

COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 8 AUGUST 2021 – 10th Sunday after Trinity

COLLECT

Let your merciful ears, O Lord,
be open to the prayers of your humble servants;
and that they may obtain their petitions
make them to ask such things as shall please you;
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 130

- 1 Out of the depths have I cried to you, O Lord;
Lord, hear my voice; ♦
let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication.
- 2 If you, Lord, were to mark what is done amiss, ♦
O Lord, who could stand?
- 3 But there is forgiveness with you, ♦
so that you shall be feared.
- 4 I wait for the Lord; my soul waits for him; ♦
in his word is my hope.
- 5 My soul waits for the Lord,
more than the night watch for the morning, ♦
more than the night watch for the morning.
- 6 O Israel, wait for the Lord, ♦
for with the Lord there is mercy;
- 7 With him is plenteous redemption ♦
and he shall redeem Israel from all their sins.

Ephesians 4: 25-5.2

25 So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbours, for we are members of one another. ²⁶Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and do not make room for the devil. ²⁸Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labour and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. ²⁹Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. ³¹Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, ³²and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.⁵¹Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, ²and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

John 6: 35-51

35 Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

41 Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven.' ⁴²They were saying, 'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, "I have come down from heaven"?' ⁴³Jesus answered them, 'Do not complain among yourselves. ⁴⁴No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. ⁴⁵It is written in the prophets, "And they shall all be taught by God." Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. ⁴⁶Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. ⁵⁰This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. ⁵¹I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.'

A Reflection from Peter

I once knew someone who was a quite remarkable judge of character. From time to time he would say, "I simply can't listen to what that man says, because of who he is." What he meant, of course, was that he perceived a lack of

connection between the 'talk and the walk'; a lack of integrity at the heart of the person. In today's Gospel something similar happens.

We read, "Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven.' They were saying 'Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?'"

But there is a difference. Those doing the complaining are taking a bit of knowledge they have – that Jesus is the son of Joseph, and they know his mother and father – and drawing conclusions from that, without being willing to admit that the truth may be bigger and better. It's a bit like Donald Trump saying that because he got more votes overall in the 2020 election than the 2016 election he must have won (conveniently overlooking the fact that Joe Biden won even more votes!). A bit of truth is made to be the whole truth.

We long for a world in which things make sense and we are free from worry and anxiety. It is of such a world that Jesus speaks, 'I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live for ever...' This bread of life is just the kind of security, joy, peace and hope that we long for. And it is possible because Jesus is not just the son of Mary and Joseph, but the Son of the living God. 'No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me,' says Jesus. Jesus, uniquely, is the point of connection between heaven and earth, between God and creation. As scripture tells us, he is the corner-stone. In Harry Potter terms, he is the port-key that enables us to reach our goal. In a world where trust can be so easily eroded and where there are many incentives to act with less than complete integrity, it is a huge reassurance and encouragement to find in Jesus such complete trustworthiness. And just as he encourages us to turn to him and find him as nourishing as the best bread ever, so he encourages us to be food for others, to help others find in him the way to the Father, the way to lasting love and joy – and complete integrity.