

Materials for Virtual Worship

First Sunday after Trinity, 6 June 2021

*Please use this material with the order of Virtual Service for
the Linton Team of Churches Ordinary Time*

Collects

O God,
the strength of all those who put their trust in you,
mercifully accept our prayers
and, because through the weakness of our mortal nature
we can do no good thing without you,
grant us the help of your grace,
that in the keeping of your commandments
we may please you both in will and deed;
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.

(or)

God of truth,
help us to keep your law of love
and to walk in ways of wisdom,
that we may find true life
in Jesus Christ your Son.
Amen.

Readings

Genesis 3:8-15

They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' He said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.' He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?'

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The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate.' Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent tricked me, and I ate.' The Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you among all animals and among all wild creatures; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.' Amen.

Mark 3: 20-end

and the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat. When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him, for people were saying, 'He has gone out of his mind.' And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, 'He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons.' And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, 'How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered.

'Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin' — for they had said, 'He has an unclean spirit.'

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The True Kindred of Jesus

Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, 'Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you.' And he replied, 'Who are my mother and my brothers?' And looking at those who sat around him, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.'

Reflection

A house divided_Proper 5B.

Genesis 3.8-15

Mark 3.20-35

'I don't know where it will lead...'

I distinctly remember my mother saying these words to me as she drove me North to my first term at theological college in Durham. She wasn't talking about the road, of course – after all, the A1 leads pretty directly to Durham - but she was talking about the sense of vocation I was following, which at that time manifested itself in a call to train as what was called 'a licensed lay worker' in the Church of England – no women priests in those days!

It probably didn't seem a very glamorous career path to my mother – in fact, a career path with no ladder to climb or prestige to gain. I had the distinct impression that she was disappointed in the way I was going, and thought I could have done better for myself on the basis of my university degree in the course of which my parents had supported me generously, even though I'd switched from Law (a 'sensible' kind of subject to study – with prospects!) to Theology (what kind of subject was that for a girl?) But, nevertheless, disappointed and puzzled though she must have been, there she was kindly driving me a very long way from our home near London to start my new course (during

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which, I have to say, my parents went on very generously supporting me in various ways).

But this little sentence I remember so well which my mother said in the car, illustrates quite a common experience – parents and children seeing things differently, children not turning out quite as expected, and choosing a path which disappoints or even dismays the family. You may have experience of this yourself, either as a child or a parent – perhaps as both! It doesn't necessarily have to do with work or vocation – it may be disappointment over a life-partner someone chooses, or a lifestyle, religion or philosophy which runs counter to the family's hopes. And of course, the grief can be over someone genuinely 'going off the rails' or choosing to move a long way away from the family – emigrating, even.

Today's Gospel showed us Jesus' own natural family being more than disappointed – they were even alarmed by the path he was taking. They came out to 'restrain' him, travelling 20 miles or so from Nazareth to Capernaum, a long way in those days, to take him in hand. People were saying he was out of his mind because of the radical things he was saying and doing; maybe the people who said that could see that he was courting opposition from very influential and powerful people – members of the Council from even so far away as Jerusalem. He'd have to be a madman to antagonize *them!* It's not quite clear whether the family were beginning to doubt Jesus' sanity, or were just deeply disturbed by the reputation he was getting as a maverick and a rebel; they were probably already deeply discombobulated by the fact that he'd disappeared off some time ago to hear John the Baptist preach – and had then never effectively returned to the family fold. We have to assume that he was the eldest son, the one who would have stepped into his father's shoes and become head of the family and of the business when Joseph died. But now he'd simply thrown it all up to wander and preach, without a by your leave. There were all sorts of things wrong, all of them extremely upsetting to a family in a tight-knit and traditional community which didn't subscribe to the idea that

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children should be left to go their own way in the same way as our society does. So, they came to take him home.

And we heard what happened: he wouldn't let them come near him, not so much as into the house where he was teaching; he turned to the onlookers and declared that they – or some of them – were just as much, if not more, his mother and brothers, if they were doing the will of God (which clearly his own kin didn't understand).

It's an emotionally brutal moment, a family rupture which I think we all feel as a bit of a shock, however well we know the story. Our picture of the gentle mother Mary holding her Son in perfect harmony is shattered. I hope it's true to say that none of our experiences of disagreement between the generations have been as painful as this. But in this painful moment Jesus established the priority of loyalty to God over every other loyalty, no matter how sacred. He was on the road to the cross, and he showed his followers how radical and profound their choice of following him might have to be. And, throughout the ages, people *have* sometimes had to choose between their natural family and their heavenly Father; they have sometimes had to behave on the basis that water – the water of new birth - is actually thicker than blood.

But not always; happily, families have often accepted the choices people make when they're seeking to follow the path that God marks out for them. The rupture of misunderstanding has not been allowed to become a total rupture in love. And sometimes new understanding has blossomed in the soil of that love, through eyes being opened to the unexpected fruit that grows in the life of someone who took what had seemed so much 'The wrong path'.

And so, it seems, was the case with Jesus' family. Mary followed to Jerusalem, and was with Jesus when he died, and then she was with other disciples when the Holy Spirit came. His brothers, it seems, also became followers. One of them, James, became leader of the church

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(the first 'bishop') in Jerusalem. We hear of him in this role in the Book of Acts. The meaning and purpose of Jesus' miraculous birth and his growing-up among them, had unfolded itself in their understanding and led to change and healing. What a work of grace that was!

So, despite the painful story in the Gospel today, Joseph's family was not finally what Jesus pithily described as 'a house divided against itself'. We all know, with him, that such a house cannot stand.

A 'house' (or family) divided against itself is one where blame is passed around, responsibility denied, and the vision of God's purposes for us suppressed by individual and group self-serving. These are infections which run rife throughout human history, causing incalculable harm and grief. No wonder that the author of Genesis Chapter 2 and 3 pictured these attitudes as stemming from our first parents, Adam and Eve. Humanity has been divided against itself from the very beginning, inflicting pain where there should be harmony. But thanks be to God! He planted not only the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the garden of our origins, but also the Tree of Life - which we now recognize to be the cross of Jesus. The single-minded path God's Son took to that cross is the reversal of Adam and Eve's story, and essential to the story of our redemption. His tree of death, having become for us the Tree of Life can, through prayer, become healing for our human disappointments, our dismay with each other, and the painful divisions which follow, whether within families, within communities and nations, or even within the church!

Maggie Guite

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Christ Whose Glory Fills The Skies

1 Christ whose glory fills the skies
Christ the true the only Light
Sun of righteousness arise
Triumph o'er the shades of night
Dayspring from on high be near
Daystar in my heart appear

2 Dark and cheerless is the morn
Unaccompanied by thee
Joyless is the day's return
Till thy mercy's beams I see
Till they inward light impart
Glad my eyes and warm my heart

3 Visit then this soul of mine
Pierce the gloom of sin and grief
Fill me radiancy divine
Scatter all my unbelief
More and more thyself display
Shining to the perfect day

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PSALM 130 with Response

**With the Lord there is mercy,
and with him is plenteous redemption.**

Out of the depths have I cried to you, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice;
let your ears consider well the voice of my supplication.
If you, Lord, were to mark what is done amiss,
O Lord, who could stand?
But there is forgiveness with you,
so that you shall be feared.

**With the Lord there is mercy,
and with him is plenteous redemption.**

I wait for the Lord; my soul waits for him;
in his word is my hope.
My soul waits for the Lord more than the night-watch for the
morning,
more than the night-watch for the morning.

**With the Lord there is mercy,
and with him is plenteous redemption.**

O Israel, wait for the Lord,
for with the Lord there is mercy;
with him is plenteous redemption.
And he shall redeem Israel from all their sins.

**With the Lord there is mercy,
and with him is plenteous redemption.**

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Praise To The Holiest In The Height

1 Praise to the Holiest in the height
And in the depth be praise
In all His words most wonderful
Most sure in all His ways

2 O loving wisdom of our God
When all was sin and shame
A second Adam to the fight
And to the rescue came

3 O wisest love that flesh and blood
Which did in Adam fail
Should strive afresh against the foe
Should strive and should prevail

4 And that a higher gift than grace
Should flesh and blood refine
God's presence and His very self
And essence all-divine

5 O generous love that He who smote
In man for man the foe
The double agony in man
For man should undergo

6 And in the garden secretly
And on the cross on high
Should teach His brethren and inspire
To suffer and to die

7 Praise to the Holiest in the height
And in the depth be praise
In all His words most wonderful
Most sure in all His ways

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Who would true valour see (He who would valiant be)

1 Who would true valour see,
let him come hither;
one here will constant be,
come wind, come weather;
There's no discouragement
shall make him once relent
his first avowed intent
to be a pilgrim.

2 Who so beset him round
with dismal stories,
do but themselves confound,
his strength the more is.
No lion can him fright:
he'll with a giant fight:
but he will have the right
to be a pilgrim.

3 Hobgoblin nor foul fiend
can daunt his Spirit,
he knows he at the end
shall life inherit.
Then, fancies, fly away;
hell fear not what men say;
hell labour night and day
to be a pilgrim.

CCLI Song # 2867250

John Bunyan | Percy Dearmer | Ralph Vaughan Williams

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Music: Oxford University Press

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There's a wideness in God's mercy

1 There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in his justice,
Which is more than liberty.
There is no place where earth's sorrows
Are more felt than up in heaven;
There is no place where earth's failings
Have such kindly judgement given.

2 For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.
But we make his love too narrow
By false limits of our own;
And we magnify his strictness
With a zeal he will not own.

3 There is plentiful redemption
In the blood that has been shed;
There is joy for all the members
In the sorrows of the Head.
There is grace enough for thousands
Of new worlds as great as this;
There is room for fresh creations
In that upper home of bliss.

If our love were but more simple, (*Second half of tune*)
We should take him at his word;
And our lives would be all gladness
In the joy of Christ our Lord.

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Closing Prayer

Eternal Father,
we thank you for nourishing us
with these heavenly gifts:
may our communion strengthen us in faith,
build us up in hope,
and make us grow in love;
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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Praise to the Holiest in the Height

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