



COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 4 JULY 2021 – 5th Sunday after Trinity

COLLECT

Almighty and everlasting God,
by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church
is governed and sanctified:
hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people,
that in their vocation and ministry
they may serve you in holiness and truth
to the glory of your name;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Psalm 48

- 1 Great is the Lord and highly to be praised, ◆
in the city of our God.
- 2 His holy mountain is fair and lifted high, ◆
the joy of all the earth.
- 3 On Mount Zion, the divine dwelling place, ◆
stands the city of the great king.
- 4 In her palaces God has shown himself ◆
to be a sure refuge. [R]
- 5 For behold, the kings of the earth assembled ◆
and swept forward together.
- 6 They saw, and were dumbfounded; ◆
dismayed, they fled in terror.
- 7 Trembling seized them there;
they writhed like a woman in labour, ◆
as when the east wind shatters the ships of Tarshish.
- 8 As we had heard, so have we seen
in the city of the Lord of hosts, the city of our God: ◆
God has established her for ever. [R]
- 9 We have waited on your loving-kindness, O God, ◆

- in the midst of your temple.
- 10 As with your name, O God,
 so your praise reaches to the ends of the earth; ♦
 your right hand is full of justice.
- 11 Let Mount Zion rejoice and the daughters of Judah be glad, ♦
 because of your judgements, O Lord.
- 12 Walk about Zion and go round about her;
 count all her towers; ♦
 consider well her bulwarks; pass through her citadels,
- 13 That you may tell those who come after
 that such is our God for ever and ever. ♦
 It is he that shall be our guide for evermore.

2 Corinthians 12:2-10

² I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. ³ And I know that such a person—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows—⁴ was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. ⁵ On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. ⁶ But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, ⁷ even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep^[a] me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated.^[b] ⁸ Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, ⁹ but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power^[c] is made perfect in weakness.” So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰ Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

Mark 6: 1-13

The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth

6 He left that place and came to his home town, and his disciples followed him. ² On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, ‘Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has

been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! ³ Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary^[a] and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?' And they took offence^[b] at him. ⁴ Then Jesus said to them, 'Prophets are not without honour, except in their home town, and among their own kin, and in their own house.' ⁵ And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. ⁶ And he was amazed at their unbelief.

The Mission of the Twelve

Then he went about among the villages teaching. ⁷ He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. ⁸ He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; ⁹ but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. ¹⁰ He said to them, 'Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. ¹¹ If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.' ¹² So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. ¹³ They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

Reflection – from Peter

It's a familiar sight, isn't it? A class of primary age schoolchildren being asked a question - and there always seem to be those who have their hands up almost before the question is out! They are so eager - and, importantly, don't seem afraid of being wrong. Many of us are just the opposite: so terrified that we might get it wrong that we dare not put our hands up at all. And, of course, just a few years later, some of those who were so eager being much more cautious in adolescence. Fear of rejection or ridicule is strong in all of us. Being teased can be fun - but it can also be very uncomfortable.

In today's Gospel reading the whole business of possible rejection is confronted directly. First, Jesus goes home to Nazareth, only to find that the local crowd can't believe what they are hearing. "Where did he get all this?" they ask (and they might as well have said, "Where did he get all this nonsense?") - and this is because they are remembering him growing up amongst them. Their memory of the past is blocking their openness to the present. Jesus seems pretty understanding about this, saying, "Prophets don't get proper recognition in their home towns!" - though he does wonder at their unbelief. And then, when Jesus sends out his disciples out in pairs to spread the word, he has to

warn them: you're likely to encounter people who don't want to listen. And if that's the case, then don't make a fuss, but deliberately move on.

Of course, the fear and suspicion that lurks in each of us brought Jesus to a point of final rejection: to his arrest, and trial, and crucifixion. But, more importantly, we know that God responds to this rejection too, raising Jesus from the dead. Now the truth becomes plain: we humans are fearful of rejection, and indeed we do a fair bit of rejecting others ourselves, but God is about acceptance and welcome - and nothing can stop God from embracing us with love and understanding and forgiveness. It may be that allowing Jesus to speak to us today will help us as we begin to test the waters and to emerge from the constraints of the past eighteen months. God has not made us to be timid and fearful. As Jesus says he has come that we may have life, life in all its fullness.