



**DURHAM
CATHEDRAL**

THE SHRINE OF ST CUTHBERT

Praying Together

*during the week beginning Sunday 12 July
The Fifth 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.

The residential clergy are still saying the Daily Offices at home or from church, and they are being live-streamed via the cathedral website where there is a link that takes you to the Cathedral's Facebook page (you don't need a Facebook account).

We are delighted that Durham Cathedral is open for private prayer and quiet reflection. If you'd like to come to the cathedral for 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 until such time as congregational worship is permitted inside the Cathedral again. We're not quite ready for that yet but are working hard to put everything in place to make it possible later this month.

Gospel

Matthew 13. 1-9, 18-23

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!'

'Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground,

this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.'

Thought for the Day

by the Reverend Canon Michael Everitt

My friend had moved house and because I had worked for a top end interior designer before ordination, she wanted my ideas on what to do. After various suggestions we went into the back garden. She looked across and said, where do I begin with this. A rule of thumb in interior design is "sort the garden out first" as it gives you a space to go into when the house is a mess.

Her garden was simply a paved area. I said to her, shall I do your garden? And so, Ruth and I removed slabs and planted up a garden. When she came to sell a few years later, I had tremendous pride in reading, "One of the main attractions of this property is the quality designer garden that is both contemporary and mature."

I confess that when it comes to gardening, beyond the lawn and roses I am more management than productive. I do know that if you want a vegetable patch or have acquired an allotment the first thing to plant are potatoes.

This is not because they have a magical effect on the soil, or like beans in rotation planting return nitrogen, it is quite simply you have to dig over the soil to a depth, when you plant them, combining it with good nutrition and also dig again to a depth when you harvest them, thus aerating the soil and improving it for the next season's endeavours.

The parable in today's Gospel is about sowers, seeds, soil and yield. The sower is profligate in the broadcasting of the seed. This is no mechanical seed drill planting with an industrial efficiency, nor is it the careful propagation that involves pricking out, planting on, nurture and support.

This is a scattering abroad with a whole range of areas receiving the seed. In a similar way, the soil is a mixture of prepared, semi-fertile, hostile, and some totally unsuitable. Even in the fertile soil, the yield is hit and miss.

It is easy to miss the point of this parable, despite Jesus explaining it. The seeds of the Kingdom of God are not treated as precious items to be carefully dispensed to a chosen few and in carefully regulated situations. The seeds of the kingdom are flung far and wide to all locations and a whole range of circumstances.

Yes, there are certain contexts where those seeds either cannot take root or thrive, however that is not the fault of the seed or even of the soil in which it might have begun to settle in, but the environment of rocks, birds, competing plants. "The Cares of the world and the lures of wealth."

Perhaps one of the reasons the point is missed is that humanity is identified with the soil. We forget the lesson of Genesis that Adam is made of the soil. "Remember thou art but dust". A garden that has been paved over cannot receive any seed into its soil. Humanity all too often has become either overgrown with competing values or has not allowed a deep nurturing preparation of who it is so that the seed of the kingdom can take root.

This is why the Church is involved in education, and especially education for all, not just those within. If we are uncomfortable being reminded that we are of the soil, we perhaps are also hesitant that we need to work hard to improve the soil for the kingdom to be propagated.

If the Church is to be true to the vision of the sower, then she needs to recognise that the word of the kingdom needs sharing liberally and generously, not just to a few that are deemed to be nearly there. That time needs to be taken to remove obstacles that can hinder growth and that when growth happens it will not be uniform or equally productive, but will be of value. In the world of market economics, this is a different voice, a distinctive way.

But Paul has reminded us that the Kingdom of God lifts us to become a whole new creation through the Spirit that is within us. No longer simply "of the soil," but now also "of God."

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 Sarah, Bishop of Jarrow,
for Durham Cathedral, for our local church communities,
and for the whole people of God,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the nations of the world, for those at enmity with each other,
for Elizabeth our Queen and for all in authority,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this City of Durham, for our own towns and villages,
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 known to us and those known only to God,
and for all in any kind of 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 the death of loved ones,
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.

Silence is kept

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.

Hymn

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord:
Unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice;
Tender to me the promise of his word;
In God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his name:
Make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
His mercy sure, from age to age the same;
His holy name, the Lord, the Mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of his might:
Powers and dominions lay their glory by;
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
The hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word:
Firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
To children's children and for evermore.

Timothy Dudley-Smith
(after St Luke 1. 46 - 55)

Calendar of Holy Days

Tuesday 14 July	John Keble, priest, poet, 1866
Wednesday 15 July	Swithun, bishop, c 862 <i>Bonaventure, friar, bishop, teacher of the faith, 1274</i>
Thursday 16 July	<i>Osmund, bishop, 1099</i>
Saturday 18 July	<i>Elizabeth Ferard, deaconess, founder of the Community of St Andrew, 1883</i>

Sunday 12 July would have been the day on which we bade farewell to departing musicians at the end of choir term. This year, five Choristers leave us—as do two Choral Scholars and one Organ Scholar. The current restrictions in place as a result of the coronavirus and its effects prevent us from doing that in person but, nevertheless, at our pre-recorded Evensong on this day (at 3.30 p.m.), we pay tribute to those musicians who have served their time in Durham Cathedral Choir and who now lay down the mantle of their office. We will invite them back here in person later in the year to mark their departure in a more conventional manner and to pay tribute to them. In the meantime, we thank them for everything they have been within our community and for everything they have contributed of their gifts and talents to the worshipping life of this holy place.

Creator Spirit, who in the making of music hast given to us a delight for the mind and a solace for the heart; by the harmonies of thy grace resolve the discords of our lives, so that we may sound forth thy praise in what we do and what we are; to the glory of thy great and wonderful name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Peter Baelz

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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 St Aidan:

Leave me alone with God as much as may be.
As the tide draws the waters close in upon the shore,
Make me an island, set apart,
Alone with you, God, holy to you.
Then with the turning of the tide
Prepare me to carry your presence
to the busy world beyond,
The world that rushes in on me,
Till the waters come again and fold me back to you.
Amen.

The next issue of *Praying Together*
will be published on Monday 20 July