

Seventeenth Sunday after TRINITY 27th September 2026

In the name of the + Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

The Greeting

Grace, mercy, and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.



HYMN

Lord of beauty, thine the splendour
shown in earth and sky and sea,
burning sun and moonlight tender,
hill and river, flower and tree:
lest we fail our praise to render
touch our eyes that they may see.

Lord of wisdom, whom obeying
mighty waters ebb and flow,
while unhasting, undelaying,
planets on their courses go:
in thy laws thyself displaying,
teach our minds thyself to know.

Lord of life, alone sustaining
all below and all above,
Lord of love, by whose ordaining
sun and stars sublimely move:
in our earthly spirits reigning,
lift our hearts that we may love.

Lord of beauty, bid us own thee,
Lord of truth, our footsteps guide,
till as Love our hearts enthrone thee,
and, with vision purified,
Lord of all, when all have known thee,
thou in all art glorified

Invitation to Confession

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy,
slow to anger and of great kindness.

Lord God,
we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
and restore us to the joy of your salvation,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

May the Father of all mercies
cleanse us from our sins,
and restore us in his image
to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord
Amen.

Almighty God,
you have made us for yourself,
and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you:
pour your love into our hearts and draw us to yourself,
and so bring us at last to your heavenly city
where we shall see you face to face;
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

First reading from scripture
Ezekiel 18 1-4 28-end

The One Who Sins Will Die

18 The word of the Lord came to me: 2 “What do you people mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel:

“‘The parents eat sour grapes,
and the children’s teeth are set on edge’?

3 “As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel. 4 For everyone belongs to me, the parent as well as the child—both alike belong to me. The one who sins is the one who will die.

25 “Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Hear, you Israelites: Is my way unjust? Is it not your ways that are unjust? 26 If a righteous person turns from their righteousness and commits sin, they will die for it; because of the sin they have committed they will die. 27 But if a wicked person turns away from the wickedness they have committed and does what is just and right, they will save their life. 28 Because they consider all the offenses they have committed and turn away from them, that person will surely live; they will not die. 29 Yet the Israelites say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Are my ways unjust, people of Israel? Is it not your ways that are unjust?

30 “Therefore, you Israelites, I will judge each of you according to your own ways, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. 31 Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, people of Israel? 32 For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live!

This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Psalms 25. 1-8



1 In you, Lord my God,
I put my trust.
2 I trust in you;
do not let me be put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.
3 No one who hopes in you
will ever be put to shame,
but shame will come on those

who are treacherous without cause
4 Show me your ways, Lord,
teach me your paths.
5 Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Savior,
and my hope is in you all day long.
6 Remember, Lord, your great mercy and love,
for they are from of old.
7 Do not remember the sins of my youth
and my rebellious ways;
according to your love remember me,
for you, Lord, are good.
8 Good and upright is the Lord;
therefore he instructs sinners in his ways.

The second reading from Scripture
Philippians 2. 1-13

2 If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, 2 make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. 5 Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
6 who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
7 but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
8 he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.
9 Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name
that is above every name,
10 so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.
12 Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

This is the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

HYMN

1. God has spoken by his prophets,
Spoken his unchanging Word,
Each from age to age proclaiming
God the one, the righteous Lord.
In the world's despair and turmoil
One firm anchor holds us fast:
God is king, his throne eternal,
God the first and God the last.

2 God has spoken by Christ Jesus,
Christ, the everlasting Son,
Brightness of the Father's glory,
With the Father ever one,
Spoken by the Word incarnate,
God from God, before time was,
Light from Light, to earth descending--
He reveals our God to us.

3 God is speaking by his Spirit,
Speaking to the hearts of all,
In the ageless Word expounding
His own message for us all.
Through the rise and fall of nations
One sure faith is standing fast.
God abides, his Word unchanging,
God the first and God the last.

The Gospel

Alleluia, alleluia.
Welcome with meekness the implanted word
That has the power to save your souls
Alleluia

The Holy Gospel is from the 21st chapter of the Gospel of Matthew beginning at the 23rd verse.
Glory to you O Lord

The Authority of Jesus Questioned

23 Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. "By what authority are you doing these things?" they asked. "And who gave you this authority?"

24 Jesus replied, "I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. 25 John's baptism—where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or of human origin?"

They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' 26 But if we say, 'Of human origin'—we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet."

27 So they answered Jesus, "We don't know."

Then he said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

The Parable of the Two Sons

28 "What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'

29 "'I will not,' he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

30 "Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,' but he did not go.

31 "Which of the two did what his father wanted?"

"The first," they answered.

Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. 32 For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

This is the gospel of the Lord
Praise to you O Christ

Reflection

Chapters 21 and 22 of Mathew are known as the chapters of questions because they contain several incidents between Jesus and the Pharisees, Sadducees and others in authority.

It helps if we place this section of the gospel in its historic setting. Jesus has ceased travelling around teaching and healing. He is aware that the time of his arrest and death is near. He has known this all along "For this reason I came". Jesus enters Jerusalem in a way that deliberately set himself in the centre of the stage and deliberately rivets every eye upon himself (Palm Sunday).

From this time on, these last days before the passion, his arrest and death that he knows is before him, his every action is a kind of magnificent and sublime defiance. A deliberate challenge to the authorities.

He goes to the Temple precincts. Here there is what can only be described as a market. Ordinary money must be changed into Temple coins and no doubt people were cheated in these transactions. They needed the money to buy animals and birds for various sacrifices. Other traders may have been there selling food and drink and much else. It was a noisy, crowded and not at all what the Temple area should be used for.

Jesus overturns the tables and creates a considerable scene "This is my Father's house; you have made it a den of thieves." This shows us that one of the fiercest manifestations of Jesus' anger directed against those who exploited others and especially against those who exploited them in the name of religion. This is present today. All this in full view of the religious leaders and other leaders of the people. A dramatic symbol, a deliberate action that he is come to cleanse the house of God. In these two actions, his entry and the cleansing, he fulfils the prophecies from the Psalms, Zechariah, and Malachi.

He leaves the city for some time with his friends in Bethany and then returns to teach openly within the Temple area, the province of the religious leaders, chief priests and elders. A face-to-face confrontation with the leaders was inevitable, but as previously, this is always, absolutely, managed by Jesus in control.

In this portion of the chapter the authorities interrupt his teaching to question him. They question him in relation to John the Baptist but he skilfully silences them. Their purpose was to discredit him, show him to the crowds as a false teacher. They recognised him as a considerable threat. He was stirring up the people with his words and actions and they were an occupied nation. All this could end very badly and Rome could be ruthless. They want him gone.

Jesus then gives another parable, the two sons, aimed directly at the religious leaders of the nation and Israel's rejection of God's plan because they had failed to live expectantly before God and failed to recognise God's outworking in Him.

Let us not leave these timeless words of Jesus in the past, words on a page directed at others with no application to us. The parable of the two sons is not really praising either of them. The ideal is the son who 'walked the walk', whose life matched his profession; neither did that.

In Paul's letter to the church at Philippi, he clearly defines who we should be as Christians. It is not vague but earthed in day-to-day living. 'Have this mind in you – the mind of Christ.' He even spells out how we begin to 'walk' this way directed by the mind of Christ, the presence of Christ within us as the Holy Spirit.

Much like me, I expect, you read it and agree with every word. The text from Philippians ends (annoyingly) at verse 13. Read on and Paul gives us the 'how to'.

Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation." Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life.

'Holding firmly to the word of life', can be thought of in two ways. The scriptures, the word which we should read and learn, and The Word, in the sense that Jesus is himself as God's creative Word. We are to hold firmly to Him.

St Benedict in his Rule, writes that to 'walk' this way is to live 'without blemish'.

'One who walks without blemish and is just in all his dealings, who speaks the truth from his heart and has not practised deceit with his tongue.' (Prologue 23.6).

We are called to 'walk' without blemish. This sets the bar high, and we will fail of course, fail to live without blemish, but failing is quite different from not even trying.

The Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,

the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.

Intercessions

Let us pray to the Father through his Son
who suffered on the cross for the world's redemption.

For the church

Fill with your Spirit Christ's broken body, the Church ...
Bless those who lead the Church with wisdom...
draw your people close to you.

For the world

For the nations in turmoil and distress
Bring healing by the wounds of Christ
to all who are weighed down by pain and injustice ...

Creator of all things, we pray for your world,
for a deeper and more respectful relationship between humanity
and the rest of creation. For a thoughtful stewardship of our natural environment,
for the compassionate treatment of animals and a greater humanity for one another.

You created the earth to be our home
and charged us to cultivate and care for it.
Give us in our own day the wisdom to know what is good for our planet,
and the restraint to work with the earth in ways that are sustainable
and the forethought to preserve the beauty of our environment
for future generations through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Look in your mercy upon the world you love.
For the natural world destroyed by our greed

For those in need

Be present with those in prison, refugees, those trafficked for gain
the deserted, orphaned, unnoticed and unwanted,
thelonly and the betrayed, the suffering and the dying.
In pity and mercy bring light in their darkness.
For all relief agencies we ask your protection and continued help.

For those known to us who suffer need, sorrow, trouble, or sickness ...
We name them in your love – and leave them there believing you know and care.

For the departed

Welcome into your presence all who have left this world in your friendship ...
According to your promises, bring them with all who have ever loved you
to share in all the benefits of Christ's death and resurrection.

Let us commend the world, for which Christ prays,
to the mercy and protection of God.
Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers.
Amen

Being made one by the power of the Spirit,
as our Saviour taught us, so we pray.

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

The peace of God be in our heart
The grace of God be in our words
The love of God be in our hands
The joy of God be in our soul
and in the song that our life sings.

And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Be with us now and always. Amen.

HYMN

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,
Whose trust, ever child-like, 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 joy,
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 kindliness, 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.

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,
Whose voice is contentment, whose presence is
balm,
Be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,
Your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the
day.