



SUNDAY 14 JUNE 2020

Readings, Collect and Reflection for the 2nd Sunday of Trinity

PSALM 100

1 O be joyful in the Lord, all the earth; ♦
serve the Lord with gladness
and come before his presence with a song.

2 Know that the Lord is God; ♦
it is he that has made us and we are his;
we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.

3 Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise; ♦
give thanks to him and bless his name.

4 For the Lord is gracious; his steadfast love is everlasting, ♦
and his faithfulness endures from generation to generation.

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Collect

O God,
the strength of all those who put their trust in you,
mercifully accept our prayers
and, because through the weakness of our mortal nature
we can do no good thing without you,
grant us the help of your grace,
that in the keeping of your commandments
we may please you both in will and deed;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Exodus 19.2-8a

2 They had journeyed from Rephidim, entered the wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness; Israel camped there in front of the mountain. 3 Then Moses went up to God; the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the Israelites: 4 You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. 5 Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, 6 but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites." 7 So Moses came, summoned the elders of the people, and set before them all these words that the Lord had commanded him. 8 The people all answered as one: "Everything that the Lord has spoken we will do."

Matthew 9.35-10.8

35 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. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; 38 therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

(Chapter 10)

1 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. 2 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; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him. 5 These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, 6 but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' 8 Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

Reflection – Mary-Lou writes ...

What a job description! *As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near'*. Now that may not sound too difficult. But how about Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons?? Yes, they'd seen Jesus do all this, they'd definitely been there. Now he was giving the 12 he'd chosen HIS authority to go and do these things too. Maybe they were all fired up and excited at the prospect, with nerves of steel! But heavens, I do wonder if some of them thought, *Crikey, what have I got myself into??*, especially if we read on in the chapter through to verse 23, where Matthew tells us Jesus warned them exactly what they could be getting themselves into, with talk of floggings, and trials, and persecution. Daunting, or what? If Jesus made it all look easy, when he commissions his disciples to carry out his ministry, things get much more difficult. It's going to demand of them a major leap of faith.

Jesus has been surrounded by crowds of people in his ministry – and Matthew describes his powerful reaction to them. They are like sheep without a shepherd, harassed and helpless, with no-one to show them the way. When he saw them, he had compassion for them. In English that sounds lovely, but it misses the real strength of his reaction, that we'd get if we read and understood the Greek word that's used in the earliest Gospels we have. That means more like a compassion rising from Jesus' very guts, or bowels – perhaps we've witnessed or experienced human responses something like this in the reactions so many have felt watching the dreadful video of George Floyd's appalling death in America. This Shepherd is so moved by what he sees that he moves to concrete action as he responds to the needs of the people. He has healed and raised and shown them the kingdom of heaven has come near, so very near! Now his disciples are sent to do the same.

A Church which holds back from putting a response of compassion and love into action is not following the Lord of the Harvest, our Good Shepherd. How can we do that right now, when so many of us can't 'go' anywhere, when we can't meet, or do any of the ministry things we have traditionally done? It challenges your ministers to find new ways to proclaim the kingdom of heaven IS – still – near! We're trying to do that through new digital means. But it challenges all of us to put our compassion into action. Whenever we offer a kind and loving response at home or on the phone; a generous response to human need; or a response that demands justice for the oppressed and stands with the suffering, we are showing the kingdom is near. Telling people about the kingdom is not enough of itself – the followers of the Good Shepherd put their faith, their love into action. St Francis (may have) said: 'Go into all the world preaching the gospel – and if you have to, use words.'