

Sunday 26 September 2021

The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity



Sermon © Rosie Kingham.

Prayers of intercession © Lay Anglicana.

Liturgy © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,
<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 I heard the voice of Jesus say (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, to be our advocate in heaven, and to bring us to eternal life.

Therefore, let us confess our sins in penitence and faith,
firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments
and to live in love and peace with all.

All Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Gloria

This Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

All Glory be to God in Heaven,
Songs of joy and peace we bring,
Thankful hearts and voices raising,
To creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,
Glory be to God our King:
Glory be to God our King.

Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,
Bore the load of this world's sin;
Only Son of God the Father,
You have brought us peace within.
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,

Now your glorious reign begin:

Now your glorious reign begin.

You O Son of God are Holy,

You we praise with one accord.

None in heav'n or earth is like you,

Only you are Christ the Lord.

With the Father and the Spirit,

Ever worshipped and adored:

Ever worshipped and adored.

The Collect for the Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity

Gracious God,

you call us to fullness of life:

deliver us from unbelief

and banish our anxieties

with the liberating love of Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the Third Book of Moses called Numbers

The rabble among them had a strong craving; and the Israelites also wept again, and said, 'If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we used to eat in Egypt for nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; but now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.' Now the manna was like coriander seed, and its color was like the color of gum resin. The people went around and gathered it, ground it in mills or beat it in mortars, then boiled it in pots and made cakes of it; and the taste of it was like the taste of cakes baked with oil. When the dew fell on the camp in the night, the manna would fall with it. Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, all at the entrances of their tents. Then the Lord became very angry, and Moses was displeased.

So Moses said to the Lord, 'Why have you treated your servant so badly? Why have I not found favour in your sight, that you lay the burden of all this people on me? Did I conceive all this people? Did I give birth to them, that you should say to me, "Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a sucking child", to the land that you promised on oath to their ancestors? Where am I to get meat to give to all this people? For they come weeping to me and say, "Give us meat to eat!" I am not able

to carry all this people alone, for they are too heavy for me. If this is the way you are going to treat me, put me to death at once—if I have found favor in your sight—and do not let me see my misery.’

So the Lord said to Moses, ‘Gather for me seventy of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; bring them to the tent of meeting, and have them take their place there with you. I will come down and talk with you there; and I will take some of the spirit that is on you and put it on them; and they shall bear the burden of the people along with you so that you will not bear it all by yourself. And say to the people: Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wailed in the hearing of the Lord, saying, ‘If only we had meat to eat! Surely it was better for us in Egypt.’ Therefore the Lord will give you meat, and you shall eat. You shall eat not only one day, or two days, or five days, or ten days, or twenty days, but for a whole month—until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you—because you have rejected the Lord who is among you, and have wailed before him, saying, “Why did we ever leave Egypt?”’ But Moses said, “The people I am with number six hundred thousand on foot; and you say, “I will give them meat, that they may eat for a whole month”! Are there enough flocks and herds to slaughter for them? Are there enough fish in the sea to catch for them?” The Lord said to Moses, ‘Is the Lord’s power limited? Now you shall see whether my word will come true for you or not.’

So Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord; and he gathered seventy elders of the people, and placed them all around the tent. Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do so again. Two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the spirit rested on them; they were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. And a young man ran and told Moses, ‘Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.’ And Joshua son of Nun, the assistant of Moses, one of his chosen men, said, ‘My lord Moses, stop them!’ But Moses said to him, ‘Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit on them!’ *Numbers 11:4–29*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Psalm

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect,
reviving the soul;
the decrees of the Lord are sure,
making wise the simple;
⁸ the precepts of the Lord are right,
rejoicing the heart;
the commandment of the Lord is clear,
enlightening the eyes;
⁹ the fear of the Lord is pure,
enduring for ever;
the ordinances of the Lord are true
and righteous altogether.
¹⁰ More to be desired are they than gold,
even much fine gold;
sweeter also than honey,
and drippings of the honeycomb.
¹¹ Moreover by them is your servant warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.
¹² But who can detect their errors?
Clear me from hidden faults.
¹³ Keep back your servant also from the insolent;
do not let them have dominion over me.
Then I shall be blameless,
and innocent of great transgression.
¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable to you,
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. *Psalm 19:8-end*

All **Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever.
Amen.**

Second reading

A reading from the Letter of St James

Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. Elijah was a human being like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain and the earth yielded its harvest. My brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and is brought back by another, you should know that whoever brings back a sinner from wandering will save the sinner's soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins. *James 5:13-20*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Lord Jesus Christ

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

All Glory to you O Lord.

John said to him, 'Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.' But Jesus said, 'Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.

'If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were hung around your neck and you were thrown into the sea. If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than to have two hands and to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than to have two feet and to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom

of God with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into hell, where their worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched.

‘For everyone will be salted with fire. Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.

Mark 9:38–50

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

Today’s gospel is a continuation and part of last week’s story: It’s one of Mark’s ‘sandwiches’ told over two weeks. The slice of bread—the child and by extension, the people without power or voice—comes back again towards the end of today’s gospel. And the filling is a concentrated cluster of moral teaching about discipleship and the task of being ‘last of all and servant of all’. And the whole is seasoned by love.

In the filling of the sandwich, John and the other disciples run into a stumbling block to their ministry, an outsider who, as John tells Jesus, ‘Was not following us.’ John does not say that this man interfered with the disciples’ work, that he had a different purpose, or that he opposed them. He simply says, ‘He was not following us.’ It didn’t matter that this person was casting out demons in Jesus’ name. He was not one of them, and that seems to be their stumbling point.

We are told in the epistle and the Old Testament reading how we are to worship, what we are to do in difficult circumstances, and how we are to bring others to God. In the Gospel, in very dramatic terms, Jesus gives us examples of what can happen if we don’t obey Him—our feet can take us places that lead us away from Him, our hands can do things he doesn’t want us to do, and we can put obstacles in the spiritual paths of others, thus harming, not helping, our neighbours. But Jesus is also gently rebuking the disciples for thinking they are the only ones doing Christ’s work—‘no-one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterwards to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us’. He is removing a stumbling block.

Now, I can too easily name and blame people, events, and circumstances that have tripped me up, interfered in my life, or kept me from getting what I wanted. I’ve never had the promotions I deserve because my face doesn’t fit. I never got the chance to be a musician because no-one encouraged me. Stumbling blocks, excuses (or self-delusions. Maybe I just wasn’t good enough ...) These stumbling blocks appear in our spiritual life, too.

There's the stumbling block of the 'Somebody else will do it' approach to helping the vulnerable, the outcast or the powerless. 'I can't afford it'. 'I haven't got time' for prayer. 'I don't like the music so I'm not going to church'. "It won't matter if I miss church today'. Gossip is a stumbling block. These things do harm to our spiritual health and to other people too. When did any of us last talk to the homeless person outside the supermarket, or give them anything. 'They'll only spend it on drink', we say. But we could buy them a pie, or a coffee, or a pair of gloves, in Jesus' name.

This is what Jesus is talking about in this passage, the need to get rid of the things that take us away from Him, to get back to true discipleship and service – never mind what anyone else is doing. He is asking us to look at ourselves, to be self-reflective. Our greatest stumbling blocks are not outside us but within us: anger and revenge, the judgments we make of others, prejudice, our desire to get ahead and be number one, the need to be right, our unwillingness to listen, the assumption that we know more and better than another, living as if our way is the only and right way, pride, fear.... These, and a thousand other things like them, are what cause others and us to fall. These are what we have to cut off.

Today, we might re-phrase Jesus' words this way: 'If it costs an arm and a leg to resist temptation, it is worth it.' We aren't suggesting that a person literally sacrifice an arm or leg, but are simply using colourful language to make the point that resisting temptation is very, very important. But we do need to take Jesus words, 'cut it off' seriously. Discipleship sometimes requires amputations. We need to amputate bad habits—resentments—ambitions that cause us to act unethically. We need to amputate things that stand between us and God. For if we don't set an example of love, how can others learn and come to Jesus? We harm others as much by inaction as by 'bad' actions, and put obstacles in the way of their spiritual journey. We lose our 'salt', our unique selling point, which is the love of Jesus working in us to empower the powerless. If we lose this, we lose the divine spark. So we need to keep the spark alive.

To do this, we need to think whether, and how, we have caused ourselves or someone else to stumble, and also what we might we need to change or give up in order to become the people God wants us to be. Have we committed ourselves to helping one another? Are we more concerned about another's wellbeing than our own? Do we encourage others? Are we true disciples?

If we are, we can be the building blocks of God's kingdom here on earth, rather than stumbling blocks. And wouldn't that be wonderful!

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
the source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

Amen.

Prayers of intercession

Lord our God,
on the way of goodness, if we stumble lift us up;
on the way of holiness, if we stray bring us back;
on the way of kindness, if we toughen soften our hearts;
that we may draw others to you and your saving power
by our words and example. *David Adam*

Lord, help us to build on that new unity to reach out to those outside the Church
as well as within our walls, so that we in turn may be a blessing and help to others.

Strengthen your Church, O Lord, in its care for the needy, and for all healers and
healing communities.

Our help comes from you, O Lord

All In your mercy, hear our prayer.

The World Help our political leaders to remain mindful that from those to whom
much is given, much shall also be expected.

As the resources of the world are not divided evenly among the peoples of the
world, help us to do all that is in our power to share so much that we take for granted,

even the constant supply of running water which for so many is a luxury beyond reach.
Our help comes from you, O Lord

All In your mercy, hear our prayer.

Our Community Lord, teach us to be open and generous in our dealings. May we dedicate ourselves to the service of others and to you. Bless the neighbourhood in which we live, and the place where we work. We pray for our friends and families.
Our help comes from you, O Lord

All In your mercy, hear our prayer.

Human Need and Suffering Lord of all power, support all whose strength is depleted, the world-weary, the exhausted, all those who feel that their well of inspiration has dried up.

We pray for those who are finding it difficult to cope with day to day living on their own. We remember also all who suffer from malnutrition, from hunger and from thirst.

Our help comes from you, O Lord

All In your mercy, hear our prayer.

The Communion of Saints We give you thanks for the victory that is ours in Christ Jesus, for the promise of joy and peace in your eternal kingdom. We pray that our loved ones departed may be numbered with your saints in glory.

Our help comes from you, O Lord

All In your mercy, hear our prayer.

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The peace

Peace to you from God our heavenly Father.

Peace from his Son Jesus Christ who is our peace.

Peace from the Holy Spirit, the Life-giver

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 Beauty for brokenness

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

The peace of God which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
and the blessing of God the Almighty:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 Ten thousand reasons (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

Father, you made the world and love your creation.
You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour.
His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death.
And so we gladly thank you,
with saints and angels praising you, and saying,

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us.
Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

Lord, we pray that your grace
may always precede and follow us,
and make us continually to be given to all good works;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.