



Seventh Sunday of Easter

28 May 2017

Sentence

This is eternal life, that we may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

John 17.3

Prayer of the day.

O God, whose Son, Jesus, prayed for his disciples, and sent them into the world to proclaim the coming of your kingdom:
by your Holy Spirit, hold the Church in unity,
and keep it faithful to your word, so that, breaking bread together,
we may be one with Christ in faith and love and service,
now and for ever. **Amen.**

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

This is one of the accounts of Jesus' ascension. The others are found at Lk 24.51 and Mk 16.19. Here the two men are assumed to be angels, in Luke they are said to be Moses and Elijah. Each gospel is drawing a portrait of Jesus and his mission with a different focus. In Luke-Acts all the significant events take place in Jerusalem. The apostles suppose that Jesus will restore the kingdom to Israel and establish the dominance once enjoyed by David. But Jesus calls them, and us, to witness to a different kind of kingdom, a new way to live in relationship to God, which is begun now but will find completion in a time and a way known only to God. Notice that Mary and Jesus' family are members of the apostles' fellowship.

When the apostles had come together, they asked Jesus, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out

of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.' Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers. *Acts 1.6-14*

Reader Hear the word of the Lord

ALL Thanks be to God

Psalm 68. 1-10, 32-35 APBA, 288

This is an ancient song of praise describing God's victory of God's foes and the choice of Jerusalem as God's dwelling place. It is not an easy psalm for us to pray with its imagery of God as a warrior but it ends with international praise of God and foreshadows the universal reach of God's kingdom.

A reading from the first letter of Peter.

This is the concluding section of the letter, exhorting the elders, those in leadership, to serve in such a way that others may follow their example.

As an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it—not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away. In the

same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for
'God opposes the proud,
but gives grace to the humble.'

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. Discipline yourselves; keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters throughout the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.
1 Peter 5.1-11

Reader May your word live in us
ALL and bear much fruit to your glory.

Gospel Acclamation

ALL Alleluia! Alleluia!
Jesus came and said to the disciples,
'All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.'

ALL Alleluia!

Reader The Lord be with you.

ALL And also with you.

Reader A reading from the holy gospel according to John.

ALL Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus makes a particularly fascinating statement in his prayer: this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom [God has] sent. Eternal life means knowing, and knowing means a relationship. Eternal life is to have an interactive relationship with the only true God and with Jesus Christ, his messenger. The Greek phrase John uses for eternal life literally means life of the ages, as opposed, to life as people

are living it not knowing God. So John's related phrases eternal life, life to the full, and life give us a unique angle on what Jesus meant by kingdom of God: a life that is radically different from the way people are living these days, a life that is full and overflowing, a higher life that is centred in an interactive relationship with God and with Jesus. To put it simply: a life to the full centred in a relationship with God.

Jesus looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed. I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

John 73.7-11

Reader For the Gospel of the Lord
ALL Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Prayer of the week.

O God, you withdraw from our sight that you may be known by our love: help us to enter the cloud where you are hidden, and to surrender all our certainty to the darkness of faith in Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Bible Readings next Sunday

Acts 2.1-21 Psalm 104.26-36 1 Cor 12.1-13 John 7.37-52

Pray for the Faithful Departed:

We remember before God: Harry Furlonger; William Mallinson; Jean (Jane) Gilchrist Garden; Isabel Doreen Jager-Glover; Herbert William Satchell; Arthur Mansell; Noel Willsmore; Dorothy Valentine; and Jocelyn Margaret May, *whose anniversaries occur this week.*

Commemorations of the Week:

May 27 (to June 3) Week of Prayer for Reconciliation & Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. **May 31 The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth.** Recorded in Luke. 1.39-45, followed by Mary's Song of Praise, the Magnificat (Luke.1.46-55). **June 1 Justin, martyr at Rome** (d. c.167). Martyred for his faith under the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, refusing to sacrifice to the gods. **June 3 The martyrs of Uganda** (d. 1886) and **Janani Luwum**, archbishop of Uganda (d. 1977). Anglican bishop, James Hannington and Ugandan Christians, were killed by a tyrannical Chief, Mwanga. As the saying goes: the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. Abp Luwum was martyred for fearlessly standing up for victims of Idi Amin.

June 3 Pope John XXIII bishop of Rome and reformer (1881-1963). Inaugurated Vatican II Council, the most radical reform of the Roman church since the Council of Trent in the 16th century. His spiritual diary, published in 1965 is called *Journal of a Soul*.

