



**COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION**  
**SUNDAY 4 JULY 2021 – 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity**

**COLLECT**

Lord of all power and might,  
the author and giver of all good things:  
graft in our hearts the love of your name,  
increase in us true religion,  
nourish us with all goodness,  
and of your great mercy keep us in the same;  
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.

**Psalm 23**

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd; ♦  
therefore can I lack nothing.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures ♦  
and leads me beside still waters.
- 3 He shall refresh my soul ♦  
and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
- 4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil; ♦  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- 5 You spread a table before me  
in the presence of those who trouble me; ♦  
you have anointed my head with oil  
and my cup shall be full.
- 6 Surely goodness and loving mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life, ♦  
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

## **Ephesians 2:11-22**

### ***One in Christ***

<sup>11</sup> So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth,<sup>[a]</sup> called 'the uncircumcision' by those who are called 'the circumcision'—a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands—<sup>12</sup> remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup> For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. <sup>15</sup> He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, so that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, <sup>16</sup> and might reconcile both groups to God in one body<sup>[b]</sup> through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it.<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>17</sup> So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; <sup>18</sup> for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. <sup>19</sup> So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.<sup>[d]</sup> <sup>21</sup> In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; <sup>22</sup> in whom you also are built together spiritually<sup>[e]</sup> into a dwelling-place for God.

## **Mark 6: 30-34; 53-56**

<sup>30</sup> The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. <sup>31</sup> He said to them, "Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. <sup>32</sup> And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. <sup>33</sup> Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. <sup>34</sup> As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

<sup>53</sup> When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret and moored the boat. <sup>54</sup> When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, <sup>55</sup> and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. <sup>56</sup> And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the

marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

### ***A Reflection from Hannah...***

'He saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them'. Jesus had been trying to escape the crowd. As our reading says, he was looking for a solitary place in which he could be with his disciples and hear about their experiences. If we find ourselves hounded by something/someone we are trying to escape, are we always compassionate?! Possibly not...

But that word *compassion* feels very prescient. This week a new guiding principle has been introduced to our collective journey out of Lockdown- 'Personal Responsibility'. Understandably, this heuristic has been met with some controversy, not least because it might not mean the same thing to everyone; and suggests I can put *me* at the centre of *my* behaviour. Our true humanity finds itself first in Christ and then, inevitably, in each other. That's why the Household of God – as Paul calls it – is such a moving idea and a radical one. It resists the temptation to put me or my demographic in the middle of my decisions, and instead invites me, in the image of Christ, to recognise that we are connected, interdependent. As Christians, we cannot function as individuals with no sense of community; it deeply compromises the integrity with which we commend the Gospel. So our personal responsibility is of course about keeping those around us safe, as well as ourselves.

Which brings us back to that word – *compassion*. Compassion won out this week after the agonising end to the Euro 2020 final and the awful racial abuse that followed. The image of Marcus Rashford's mural covered in hearts and encouragements is a heartening affirmation of the compassion which we can draw out of each other, and which finds its example in Christ. Christ is forever breaking down boundaries and drawing people in. In St Paul's time, the great divide was between those in the Jewish community and those in the Gentile one. When you add those two groups together you get... everyone. St Paul says 'For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.' When we hear those words, we are reminded that the Gospel leaves nobody out, and all are equal.

I suspect that in the weeks to come, there will be a certain bumpiness to our life together. That phrase 'personal responsibility' will inevitably lead to difference. But it need not lead to anger. When Jesus looked out and saw a crowd who were lost and

chaotic and directionless (sound familiar?!) his response was not one of judgement or divisiveness, it was pure love. That compassion with which he beheld God's beloved people is something we can pray for, and cultivate, in our own lives and in the life of our nation, especially now. Compassion leads to reconciliation, to the walls coming down, to a real and enduring understanding that, under Christ, we are all equal, loved and one in him.