

Morning Prayer 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2020



Eighth Sunday after Trinity

Service with Peter Widdess

Personal preparation before the service begins.  
Please take time to remember where you are, and why  
you are here. Give thanks and become still in the  
presence of God

Music before the service

Grace, mercy and peace  
from God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ  
be with you.  
And also with you  
This is the day that the Lord has made.  
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Song

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,  
whose trust, ever childlike, no cares could destroy:  
Be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,  
your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,  
whose strong hands were skilled  
at the plane and the lathe:  
Be there at our labours, and give us, we pray,  
your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the  
day.

Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,  
your hands swift to welcome, your arms to embrace:  
Be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,  
your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.

Let us pray with words from Psalm 145

The Lord is gracious and compassionate,

**slow to anger and rich in love.**

The Lord is good to all;

**he has compassion on all he has made.**

The eyes of all look to you,

**and you give them their food at the proper time.**

You open your hand

**and satisfy the desires of every living thing.**

The Lord is righteous in all his ways

**and faithful in all he does.**

My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord.

**Let every creature praise his holy name**

**for ever and ever.**

Glory be 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.

The collect for today, the 8th Sunday after Trinity.

Almighty Lord and everlasting God,

We beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of your laws and the works of your commandments;

That through your most might protection, both here and ever,

we may be preserved in body and soul;

Through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God now and for ever.

Amen

The first reading is taken from Isaiah 55, 1-3

Let us prepare ourselves for the word of God

**Our hearts and our minds are open**

“Come, all you who are thirsty,  
come to the waters;  
and you who have no money,  
come, buy and eat!  
Come, buy wine and milk  
without money and without cost.  
Why spend money on what is not bread,  
and your labour on what does not satisfy?  
Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good,  
and you will delight in the richest of fare.  
Give ear and come to me;  
listen, that you may live.  
I will make an everlasting covenant with you,  
my faithful love promised to David.

This is the word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to  
Matthew  
**Glory to you, O Lord**



When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.”

Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

“We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered.

“Bring them here to me,” he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave

thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

Homily

I ask myself why is the Anglo-American world suffering so badly under Corona. Some commentators say bad governance. Others blame the Anglo-American understanding of capitalism, with its roots in slavery, racialism, colonialization and empire. Some may remember Margaret Thatcher denying the existence of society. Power, might, force and violence, the winner takes all!

When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place.

What had happened?

Herod, the prince, had been criticised by John the Baptist for taking his brother's wife, Herodias. She and her daughter Salome persuaded Herod to kill John. John's disciples came to Jesus, John's cousin, and reported that Herod feared that Jesus may be John raised to life again.

I can well understand Jesus being afraid, wanting to get away, be on his own, wanting to do his own thing, wanting to be free and not imprisoned and threatened with death like that of his cousin.

In demonstrations there are angry people demanding back their freedom after the lockdown, the freedom to do "what I want, when I want". This freedom of self-determination regardless of the consequences for others is a very serious misunderstanding of true freedom. In the reading from Isaiah we are given a hint

as to what is true freedom. First of all Isaiah tells us to buy without money:

“Why spend money on what is not bread,  
and your labour on what does not satisfy?”

For Isaiah true freedom begins in the relationship with God:

“Give ear and come to me;  
listen, that you may live.”

But what does this mean for Jesus, fleeing, full of sorrow at the murder of his cousin, fearful for his own life. What is freedom for Jesus?

It is not freedom far from the madding crowd. They got there first waiting for him where he landed. Jesus is filled with compassion for them and heals the sick.

It is not freedom from our daily needs, food and drink. It is a long way to the next shop, say his friends, we only have five loaves and two fish, hardly enough for us, regardless of the five thousand men here. Was it Jesus who had to remind them that there were women and children there as well?

It is not freedom from responsibility or obligation: bring the people here to me, says Jesus. He gives his heavenly father thanks for the food and shares it with the people.

Very many years ago, the school chaplain in my boarding school prepared a group of us for confirmation. He talked with us about the feeding of the five thousand (he didn't mention the women and children – it was a boys school). Perhaps the context was the Eucharist, I cannot remember, but I have never forgotten what he said:

Jesus wasn't standing there thinking to himself: now I am going to do a miracle, multiplying the bread and fish. He simply gave thanks for what his friends had brought and shared it out.

He was full of trust that not only his friends had brought something to eat but a large number of other people as well.

The thanksgiving was a reminder that what we have ultimately comes from God –

or as Isaiah says: listen to me, and eat what is good,  
and you will delight in the richest of fare.

In his thanks and sharing what his friend had, he was challenging all those who had brought some food, to bring it out, give thanks and share it with others.

What is the miracle here? People think only of themselves, of their own hunger, their own needs, their desire for the freedom to do what they want, when they want. The transformation comes when they learn that what they have is already a blessing, when they learn to share with others. My face mask helps to free others from the danger of infection.

Matthew writes: They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

They were satisfied. What a wonderful image. Here are people who discover that they have more than enough, that they don't need to worry whether others got a better piece of bread or fish. Envy is replaced by twelve baskets of leftovers, an image of the twelve tribes of Israel living in peace with each other in plenty, an image of a healthy society.

When the miracle here is the transformation of ourselves, then it is about learning that ultimately what we have, our gifts, our abilities, our possessions, what and who we are, come from God. It is about trusting God's love for each and every one of us, and, in giving thanks to God, learning to share. Freedom is not about holding on tightly to what I think I have or ought to have, but rather letting loose and learning that in sharing we all have more than we need. This is a vision for an individual parish but also for the whole of society. Amen.

Song

When I needed a neighbour,  
Were you there, were you there?  
When I needed a neighbour, were you there?  
And the creed and the colour  
And the name won't matter,

Were you there?

I was hungry and thirsty,  
Were you there, were you there?  
I was hungry and thirsty, were you there?  
And the creed and the colour  
And the name won't matter,  
Were you there?

I was cold, I was naked,  
Were you there, were you there?  
I was cold, I was naked, were you there?  
And the creed and the colour  
And the name won't matter,  
Were you there?

Intercessions (by Solveyg)

Heavenly Father, in this pandemic time with all the conflicts, struggles, economic fears and imponderability give us your hope and make us trust in You. Let the leaders and all people not forget about each other, because we are all facing the same threat, which none of us never met before.

To all, who are ignoring or even doubting, the necessity of keeping hygienic rules until scientists will find a way to get this virus under control, give Your wisdom. Let them stop and listen to You to find back to acting with caution and sanity.

For all struggling healthwise, either due to the corona virus or other disease, we ask you for healing and new life. For all facing economic or financial problems we ask you to strengthen them with your hope, make your light shine even brighter than all the spotlights of "false prophets", feed the hungry satisfy the thirsty and give us confidence.

Heavenly Father, we pray for our church as we are in another time of interregnum. Guide and lead us through this difficult time with Your wisdom, give us patience and faithfulness in listening to Your voice to



teaching people to live to bless,  
love in word and in deed express.  
Jesus lives again; earth can breathe again.  
Pass the Word around: loaves abound!

Jesus calls us in, sends us out  
bearing fruit in a world of doubt,  
gives us love to tell, bread to share:  
God (Immanuel) everywhere!  
Jesus lives again; earth can breathe again.  
Pass the Word around: loaves abound!

Words by: Fred Kaan, 1975  
Music by: Adapt. Doreen Potter, 1975

### The Blessing



God the Father,  
By whose glory Christ was raised from the dead,  
strengthen you walk with him ins risen life,  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always.  
**Amen.**

Go in the peace of Christ  
**Thanks be to God**

Music at the end of the service