



**COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 28 JULY 2024 - TRINITY 9**

COLLECT

Almighty God,
who sent your Holy Spirit
to be the life and light of your Church:
open our hearts to the riches of your grace,
that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit
in love and joy and peace;
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 145 (vv10-19)

- 10 All your works praise you, O Lord, ♦
and your faithful servants bless you.
- 11 They tell of the glory of your kingdom ♦
and speak of your mighty power,
- 12 To make known to all peoples your mighty acts ♦
and the glorious splendour of your kingdom.
- 13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; ♦
your dominion endures throughout all ages.
- 14 The Lord is sure in all his words ♦
and faithful in all his deeds.
- 15 The Lord upholds all those who fall ♦
and lifts up all those who are bowed down.
- 16 The eyes of all wait upon you, O Lord, ♦
and you give them their food in due season.
- 17 You open wide your hand ♦
and fill all things living with plenty.
- 18 The Lord is righteous in all his ways ♦
and loving in all his works.
- 19 The Lord is near to those who call upon him, ♦
to all who call upon him faithfully.

A reading from the second book of Kings Chapter 4, verses 42 to 44.

A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing food from the first fruits to the man of God: twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. Elisha said, 'Give it to the people and let them eat.' But his servant said, 'How can I set this before a hundred people?' So he repeated, 'Give it to the people and let them eat, for thus says the LORD, "They shall eat and have some left." ' He set it before them, they ate, and had some left, according to the word of the LORD. *2 Kings 4.42-44*

For the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

At Morning Prayer, the Gospel is simply the second reading, people sit to hear it and is introduced in the same way as the first:

The second reading is from John, chapter 6, verses 1-21.

and then at the end:

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

For Eucharists/ Communion people stand to hear the Gospel and it is introduced with an Acclamation, as below:

Alleluia. **Alleluia.**

My sheep hear my voice, says the Lord. I know them, and they follow me.

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John, chapter 6, verses 1-21.

Glory to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

John 6.1-21

After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?' He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, 'Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?' Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.' Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, 'Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.' So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, 'This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.'

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, got into a boat, and started across the lake to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The lake became rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the lake and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. But he said to them, 'It is I; do not be afraid.' Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land towards which they were going.

A Reflection from Peter...

If this were a chapter in one of the Winnie the Pooh books it might be entitled, "In which Jesus lays on an impromptu picnic and everyone had more than enough!" But such a title skips over the really astonishing bit. This was a huge crowd; and a quick enquiry found that one boy had just five small barley loaves and two fish – and that was it. Jesus simply says grace over what there is – and all of a sudden there is more than enough. Indeed they filled twelve baskets with the leftovers.

What is this all about? Are we supposed to think that God is something of a magician, able to conjure fantastic picnics out of thin air? Well.... This is the beginning of Chapter 6 of John's Gospel – a long and complex chapter that takes us from this amazing picnic to Jesus talking about himself as the bread of life, and saying, 'Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.' In just a few verses we have moved from what seems like a conjuring trick with loaves and fish to a new kind of holy cannibalism...!

John, the writer of the fourth Gospel knows just what he is doing by giving us this complicated chapter. It is really important for him that we keep the picnic and the teaching about the Eucharist together. Providing food for the hungry crowd is a sign of God's generosity and care for the whole creation. The Eucharist – the sharing of blessed bread and wine, in the pattern of the Last Supper, - is the means by which we join in God's generosity and caring. If you don't, Jesus says, you have no life in you. That is to say, without the Spirit of God coursing in our veins we are only partly alive. So today we are reminded first of God's generous care for, and understanding of us. Then, we see that same generosity as God continues to strengthen us with the bread of life – but we are also drawn into the action. We too have to grow in our care and generosity for others, and for all creation.