

Morning Prayer 04th October 2020

The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity

Service with Bishop Trevor Musonda Mwamba



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

Prelude

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

ACF 37 For the fruits of all creation

For the fruit of all creation
Thanks be to God
For His gifts to every nation
Thanks be to God
For the plowing sowing reaping
Silent growth while we are sleeping
Future needs in earth's safekeeping
Thanks be to God

In the just reward of labor
God's will is done
In the help we give our neighbor
God's will is done
In our worldwide task of caring

For the hungry and despairing
In the harvests we are sharing
God's will is done

For the harvests of the Spirit
Thanks be to God
For the good we all inherit
Thanks be to God
For the wonders that astound us
For the truths that still confound us
Most of all that love has found us
Thanks be to God

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Let us pray with words from Psalm 65 (V. 1, 8-13)

Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion;
**to you that answer prayer
shall vows be paid.**
You visit the earth and water it;
you make it very plenteous.
The river of God is full of water;
**you prepare grain for your people,
for so you provide for the earth.**
You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges;
**you soften the ground with showers
and bless its increase.**
You crown the year with your goodness,
and your paths overflow with plenty.
May the pastures of the wilderness flow with goodness
and the hills be girded with joy.
May the meadows be clothed with flocks of sheep
**and the valleys stand so thick with corn
that they shall laugh and sing.**

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 17th Sunday after Trinity /
Harvest Festival

Eternal God,
you crown the year with your goodness
and you give us the fruits of the earth in their season:
grant that we may use them to your glory,
for the relief of those in need and for our own well-
being;
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.

Amen.

The first reading is taken from Deuteronomy 8:7-18

Let us prepare ourselves for the word of God
Our hearts and our minds are open

For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land
—a land with brooks, streams, and deep springs
gushing out into the valleys and hills; a land with wheat
and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil
and honey; a land where bread will not be scarce and
you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron
and you can dig copper out of the hills.

When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord
your God for the good land he has given you. Be
careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing
to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees
that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat
and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle
down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and
your silver and gold increase and all you have is
multiplied, then your heart will become proud and you
will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of
Egypt, out of the land of slavery. He led you through
the vast and dreadful wilderness, that thirsty and
waterless land, with its venomous snakes and
scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. He

gave you manna to eat in the wilderness, something your ancestors had never known, to humble and test you so that in the end it might go well with you. You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The reading is taken from Luke 12.16-30

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

Glory to you, O Lord

And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'

"Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'"

"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

"This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God."

Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by

worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

“Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Homily

In 1983 when Alexander Solzhenitsyn received the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion in London. He delivered an amazing speech which has been indelibly imprinted on my mind. The title of the speech was Men have Forgotten God.

What does Alexander Solzhenitsyn's speech have to do with today's Harvest Sunday?

In 1983 Solzhenitsyn remembered as a child old people saying that the reason for the Russian Revolution was because people had forgotten God and that's why the disaster had happened. He did not believe it then.

So, he spent 50 years trying to make sense of the Revolution. 50 years later, he said, if asked to sum up concisely the main reason for the ruinous revolution that swallowed up some 60 million Russians, he said he could not put it more accurately than to repeat what he had heard as a child: people had forgotten God and that's why the disaster had happened.

They had forgotten God whom as Psalm 65 reveals:

visits the earth and waters it;
and makes it very plenteous.
And prepares grain for His people,
and so provides for the earth.

They had forgotten God who
softens the ground with showers and bless its
increase.

Who crowns the year with His goodness,
and whose paths overflow with plenty.

They had forgotten God.

Solzhenitsyn traced the root of this forgetfulness to the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution in Europe. It was epitomized by the French mathematician and philosopher Rene Descartes who wrote of employing science and human knowledge so that "we can... render ourselves the masters and possessors of nature."

Though Descartes' thinking has enhanced the scientific and technological enterprise, it has also radically impoverished the world in terms of its qualitative dimensions of moral purpose and spiritual meaning.

This Solzhenitsyn concluded led to secularism and a spiritually bankrupt Western world. The spiritual bankruptcy of the West is forgetting God.

Hence the title of his speech "Men have forgotten God". So what does this have to do with Harvest Sunday? A lot actually. Harvest Thanksgiving is a Service of Remembrance. A Service of not forgetting God but renewing our trust, our faith, our focus, our dependence on God from whom all things come.

We live in a sacred universe. The British philosopher Roger Scruton in his book, 'The Soul of the World,' explores the experience of the sacred against today's atheism. He writes that our personal relationships and moral intuitions point to a divine dimension that cannot be understood through the eyes of science alone. So to be fully alive, to understand what we are, is to acknowledge the reality of sacred things.

To remember God as the source of life is what Harvest Thanksgiving is about.

The book of Deuteronomy reminds and teaches the children of Israel that its God who bringings them into a good land,

a land with flowing streams, with springs and underground waters welling up in valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates,

a land of olive trees and honey, a land where they may eat bread without scarcity, where they will lack nothing...

In that land they are told they shall eat their fill and bless the Lord their God for the good land that he has given them.

Then comes the caution because when things are going hunky- dory, don't think it's because of your ingenuity and efforts. Remember who is behind your lives, your successes. Take care that you do not forget the Lord your God, by failing to keep his commandments.

Take care that you do not exalt yourselves forgetting the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

Take care that you do not say to yourself, 'My power and the might of my own hand have gained me this wealth.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, so that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your ancestors. Remember.

The Gospel of Luke gives us a cautionary tale of a rich man also known as the rich fool who did not remember and said to himself, 'My power and the might of my own hand have gained me this wealth.' He had big plans to expand and live a life of leisure for many years; relaxing, eating, drinking, and being merry!

There was one major problem he forgot God in the equation. So God came in without an appointment and rudely said to him:

“You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?” So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God.’

In other words so it is with those who forget God. This is what Solzhenitsyn was pointing to in his amazing speech for the West to remember God. This is what Harvest Thanksgiving is about remembering God and teaching us we belong to God.

And because we do should always take Jesus' comforting words to heart:

‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear...

Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds!

Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you —you of little faith!

Do not keep worrying...your Father knows what you need in life.

Harvest Thanksgiving is about remembering God to whom everything in heaven and in earth belongs. Our moments, our emotions, our talents, our successes and failures, the visible and invisible, our past, our present, our future; the Breath of Life we inhale and exhale.

Harvest Thanksgiving reminds us never to lose focus of God in our lives from whom all things come and of His own do we give Him.

The greatest harvest we can give God is really ourselves to live justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with God.

Intercessions (by Wolfgang)

We are celebrating harvest festival today – normally a time to decorate the church with fresh fruit and vegetables, wheatsheaves and other farm and garden produce. This year's produce is a can of beans in tomato sauce ... No, 2020 has not been a normal year in a variety of ways. Of course the easy way out is now to pray for a return to normalcy. But that won't happen. Looked at more closely, there hasn't been a normal for a number of years now. The best we can hope for is that God as the spirit of love help us to stand together to overcome the impact of increasingly abnormal conditions.

Lord in your mercy – hear our prayer

“You visit the earth and water it; you make it very plenteous” – did any of you notice that in the psalm today as well as in the reading from Deuteronomy there is no mention of sunny weather? Almost always in the bible, when beneficial weather conditions are mentioned, the respective writers mention rainfall. Greater Palestine was, and continues to be, rather arid country – enough sun, but always the danger of a dearth of rain, and today certainly more so than in biblical days. Who would have thought that we'd end up praying for rain in this part of the world? This year was a bit better than the last three, but we did not nearly get enough rain to sustain the forests, and replenish the reservoirs. So let us pray for more rain, lots more rain, even if it should rain on our personal parades.

Lord...

Lord, some of us haven't really felt like parading recently anyway, and others already for a while. We are grateful that our brother Brian is on a good way after his surgery – he already participated again in the

ACF 3 All creatures of our God and King

All creatures of our God and King
Lift up your voice and with us sing
O praise Him alleluia
Thou burning sun with golden beam
Thou silver moon with softer gleam
O praise Him O praise Him
Alleluia alleluia alleluia

Thou rushing wind that art so strong
Ye clouds that sail in Heav'n along
O praise Him alleluia
Thou rising moon in praise rejoice
Ye lights of evening find a voice
O praise Him O praise Him
Alleluia alleluia alleluia

Let all things their Creator bless
And worship Him in humbleness
O praise Him alleluia
Praise praise the Father praise the Son
And praise the Spirit three in One
O praise Him O praise Him
Alleluia alleluia alleluia

O alleluia alleluia
O alleluia alleluia
O alleluia alleluia
O alleluia alleluia alleluia

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The Blessing



The Lord bless you and watch over you,
the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you,
the Lord look kindly on you and give you peace;

and the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and always.

Amen.

The Conclusion

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,
and keep us in eternal life.

Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude