

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

COLLECT

O God, forasmuch as without you
we are not able to please you;
mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit
may in all things direct and rule our hearts;
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.

Psalm 22

- 1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me, ♦
and are so far from my salvation, from the words of my distress?
- 2 O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer; ♦
and by night also, but I find no rest.
- 3 Yet you are the Holy One, ♦
enthroned upon the praises of Israel.
- 4 Our forebears trusted in you; ♦
they trusted, and you delivered them.
- 5 They cried out to you and were delivered; ♦
they put their trust in you and were not confounded.
- 6 But as for me, I am a worm and no man, ♦
scorned by all and despised by the people.
- 7 All who see me laugh me to scorn; ♦
they curl their lips and wag their heads, saying,
- 8 'He trusted in the Lord; let him deliver him; ♦
let him deliver him, if he delights in him.'
- 9 But it is you that took me out of the womb ♦
and laid me safe upon my mother's breast.
- 10 On you was I cast ever since I was born; ♦
you are my God even from my mother's womb.
- 11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near at hand ♦
and there is none to help.

- 12 Mighty oxen come around me; ♦
fat bulls of Bashan close me in on every side.
- 13 They gape upon me with their mouths, ♦
as it were a ramping and a roaring lion.
- 14 I am poured out like water; all my bones are out of joint; ♦
my heart has become like wax melting in the depths of my body.
- 15 My mouth is dried up like a potsherd; my tongue cleaves to my gums; ♦
you have laid me in the dust of death.

Hebrews 4.12-16

12 Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.

14 Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Mark 10.17-31

17 As Jesus was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, 'Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?' 18 Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. 19 You know the commandments: "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honour your father and mother." ' 20 He said to him, 'Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.' 21 Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, 'You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' 22 When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

23 Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, 'How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!' 24 And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, 'Children, how hard it is

to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.’ 26 They were greatly astounded and said to one another, ‘Then who can be saved?’ 27 Jesus looked at them and said, ‘For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.’

28 Peter began to say to him, ‘Look, we have left everything and followed you.’ 29 Jesus said, ‘Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, 30 who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.’

A Reflection from Peter

Monasteries are not always serious places. For centuries there has been a tradition of using very short biblical passages in some of the daily services. This makes them very memorable and they function a bit like ‘arrow prayers’. There was a time when we were revising some of the liturgy at Mirfield and were looking for some new short readings. Two of the brothers got together and came up with some suggestions: “It is easier for a camel!” “Foxes have holes” “But I say to you” These deliberately comical suggestions showed both what makes something memorable, but also how difficult it is to say something very briefly yet with depth of meaning. Indeed, Jesus own illustration is not without its problems – “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God” – and we are not surprised that St Mark tells us the disciples were greatly astounded. But then, after picturing a camel trying to squeeze through a needle we tend to move on, thinking ‘Well, it’s not my problem!’ But what is Jesus really saying? Remember, the passage began with that young man – who was clearly a very good young man. Jesus could see all that, but the young man had asked what he needed to do to inherit eternal life. Jesus’ reply is the one thing that he didn’t want to hear – either because he had already thought about it and dismissed it, or because it was just more than he could cope with. Here is the heart of Jesus’ message. We often get stuck in patterns of behaving, responding, hoping, or fearing and we cannot get out of them by ourselves. They are a block to further growth. Being a disciple of Jesus is to discover that we can trust Jesus to help us overcome such blockages – even though we shall resist – and find ourselves becoming like a super-sleek camel sliding through the eye of a needle!