

Collect, Readings and Sermon
Sunday 31st May 2026
Trinity Sunday

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God,
you have given us your servants grace,
by the confession of a true faith,
to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity
and in the power of the divine majesty to worship the Unity:
keep us steadfast in this faith,
that we may evermore be defended from all adversities;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Isaiah 40:12-17, 27-31

Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand
and marked off the heavens with a span,
enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure,
and weighed the mountains in scales
and the hills in a balance?
Who has directed the spirit of the Lord,
or as his counsellor has instructed him?
Whom did he consult for his enlightenment,
and who taught him the path of justice?
Who taught him knowledge,
and showed him the way of understanding?
Even the nations are like a drop from a bucket,
and are accounted as dust on the scales;
see, he takes up the isles like fine dust.
Lebanon would not provide fuel enough,
nor are its animals enough for a burnt-offering.
All the nations are as nothing before him;
they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness.

Why do you say, O Jacob,
and speak, O Israel,
'My way is hidden from the Lord,
and my right is disregarded by my God'?
Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God,

the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.
He gives power to the faint,
and strengthens the powerless.
Even youths will faint and be weary,
and the young will fall exhausted;
but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Matthew 28:16-20

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

Post Communion

Almighty and eternal God,
you have revealed yourself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
and live and reign in the perfect unity of love:
hold us firm in this faith,
that we may know you in all your ways
and evermore rejoice in your eternal glory;
holy and eternal Trinity,
one God, now and for ever.

Sermon

One of my childhood memories is of bedtime prayers. I was not brought up by a particularly church-going family, but for a while, my parents would encourage us to say our prayers at night. I remember saying the Lord's prayer, and then praying for each member of the family. It was at this point that we then started to add our soft toys to the prayer list. And finally, for reasons I can't explain, we would pray for Zebedee, Dylan, Dougal, Brian and Florence. Some of you might remember the children's programme "The Magic Roundabout". We had a "Magic Roundabout" height chart, and for some reason it became necessary to pray for each of the characters on the chart every evening.

Hopefully it will not surprise you to hear that my prayer life has changed somewhat over the years. And there is something about this morning's readings that I think really lead us into prayer. I find the scriptures to be such a helpful way of leading us into prayer, and I think it's worth spending a little time with each of the readings to see how they might support our prayer life.

The reading from Isaiah comes from chapter 40, which begins with those beautiful words: "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God." There are times when our prayers undoubtedly need to focus on the comfort that our relationship with God can bring. I do want to emphasise here that I don't think that faith brings a comfort that takes away suffering. We all know that a life of faith does not immunise us from the challenges of the world. But there are times when I believe that our prayer life needs to bring us into relationship with a God who loves us and holds us, no matter what we are experiencing.

The words from Isaiah are such a wonderful way to enter into this kind of prayer. The beginning of this morning's passage represents a series of rhetorical questions that seek to persuade those listening to trust in the Lord because it is God who has the ability to deliver, strengthen and restore God's people. The prophet offers images of God as creator and sustainer of the world: "Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens?" There is a sense that these questions seek to

give perspective: God has been in existence from the beginning and will continue into all eternity. The prophet is seeking to reassure us of God's enduring presence.

And then we hear about the nature of God:

“Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.
He gives power to the faint,
and strengthens the powerless.
Even youths will faint and be weary,
and the young will fall exhausted;
but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.”

I just love these words. I wonder whether you, like me, have times when you just feel exhausted; weary; as though there are just too many demands. You know you have to keep going, but energy is lacking. Sometimes we just need to hear that we can trust that God will always be there. That when we are exhausted and weary, God will not be. God will be right there, holding us in our tiredness. It can be such an important part of our prayer lives, to simply come into God's presence, as we are, and allow ourselves to be held. And indeed allow ourselves to remember that however many demands there are on us, we are not responsible for the salvation of the world.

If Isaiah encourages us to enter a kind of prayer that brings us into relationship with God, recognising God's nature, the reading from 2 Corinthians reminds us of something that I have found especially helpful in prayer over the years. The final words, which form the grace with which you are probably quite familiar, reminds us very appropriately on this Trinity Sunday, that we worship God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. I wonder how you think of God when you pray. I think that in my childhood prayers, which I described at the beginning, there was a strong focus on God the Father. I had my shopping list of people that I was taking to the wise Father.

Over the years, though, I have enjoyed exploring different kinds of prayer. When I was teaching, for example, if the children were engaged in an independent activity, and I was therefore simply monitoring and on hand for any questions, I would sometimes find myself imagining what it would be like if Jesus was in the classroom. Perhaps there would be an empty chair at one of the desks, and I would picture Jesus sitting there and ask myself what he might be noticing. I would pray to Jesus silently both for the children, and for wisdom to understand and teach them better.

Nowadays there are times when I go out running that I like to imagine Jesus running alongside me. And as I run, I engage in a conversation with Jesus, bringing people and situations to him and seeking guidance and support.

My Holy Spirit prayers are often more about seeking to see the gifts of the Spirit at work in the world. I pray that I will be reminded of God's work through the individuals that I meet and the gifts that they bring.

In some senses the gospel reading's focus is on the purpose of our prayer. This is the end of Matthew's gospel, which is often referred to as the Great Commission, in which Jesus sends the disciples out to continue his work in the world. These words are, of course, not just for those first disciples: they are for us, too. We are also commissioned to make disciples; to baptise; and to teach. Those final words, though, are so very important: "And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." This is why we pray. Jesus commissions us to continue his work here on earth. And we simply cannot do that unless we remain in relationship with God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit through our prayer. Here, Jesus reminds us of God's presence; of God's desire for ongoing relationship with us; of our need for prayer.

On Trinity Sunday we celebrate a mystery that simply cannot be understood. It is a mystery, though, that we are invited to be a part of through our prayer. The nature of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit speaks of internal relatedness. And we are invited to be a part of that relationship, deliberately coming into God's presence. As we do so, we might bring questions and concerns; we might bring particular petitions. Most of all, though, we bring ourselves. If

we only dare to believe it, that is the most precious gift that we can bring. And we can trust the infinite and eternal love of God to do the rest.

Amen.