



## DURHAM CATHEDRAL

THE SHRINE OF ST CUTHBERT

# Praying Together

*during the week beginning Sunday 14 June*

*The First 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.*

*This is particularly important to us at a time when, following the Church of England's instructions, public worship at the Cathedral has been suspended. 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 hope that this pamphlet will provide you with important worship and prayer resources for use at home as well as a reminder of how to keep in touch with us, especially if you have particularly needs. Please be assured that you are firmly in our thoughts and prayers, and please pray for us at this very difficult and worrying time.*

## Gospel

## Matthew 9. 35—10.8

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.' Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him. These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, "The kingdom of heaven has come near." Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.'

# Thought for the Day

by the Reverend Canon Michael Hampel

Jesus's call to his disciples in this morning's gospel lesson is a call to leadership. The hallmarks of Christian discipleship, however, include such qualities as humility and sacrifice such that the Christian priest today is often mistaken as a foil to people's idiosyncrasies and foibles rather than as one who leads decisively even at the expense of his or her popularity.

People are likely to offer the vicar more tea for the cup than more power to the elbow.

And yet it seems to me that there is a growing number of groups within society – both here and elsewhere – which feel like sheep without a shepherd. And, while they do indeed need tea and sympathy, they also need strong voices and a call to action.

The context in this morning's gospel lesson appears to be narrow: it is a call to mission and evangelism rather than a call to social or political action and, in the case of St Matthew's particular account, the context is narrowed down even further to a call specifically to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

But even the call to mission and evangelism must be set within the context of the search for the Kingdom of God which, throughout the Gospel, is a call to social and political action of dynamic and anarchic proportions – not least when it comes to the challenge to the rich on behalf of the poor.

In the contemporary context of church, I wonder if the social context is now an afterthought to the more pressing matter of numbers in church on a Sunday morning. Whereas the call to action was often – particularly in the nineteenth and early twentieth century – synonymous with mission because people were drawn to a message with which they could identify both theologically and empirically.

In the aftermath of a world health crisis and in the aftermath of the death of black man in Minnesota, the job of strong leadership – both in Church and State – going forward must surely be to harness the potential for strong community that is clearly present throughout society and let it inform the political agenda.

You know the Church must be doing something right when politicians criticise it for interfering in politics. You know it must be doing something wrong when it becomes congregationalist.

New church members should be the result of Christian action, not the *sine qua non*.

And I understand and share the criticism of those in authority both in terms of their responsibility and their response but I believe passionately in shared responsibility so that, if we don't like what we've got, we need to go out and vote in local and national elections or even stand for election ourselves.

And the Church has such an enormous, and enormously exciting, part to play in the call for action, in the drawing together of society, in the building up of community, in the political interference that makes change happen, in the recognising of shared responsibility, and in the challenging leadership that sheep without shepherds need.

But it's going to have to re-think its strategy and send out labourers into God's harvest not so much as missionaries than as turbulent priests whose call to social action might open eyes and ears to the good news of the kingdom – tomorrow, next year, maybe never. But that's OK because the sower who went out to sow flung the seed all over the place and only some of it yielded fruit so don't worry about results. Just fling the seed of Christian action around as an end in itself because the fertile ground of God is out there just as much as it is in here.

The world is hurting very much right now but, if we peer over the brow of church mission plans and party political manifestos, we see the potential in our brothers and sisters for the agenda to change and for the hurt to heal.

# A Form of Intercession

United in the company of all the faithful  
and looking for the coming of the kingdom,  
let us offer our prayers to God,  
the source of all life and holiness.

Merciful Lord,  
strengthen all Christian people by your Holy Spirit,  
that we may live as a royal priesthood and a holy nation  
to the praise of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Bless Paul our bishop, and all ministers of your Church,  
that by faithful proclamation of your word  
we may be built on the foundation  
of the apostles and prophets  
into a holy temple in the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Empower us by the gift of your holy and life-giving Spirit,  
that we may be transformed into the likeness of Christ  
from glory to glory.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Give to the world and its peoples  
the peace that comes from above,  
that they may find Christ's way of freedom and life.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Hold in your embrace all who witness to your love  
in the service of the poor and needy;  
all those who minister to the sick and dying;  
and all who bring light to those in darkness.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Touch and heal all those whose lives are scarred by sin  
or disfigured by pain,  
that, raised from death to life in Christ,  
their sorrow may be turned to eternal joy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Remember in your mercy all those gone before us,  
who have been well-pleasing to you from eternity;  
preserve in your faith your servants on earth,  
guide us to your kingdom,  
and grant us your peace at all times.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Hasten the day when many will come  
from east and west, from north and south,  
and sit at table in your kingdom.

**Lord, have mercy.**

We give you thanks  
for the whole company of your saints in glory,  
with whom in fellowship we join our prayers and praises;  
by your grace may we, like them,  
be made perfect in your love.

**Blessing and glory and wisdom,  
thanksgiving and honour and power,  
be to our God for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

# Hymn: Angel-voices ever singing

Angel-voices ever singing  
Round thy throne of light,  
Angel-harps for ever ringing,  
Rest not day nor night;  
Thousands only live to bless thee  
And confess thee  
Lord of might.

Thou who art beyond the farthest  
Mortal eye can scan,  
Can it be that thou regardest  
Songs of sinful man?  
Can we know that thou art near us,  
And wilt hear us?  
Yea, we can.

For we know that thou rejoicest  
O'er each work of thine;  
Thou didst ears and hands and voices  
For thy praise design;  
Craftsman's art and music's measure  
For thy pleasure  
All combine.

In thy house, great God, we offer  
Of thine own to thee,  
And for thine acceptance proffer  
All unworthily  
Hearts and minds and hands and voices  
In our choicest  
Psalmody.

Honour, glory, might and merit  
Thine shall ever be,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
Blessed Trinity.  
Of the best which thou hast given  
Earth and heaven  
Render thee.

*Francis Pott*

# The Darkling Thrush: Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

Thomas Hardy struggled with his faith and, in the following poem, hears something of the Christian hope in birdsong. The blackbird which boasts little in the way of colourful plumage and, in this particular case, is old and ragged, creates possibly the most beautiful birdsong of any in our gardens or woodland. As part of God's creation, it is perhaps closer to the truth than we in our distracted material worlds?

1. I leant upon a coppice gate  
When Frost was spectre-gray,  
And Winter's dregs made desolate  
The weakening eye of day.  
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky  
Like strings of broken lyres,  
And all mankind that haunted night  
Had sought their household fires.

2. The land's sharp features seemed to be  
The Century's corpse outleant,  
His crypt the cloudy canopy,  
The wind his death-lament.  
The ancient pulse of germ and birth  
Was shrunken hard and dry,  
And every spirit upon earth  
Seemed fervourless as I.

3. At once a voice arose among  
The bleak twigs overhead  
In a full-hearted evensong  
Of joy illimited;  
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,  
In blast-beruffled plume,  
Had chosen thus to fling his soul  
Upon the growing gloom.

4. So little cause for carollings  
Of such ecstatic sound  
Was written on terrestrial things  
Afar or nigh around,  
That I could think there trembled through  
His happy good-night air  
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew  
And I was unaware.

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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 Gregory of Nazianzus

You alone are unutterable,  
from the time you created all things  
that can be spoken of.  
You alone are unknowable,  
from the time you created all things  
that can be known.  
All things cry out about you;  
those which speak,  
and those which cannot speak.  
All things honour you;  
those which think  
and those which cannot think.  
For there is one longing, one groaning,  
that all things have for you.  
All things prayer to you that comprehend your plan  
and offer you a silent hymn.  
In you, the One, all things abide,  
and all things endlessly run to you  
who are the end of all.  
Amen.

The next issue of *Praying Together*  
will be published on Monday 22 June