



COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 15 September 2024 - TRINITY 16

COLLECT

O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to hear the prayers
of your people who call upon you;
and grant that they may both perceive and know
what things they ought to do,
and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil them;
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 116.1-8

- 1 I love the Lord, for he has heard the voice of my supplication; ♦
because he inclined his ear to me on the day I called to him.
- 2 The snares of death encompassed me; the pains of hell took hold of me; ♦
by grief and sorrow was I held.
- 3 Then I called upon the name of the Lord: ♦
'O Lord, I beg you, deliver my soul.'
- 4 Gracious is the Lord and righteous; ♦
our God is full of compassion.
- 5 The Lord watches over the simple; ♦
I was brought very low and he saved me.
- 6 Turn again to your rest, O my soul, ♦
for the Lord has been gracious to you.
- 7 For you have delivered my soul from death, ♦
my eyes from tears and my feet from falling.
- 8 I will walk before the Lord ♦
in the land of the living.

A reading from the prophecy of Isaiah, Chapter 50, verses 4 – 9a.

The Lord God has given me

the tongue of a teacher,

that I may know how to sustain

the weary with a word.

Morning by morning he wakens—

wakens my ear

to listen as those who are taught.

The Lord God has opened my ear,

and I was not rebellious,

I did not turn backwards.

I gave my back to those who struck me,

and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;

I did not hide my face

from insult and spitting.

The Lord God helps me;

therefore I have not been disgraced;

therefore I have set my face like flint,

and I know that I shall not be put to shame;

he who vindicates me is near.

Who will contend with me?

Let us stand up together.

Who are my adversaries?

Let them confront me.

It is the Lord God who helps me;

who will declare me guilty?

Isaiah 50.4-9a

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 Mark, chapter 8, verses 27-38

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.**

Speak, Lord, your servant is listening: you have the message of eternal life.

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Mark, chapter 8, verses 27 - 38

Glory to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Mark 8.27-38

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that I am?' And they answered him, 'John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.' He asked them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered him, 'You are the Messiah.' And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, 'Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.'

A Reflection from Peter...

One of the most fundamental questions is simply "Who are you?" And, as we know only too well, it is a question we ask ourselves, "Who am I?" It is also a question to which the answer is never settled. We all change – perhaps not very dramatically – but continually. Some of the change is the consequence of ageing; some the result of experience; some because of the relationships that we have and the company we keep. Before the General Election there were many questions about the character and commitments of those standing for election. We are seeing the same kind of curiosity about the American election and people are asking to know more about Kamala Harris before making a decision.

In today's Gospel Jesus asks a different question. He says, "Who do people say that I am?" and then, "And who do you say that I am?" This is one of the moments in the Gospel when we understand something of the relationship to which God calls each of us. Jesus is not asking because he doesn't know who he is; he knows full well who he is, and who we are. He is asking in order to discover how much of the truth we know ourselves. As we hear the answers we are inclined to think that people in general don't have much idea of the truth, but that Peter does: "you are the Messiah." In fact, as the story unfolds, we realise that Peter may have had a sudden insight, but it took a lot longer before the whole truth of what he had seen became clear.

Jesus' confidence in himself is the gift that belongs to him as the only Son of the Father. But the gift is ours too: Jesus draws us to him and we learn, gradually and sometimes awkwardly, that God knows us through and through and enfolds us in love. We don't need to struggle to discover who we are. By letting the Spirit draw us into the light of God we realise we can be confident in ourselves as Jesus is confident in himself. And, if we ever felt the need to ask, "And who do people say that I am?" it would be with a wry smile, because we, by God's gift and grace, we know who we are!