



**COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION**  
**SUNDAY 16 MAY 2021 – 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter**

**COLLECT**

O God the King of glory,  
you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ  
with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:  
we beseech you, leave us not comfortless,  
but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us  
and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
Amen.

**Psalm 1**

- 1 Blessed are they who have not walked  
in the counsel of the wicked, ◆  
nor lingered in the way of sinners,  
nor sat in the assembly of the scornful.
- 2 Their delight is in the law of the Lord ◆  
and they meditate on his law day and night.
- 3 Like a tree planted by streams of water  
bearing fruit in due season, with leaves that do not wither, ◆  
whatever they do, it shall prosper.
- 4 As for the wicked, it is not so with them; ◆  
they are like chaff which the wind blows away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked shall not be able to stand in the judgement, ◆  
nor the sinner in the congregation of the righteous.
- 6 For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, ◆  
but the way of the wicked shall perish.

*Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England, material from which is included here,  
is copyright © The Archbishops' Council 2000 and published by Church House Publishing.*

## **Acts 1. 15-17 & 21-26**

15 In those days Peter stood up among the believers (together the crowd numbered about one hundred twenty persons) and said, 16 "Friends, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit through David foretold concerning Judas, who became a guide for those who arrested Jesus— 17 for he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.

21 So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these must become a witness with us to his resurrection."

23 So they proposed two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also known as Justus, and Matthias. 24 Then they prayed and said, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which one of these two you have chosen 25 to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." 26 And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was added to the eleven apostles.

## **John 17.6-19**

6 "I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 7 Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; 8 for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. 9 I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. 10 All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. 11 And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. 12 While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. 13 But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. 14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 15 I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. 16 They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

## **Reflection – this week from Mary-Lou**

On this Sunday after Ascension, we are in the season called Thy Kingdom Come, when we are joined with believers around the world in prayer and in our Gospel today, we have an extraordinary glimpse of the prayer of Christ himself.

First, we hear that Jesus praying for his friends. How wonderful is that?! Praying in love for them – for us. And what does Jesus ask from God for his friends? He prays for their protection: that's something we can relate to. So many of us have asked God to protect us, or someone we love. But Jesus prays for protection for his friends with a purpose: that we may be one. If we're honest, perhaps that's not always so central to our prayers, when for Jesus it's crucial. He prays for his disciples that they will be protected from the 'evil one', who seeks to destroy Christian unity.

Jesus also prays that the disciples may have joy: not some easy joy - it seems it's going to involve being hated and rejected by a world that fails to recognise what God the Father is doing in Jesus. Christian joy is something deeply serious, something that holds us faithfully to Christ through the darkest times.

Finally, Jesus prays in a new way for his disciples. He asks the Father to sanctify them, to make them holy - holy in their earthly, worldly everyday lives! Christ's disciples discover that the love, unity, joy and holiness seen in the Father and the Son will continue to be poured out on those who witness to the world that Jesus comes bringing the loving, saving presence of God into our human situation. Caught up in that love, all of creation is holy. This is the precious gift to come – the gift of the Holy Spirit!

So trust that Jesus prays for us, for you! The Bible says 'he always lives to make intercession for them ...' We are never alone, always know and trust that your Saviour and Lord prays for you. You can trust him! Hear afresh his love for you, expressed in his loving prayer and let that love of the Father and the Son make you holy, day by day.

Know that when we get together with our brothers and sisters in the family of Christ, especially when we get to know and share with Christians from other denominations, we're doing exactly what Jesus prayed we would do – being one, showing that united witness in being his followers. And we can rejoice that here and now we are able to share worship and other experiences without the levels of suspicion which dogged past centuries.

Hear the purpose of Jesus's prayer. It is that we can bear witness, in faithfulness and with joy. We sometimes find this hard – yet we are offered a wonderful way to respond in this season, Thy Kingdom Come. Join in! Pray the Lord's Prayer every day. And as we wait for Pentecost, pray that God will pour out afresh a new anointing of his Holy Spirit on our world, our churches and communities.

Christ is now our risen and ascended Lord and he loves and prays for us. We lift up our hearts as we worship our King!