is that His ministry and these acts of deliverance, teaching and forgiveness are done in a fairly public arena – the lakeside, a hillside, someone's house, and all in full view of many, many people. They were never going to keep quiet, or keep a secret about a new Messiah, especially one who was showing signs of being the Anointed One, the Christ.

After seeking the comments of his disciples He then asks them who they think He is, to which Simon responds, 'You are the Messiah. the Son of the living God.' It is upon Simon, now to be Peter, that Jesus will build His Church.

Somehow, it is for us to face God and in acknowledging His Son, Jesus Christ, as the Son of the Living God, accept that we are part of the continuing establishment of God's Church, here, on earth. The Resurrection showed that the Messianic Secret had now revealed Jesus Christ as Lord.

### From the Fathers

"Some things are said which seem to relate especially to the apostle Peter, and yet are not clear in their meaning unless referred to the Church, which he is acknowledged to have represented in a figure on account of the primacy which he bore among the disciples. Such is 'I will give unto you the keys of the kingdom of heaven,' and other similar passages. In the same way, Judas represents those Jews who were Christ's enemies."

From *St Augustine's Commentary on Psalm 108 1* [A.D. 415].