



**DURHAM
CATHEDRAL**

THE SHRINE OF ST CUTHBERT

Praying Together

*during the week beginning Sunday 4 October
The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity*

During this time of great anxiety and uncertainty, we want to stay in touch with our regular worshippers and indeed with everyone who is associated with the Cathedral family. We are delighted that we have been able to reintroduce congregational worship here at the Cathedral and there is more information about that later on in this booklet. Durham Cathedral is also open for private prayer and quiet reflection.

If you'd like to come to the cathedral for worship and/or prayer, there are some important measures we'd like you to know about, to ensure the safety of members of the public and staff. You can find this information on our website: www.durhamcathedral.co.uk We will continue to live stream services as well so that, if you can't re-join us yet, you will still be able to engage with us online.

Gospel

Matthew 21. 33-end

Jesus said, 'Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watch-tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, "They will respect my son." But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance." So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?' They said to him, 'He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.'

Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures:

*"The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;*

this was the Lord's doing,
and it is amazing in our eyes"?

Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.' When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

Thought for the Day

by the Reverend Canon Charlie Allen

Today's Gospel reading tells the story, the parable, of a vineyard - which seems rather fitting in this season of harvest festivals. With so many turning to gardening during lockdown, I wonder how many of you have celebrated your own mini harvest this year. Our household has certainly spent a good amount of time rejoicing in home grown peppers and strawberries and tomatoes and potatoes and leeks - and goodness knows what else!

Perhaps you can identify with the owner of the vineyard in today's Gospel reading working hard to prepare the soil, removing the stones, carefully planting out and ensuring that all is well for his vines to grow in full abundance. How frustrated he must have been when he could not gather in the harvest due to issues with the tenants. Serious issues with serious consequences, and despite the owner's efforts to restore good relationships, he eventually has little choice but to hand over the vineyard to someone else - to new and more reliable tenants.

This is just a story, but as a parable it is a story with meaning of great depth, because Jesus used his parables to shine the torchlight of truth-telling into the hearts of those who were listening.

And those who heard this parable were gathered with him in the Temple in Jerusalem. Perhaps they were expecting the challenge it brought, because they had already observed Jesus turning over the tables of the money changers and confronting the religious leaders of the day with their rebelliousness and pride, pointing out that it will be the outcasts of society who humbly turn to God who will be welcomed into the kingdom of God ahead of them.

This parable spoke into the situation in which Jesus found himself, shocked and

saddened and frustrated at how the religious establishment of the day had forgotten its calling, its vocation; appalled at how they excluded others, and refused to have their comfortable peace disturbed with reality.

Jesus instead sought to model something different - think of all the enactments of hope and love, healing and inclusion that he revealed in his life and ministry – hospitality and welcome to the stranger and the outcast, a generosity to the poor, compassion towards the vulnerable, the nurture of reconciliation, a passion for justice, and ultimately he total self-surrender to the rule of love.

Today's Gospel calls us to reflect on what it is that we model in our lives. It calls us to think deeply about the ways in which we put up barriers to keep God's love out; about ways in which we have a tendency towards a smallness of heart. The mistrust of strangers, apathy towards the plight of the needy, complacency about the vulnerable, a lack of fruitfulness and joy.

Today we are called to dare to live differently, to nurture the vineyard that is entrusted to us with care, love and hope.

Today we are called again to be God's people.

A prayer attributed to St Francis of Assisi, whose feast day we celebrate this week:

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.*

*O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.*

*For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.*

A Form of Intercession

For the peace that comes from God alone,
for the unity of all peoples,
and for our salvation,

let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the Church of Christ, for Paul our Bishop,
and for the whole people of God,

let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the nations of the world,
for Elizabeth our Queen and for all in authority,

let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this City and County of Durham,
for our neighbours and our friends,

let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the good earth which God has given us,
and for the wisdom and will to conserve it,

let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the aged and infirm,
for the widowed and orphans,
for the sick and suffering,

for those whom we remember in these prayers,
and for all in any need,

let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the poor and the oppressed,
for the unemployed and the destitute,
for prisoners and captives,
and for all who remember and care for them,

let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the dying, for those who mourn,
for the faithful whom we entrust to the Lord in hope,
as we look forward to the day when we share
the fullness of the resurrection,

let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Rejoicing in the communion of Cuthbert, Bede, and all the saints,
let us commend ourselves, and one another,
and all our life, to God.

For yours is the majesty,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;
yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory,
now and for ever.

Amen.

Calendar of Holy Days

Tuesday 6 October	William Tyndale, translator, martyr, 1536
Friday 9 October	<i>Denys, bishop, and companions, martyrs, c 250</i> <i>Robert Grosseteste, bishop, philosopher, scientist, 1253</i>
Saturday 10 October	Paulinus, bishop, missionary, 644 <i>Thomas Traherne, poet, spiritual writer, 1674</i>

Hymn

Blest are the pure in heart,
For they shall see our God,
The secret of the Lord is theirs,
Their soul is Christ's abode.

The Lord, who left the heavens
Our life and peace to bring,
To dwell in lowliness with men,
Their pattern and their King.

Still to the lowly soul
He doth himself impart,
And for his dwelling and his throne
Chooseth the pure in heart.

Lord, we thy presence seek;
May ours this blessing be;
Give us a pure and lowly heart,
A temple meet for thee.

John Keble

Poem: Sonnet (on his blindness) by John Milton (1608-1674)

John Milton's sonnet gives us the well-known lines, 'They also serve who only stand and wait.' There is an echo of Mary and Martha about the poem. We can do God's work quietly and peacefully and not only by dashing around and 'doing' mission at 100 miles per hour. At a time of restricted activity for some people, this may be refreshing. But it also a lesson in being still and knowing God.

When I consider how my light is spent,
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one Talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my Soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide;
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er Land and Ocean without rest:
They also serve who only stand and wait."



A Prayer for use during the Coronavirus outbreak

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.

A Prayer of Janet Morley

Christ our companion,
you came not to humiliate the sinner
but to disturb the righteous.
Welcome us when we are put to shame,
but challenge our smugness,
that we may truly turn from what is evil,
and be freed even from our virtues,
in your name.
Amen.

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The next issue of *Praying Together*
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