

Sunday Worship at Home 29th August 2021 Trinity 13



Opening Prayer:

Father God, thank you for being with me today,
thank you for the community in which I live and the church to which I belong. Help us to
love each other as you love and us. **Amen**

Invitation to confession:

Hear the good news that the love of God is beyond measure
and you are included in that love.

Lord God, For the times we have forgotten to love you:

Lord have mercy

Lord, Jesus, For the times we have forgotten to love others:

Christ have mercy.

Lord God, We thank you for never forgetting to love us:

Lord have mercy

May almighty God have mercy upon you,
forgive your sins and bring you to everlasting light. Amen

The Collect (Special Prayer for the day)

Almighty God,
you search us and you know us: may we rely on you in strength
and rest on you in weakness, now and in all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord **Amen**

Gospel Reading: Mark 7 1-8,14,15,21-23 Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) So, the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" He said to them, "Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.' You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition." Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile." For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you O Christ.**

Reflection on the Gospel. In today's Gospel, some Pharisees and scribes made the journey north from Jerusalem to see Jesus and his disciples, primarily to nit-pick and find fault, because that's what they did; they pounced on the fact that some of the disciples didn't wash their hands before eating. Not that I'm saying don't wash your hands before eating, just that it's not the be all and end all.

Jesus could see that their criticism of the disciples was aimed at him, and it came from their love of the law and their joy of feeling superior to everyone else. It was not their way to have compassion or understanding for others.

I am sure that there are times when we can all dig our heels in and claim tradition as the most important thing, especially in our church life. Hymn singing is a bone of contention when your favourites are not selected every week, we think of Hymns as traditional but there was a time when clergy were sent to prison for daring to introduce them to worship. Pews and organs can be time-consuming items at PCC meetings, yet these were only introduced to churches in Victorian times, they are relatively new in the whole scale of the history of the church, but how we cling to them! It is good to have stability but the truth is that nothing remains the same forever, if it did it would mean we would never free to develop or explore new ways of doing things. If we become entrenched by tradition and continually want things “as they have always been,” we adopt a false comfort zone, a “we’re alright attitude”, and we prevent ourselves being open to others and find ourselves a church that will not attract the unchurched generations in our midst. From September we will be adopting a new service pattern aimed to give varied services of worship which we hope will appeal to those who live in our parishes who have yet to find God.

The decision could have been made to revert to the way things were before Covid 19 struck, but it is obvious to all that regeneration in our churches is required, and that is the responsibility of all of us, not just the clergy. Please give the new pattern of worship your support. If there is a service you prefer in one of the other churches of the Benefice other than your own, please travel to it if you can. If you enjoy coming to your church, support whatever service is on whether it is to your taste or not, also, invite a friend and bring them along. Above all talk about your faith and your love of God, don’t keep it as your secret; during this time of uncertainty, people are searching for something to hold on to that gives meaning to life, show them what you have. After the challenging period of Covid, which is not yet over, we now have the opportunity to try something new to revitalise each other and to address the issue of falling church attendance. Please be open to the changes and give us your patience and support, so that together we can work to grow God’s kingdom in this Benefice.

The Creed

We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family in heaven and earth is named.
We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.
We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us with power from on high.
We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Be still and Pray: For the people in Afghanistan desperate for their future and those trying to help them. Your family and all those you love and who love you. For the Church in this Diocese and our Benefice. Bless Her majesty the Queen, may world leaders to govern with care. Remember those who are travelling at this time that their journeys may be safe. Those who are ill or on the road to recovery. Pray for the souls of those who have died recently and whose funerals take place this week. May they rest in peace & rise in glory. **Amen**

The Lord’s Prayer:

Our Father, which art in heaven....

Blessing: The love of the Lord Jesus draw you to himself,
the power of the Lord Jesus strengthen you in time of trouble,
and the joy of the Lord Jesus fill your heart;
and the blessing of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
be with you and all those you love, today and always. Amen

Reverend Irene