

st john's

ANGLICAN CHURCH
CAMBERWELL



A JOURNAL
OF
SCRIPTURE & PRAYER

PENTECOST

June - July 2017

A resource for daily devotion

A change of pace

Pentecost represents a significant change of pace in the Church's Year, after the succession of great festivals centred on the life of Jesus: Advent prepared us for his coming, Christmas and Epiphany celebrated his incarnation and presentation to the world, Lent drew us through his earthly ministry to his passion and death, and the Easter season celebrated his great victory over death and sin through his resurrection. Ascension Day commemorated the completion of his earthly work.

Pentecost marks the beginning of our work as members of Christ's Church, as it was on the Feast of Pentecost that the first disciples received the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is that same Spirit who inspires, strengthens, renews and encourages the Church today. The season of Pentecost—the Sundays following the Day of Pentecost until the great cycle begins again with Advent—is the season of our growth in the faith as Christ's faithful servants. Using this Journal regularly is one way in which we can re-commit ourselves to our spiritual growth.

Though the daily readings are short, the idea is **not** to read hurriedly! Rather, the Journal has been prepared to encourage quiet reflection and meditation on the reading whenever that is possible. Some days there will be less time than others; sometimes the only available moment you have might be on the train on your way to work, or waiting for an appointment or while you eat breakfast. But whenever you can, set aside 10 to 15 minutes to savour the reading and pray the reading. The psalm for the day is noted in parenthesis for those who use this Journal with the liturgies for daily prayer in *A Prayer Book for Australia*. For others, commencing and concluding prayers are provided below.

Commencing prayers:

Prayer at the start of the day

Christ my companion,
you meet me at the beginning of each new day
and walk with me on the road.

Open my heart to know you and receive you,
that I may serve you in love for others
today and always. Amen.

Prayer at the ending of the day

Christ my companion,
you have walked with me on the road today
and met me in those I have encountered.
Open my heart to know you
and receive you in your word,
so I may rest in peace and safety,
confident in your abiding love,
tonight and always. Amen.

Concluding prayers:

Pentecost daily prayer

Spirit of truth
whom the world can never grasp,
touch our hearts with the shock of your coming;
fill us with desire for your disturbing peace;
and fire us with longing
to speak your uncontainable word.
Through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Parish prayer

Holy One,
you have revealed to your Church,
through your servant John,
the dazzling vision of your light,
the eternal Word of your truth,
the deep wisdom of your heart.
May we who are inspired by John
also walk in the way of Jesus the Christ;
here at the Junction,
wherever you send us,
in the service of love;
we pray in the name of Christ. Amen.

Thursday 1 June

Glory!

John 17: 20-26

[Psalm 16:1-6]

Jesus said, 'I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.'

Friday 2 June

'Do you love me?'

John 21:15-19

[Psalm 103:15-22]

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' A second time he said to him, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Tend my sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time,

‘Do you love me?’ And he said to him, ‘Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.’ (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, ‘Follow me.’

Saturday 3 June

‘Come to me’

John 7: 37-39

[Psalm 104:26-32]

On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, ‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, “Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.” ’ Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Sunday 4 June DAY OF PENTECOST

John 20:19-23

[Psalm 104:26-36]

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them,

‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’

Monday 5 June

The parable of the evil tenants

Mark 12: 1-12

[Psalm 112:1-6]

Jesus began to speak to them in parables. “A man planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a pit for the wine press, and built a watch-tower; then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the season came, he sent a slave to the tenants to collect from them his share of the produce of the vineyard. But they seized him, and beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. And again he sent another slave to them; this one they beat over the head and insulted. Then he sent another, and that one they killed. And so it was with many others; some they beat, and others they killed. He had still one other, a beloved son. Finally he sent him to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son’. But those tenants said to one another, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours’. So they seized him, killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the tenants and give the vineyard to others. Have you not read this scripture: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, it is amazing in our eyes?’” When they realized that he had told this parable against them, they wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowd. So they left him and went away.

Tuesday 6 June

The things that are God's

Mark 12: 13-17

[Psalm 112]

They sent to him some Pharisees and some Herodians to trap him in what he said. And they came and said to him, “Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality, but teach the way of God in accordance with truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?” But knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, “Why are you putting me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me see it.” And they brought one. Then he said to them, “Whose head is this, and whose title?” They answered, “The emperor’s”. Jesus said to them, “Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s”. And they were utterly amazed at him.

Wednesday 7 June

God of the living

Mark 12: 18-27

[Psalm 25:1-10]

Some Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him and asked him a question, saying, “Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies, leaving a wife but no child, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother. There were seven brothers; the first married and, when he died, left no children; and the second married her and died, leaving no children; and the third likewise; none of the seven left children. Last of all the woman herself died. In the resurrection whose wife will she be? For the seven had married her.” Jesus said to them, “Is not this the reason you are wrong, that you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God?

For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the story about the bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is God not of the dead, but of the living; you are quite wrong.”

Thursday 8 June

The two commandments

Mark 12: 28-34

[Psalm 128]

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that Jesus answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the first of all?” Jesus answered, “The first is, ‘Hear, O: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength’. The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself’. There is no other commandment greater than these.” Then the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that ‘he is one, and besides him there is no other’; and ‘to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength’, and ‘to love one’s neighbour as oneself’—this is much more important than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.” When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God”. After that no one dared to ask him any question.

Friday 9 June

The crowd listens with delight

Mark 12: 35-37

[Psalm 146]

While Jesus was teaching in the temple, he said, “How can the scribes say that the Messiah is the son of David? David himself, by the Holy Spirit, declared, ‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet”.’ David himself calls him Lord; so how can he be his son?” And the large crowd was listening to him with delight.

Saturday 10 June

The widow’s mite

Mark 12: 38-44

[Psalm 103:1-5]

As Jesus taught, he said, “Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the market-places, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honour at banquets! They devour widows’ houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.” He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

Sunday 11 June TRINITY SUNDAY

Matthew 28:16-20 [Song of 3YM 29-34, APBA p.399]

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.'

Monday 12 June

The Beatitudes

Matthew 5: 1-12

[Psalm 34:1-10]

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.’

Tuesday 13 June

The salt of the earth

Matthew 5: 13-16

[Psalm 119:129-136]

Jesus said: “You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.”

Wednesday 14 June

The Law and the prophets

Matthew 5: 17-19

[Psalm 99:6-9]

Jesus said, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Thursday 15 June **CORPUS CHRISTI**

Mark 14: 12-16, 22-26

[Psalm 116]

On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples said to Jesus, ‘Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?’ So he sent two of his disciples, saying to them, ‘Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, “The Teacher asks, Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?”’ He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.’ So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, ‘Take; this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, ‘This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.’

When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Friday 16 June

Jesus’ moral teaching

Matthew 5:27-32

[Psalm 116: 10-18]

Jesus said, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’. But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your

right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell. It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce'. But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery."

Saturday 17 June

Let your 'yes' be 'yes'

Matthew 5: 33-37

[Psalm 103: 6-14]

Jesus said: "Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord'." But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one."

Sunday 18 June

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Matthew 9: 35-10:8

[Psalm 100]

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless,

like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.’

Then Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: ‘Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, “The kingdom of heaven has come near.” Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment.

Monday 19 June

Turn the other cheek

Matthew 5: 38-42

[Psalm 98: 1-7]

Jesus said: ‘You have heard that it was said, “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.’

Tuesday 20 June

Love your enemies

Matthew 5: 43-48

[Psalm 146]

Jesus said: ‘You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.” But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.’

Wednesday 21 June

True piety

Matthew 6: 1-6, 16-18

[Psalm 112]

Jesus said: ‘Beware of practising your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

‘So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that

they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.

‘But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.’

Thursday 22 June

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6: 7-15

[Psalm 111]

Jesus said: ‘When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Pray then in this way:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our.

do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil.

‘For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.’

Friday 23 June

Treasures in heaven

Matthew 6: 19-23

[Psalm 34:1-8]

Jesus said: 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!'

Saturday 24 June

Do not worry

Matthew 6: 24-34

[Psalm 34: 4-10]

Jesus said: 'No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?'

'And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, 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, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith?

‘Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.’

Sunday 25 June

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Matthew 10:24-39

[Psalm 69:7-10,16-19]

Jesus said, ‘A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

‘So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

‘Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

‘Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household.

‘Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

Monday 26 June

Do not judge

Matthew 7: 1-5

[Psalm 33: 13-21]

Jesus said: ‘Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgement you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck in your neighbour’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbour, “Let me take the speck out of your eye”, while the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbour’s eye.’

Tuesday 27 June

The ‘golden rule’

Matthew 7: 6, 12-14

[Psalm 15]

Jesus said, ‘Do not give what is holy to dogs; and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under foot and turn and maul you. In everything do to others as you would have them do

to you; for this is the law and the prophets. Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.’

Wednesday 28 June

By their fruits...

Matthew 7: 15-20

[Psalm 105: 1-7]

Jesus said, ‘Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will know them by their fruits.’

Thursday 29 June

PETER & PAUL, APOSTLES & MARTYRS

John 21:15-22

[Psalm 87]

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’ A second time he said to him, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Tend my sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon son of John, do you love me?’ Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ And he said to him, ‘Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own

belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go.’ (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, ‘Follow me.’

Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, ‘Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?’ When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, ‘Lord, what about him?’ Jesus said to him, ‘If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!’

Peter was the leading figure among the 12 disciples whom Jesus named apostles, and a great encouragement to all Christians who struggle with their faith, given his spectacular failings at key points in the Gospels. Paul was a later convert, a Jewish leader who originally persecuted the early Church. He became the great missionary to the Gentiles. Both were martyred.

Friday 30 June

‘Make me clean’

Matthew 8: 1-4

[Psalm 128]

When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him; and there was a leper who came to him and knelt before him, saying, ‘Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean’. He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, ‘I do choose. Be made clean!’ Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. Then Jesus said to him, ‘See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them’.

Saturday 1 July

Jesus heals the centurion's servant

Matthew 8: 5-17

[Song of Mary, APBA, p.9]

When Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, appealing to him and saying, 'Lord, my servant is lying at home paralysed, in terrible distress.' And he said to him, 'I will come and cure him.' The centurion answered, 'Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, "Go", and he goes, and to another, "Come", and he comes, and to my slave, "Do this", and the slave does it.' When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, 'Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' And to the centurion Jesus said, 'Go; let it be done for you according to your faith.' And the servant was healed in that hour.

When Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever; he touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she got up and began to serve him. That evening they brought to him many who were possessed by demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and cured all who were sick. This was to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, 'He took our infirmities and bore our diseases'.

Sunday 2 July

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Matthew 10: 40-42

[Psalm 89: 1-4; 15-18]

Jesus said, 'Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.'

Monday 3 July

'Let the dead bury the dead'

Matthew 8:18-22

[Psalm 103:6-14]

Now when Jesus saw great crowds around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side. A scribe then approached and said, 'Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.' Another of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, first let me go and bury my father.' But Jesus said to him, 'Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.'

Tuesday 4 July

What sort of man is this?

Matthew 8:23-27

[Psalm 26]

When Jesus got into the boat, his disciples followed him. A gale arose on the lake, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. And they went and woke him up, saying, 'Lord,

save us! We are perishing!’ And he said to them, ‘Why are you afraid, you of little faith?’ Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm. They were amazed, saying, ‘What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?’

Wednesday 5 July

Jesus heals two troubled people

Matthew 8: 28-34

[Psalm 34: 1-10]

When Jesus came to the country of the Gadarenes, two demoniacs coming out of the tombs met him. They were so fierce that no one could pass that way. Suddenly they shouted, ‘What have you to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?’

Now a large herd of swine was feeding at some distance from them. The demons begged him, ‘If you cast us out, send us into the herd of swine.’ And he said to them, ‘Go!’ So they came out and entered the swine; and suddenly, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and perished in the water. The swineherds ran off, and on going into the town, they told the whole story about what had happened to the demoniacs. Then the whole town came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their neighbourhood.

Thursday 6 July

Jesus heals a paralysed man

Matthew 9:1-8

[Psalm 116: 1-9]

After getting into a boat Jesus crossed the water and came to his own town. And just then some people were carrying a paralysed man lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, ‘Take

heart, son; your sins are forgiven.’ Then some of the scribes said to themselves, ‘This man is blaspheming.’ But Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, said, ‘Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, “Your sins are forgiven”, or to say, “Stand up and walk”? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins’—he then said to the paralytic—‘Stand up, take your bed and go to your home.’ And he stood up and went to his home. When the crowds saw it, they were filled with awe, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to human beings.

Friday 7 July

Jesus calls not the righteous, but sinners

Matthew 9:9-13

[Psalm 106: 1-5]

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, ‘Follow me’. And he got up and followed him. And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax-collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, ‘Why does your teacher eat with tax-collectors and sinners?’ But when he heard this, he said, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice”. For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.’

Saturday 8 July

New wine in new wineskins

Matthew 9:14-17

[Psalm 135:1-6]

The disciples of John came to Jesus, saying, ‘Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?’ And Jesus said to

them, ‘The wedding-guests cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak, for the patch pulls away from the cloak, and a worse tear is made. Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.’

Sunday 9 July

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Matthew 11:15-19, 25-30

[Psalm 145: 8-14]

Jesus said, ‘Let anyone with ears listen! But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one another, “We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.” For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, “He has a demon”; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, “Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!” Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.’

At that time Jesus said, ‘I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon

you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

Monday 10 July

Jesus heals a woman and a child

Matthew 9: 18-26

[Psalm 91:1-6]

A leader of the synagogue came in and knelt before Jesus, saying, 'My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.' And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples.

Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from haemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, for she said to herself, 'If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well.' Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, 'Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.' And instantly the woman was made well.

When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute-players and the crowd making a commotion, he said, 'Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping'. And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. And the report of this spread throughout that district.

Tuesday 11 July

Jesus has compassion for the crowds

Matthew 9: 32-38

[Psalm 17: 1-7]

A demoniac who was mute was brought to Jesus. And when the demon had been cast out, the one who had been mute spoke; and the crowds were amazed and said, 'Never has anything like this been seen

in Israel.’ But the Pharisees said, ‘By the ruler of the demons he casts out the demons’. Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.’

Wednesday 12 July

Jesus sends out the twelve apostles

Matthew 10: 1-7

[Psalm 33: 13-21]

Jesus summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax-collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him. These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: ‘Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, “The kingdom of heaven has come near”.’

Thursday 13 July

Proclaim the good news!

Matthew 10: 7-15

[Psalm 105: 16-22]

Jesus said to them, 'As you go, proclaim the good news, "The kingdom of heaven has come near." Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for labourers deserve their food. Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. As you enter the house, greet it. If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgement than for that town.'

Friday 14 July

Be wise as serpents, innocent as doves

Matthew 10: 16-23

[Psalm 37:18-26]

Jesus said, 'See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his

child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly I tell you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.’

Saturday 15 July

‘Do not be afraid’

Matthew 10: 24-33

[Psalm 105: 1-7]

Jesus said, ‘A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household! So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

‘Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows. Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.’

Sunday 16 July
SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-23

[Psalm 65: 8-13]

Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: 'Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

‘Let anyone with ears listen!... Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.’

Monday 17 July

Welcoming in Jesus' name

Matthew 10: 34-11:1

[Psalm 124]

Jesus said, 'Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one's foes will be members of one's own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.' Now when Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and proclaim his message in their cities.

Tuesday 18 July

Repentance

Matthew 11:20-24

[Psalm 69:32-38]

Jesus began to reproach the cities in which most of his deeds of power had been done, because they did not repent. 'Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in

sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, on the day of judgement it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be brought down to. For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I tell you that on the day of judgement it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom than for you.'

Wednesday 19 July

Knowing the Father

Matthew 11:25-27

[Psalm 103:1-8]

Jesus said, 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.'

Thursday 20 July

Jesus gives rest

Matthew 11: 28-30

[Psalm 105:23-27]

Jesus said: 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

Friday 21 July

Mercy, not sacrifice

Matthew 12:1-8

[Psalm 116:11-18]

At that time Jesus went through the cornfields on the sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. When the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, 'Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath.' He said to them, 'Have you not read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? He entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him or his companions to eat, but only for the priests. Or have you not read in the law that on the sabbath the priests in the temple break the sabbath and yet are guiltless? I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. But if you had known what this means, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice", you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is lord of the sabbath.'

Saturday 22 July

Jesus the hope of the Gentiles

Matthew 12: 14-21

[Psalm 136: 1, 10-16]

The Pharisees went out and conspired against Jesus, how to destroy him. When Jesus became aware of this, he departed. Many crowds followed him, and he cured all of them, and he ordered them not to make him known. This was to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah: 'Here is my servant, whom I have, my beloved, with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to Gentiles. He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in streets. He will not break a bruised

reed or quench a smouldering wick until he brings justice to victory. And in his name the Gentiles will hope.’

Sunday 23 July
MARY MAGDALENE,
APOSTLE TO THE APOSTLES

John 20: 1-18

[Psalm 63]

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, ‘They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.’

Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, ‘Woman, why are you

weeping?’ She said to them, ‘They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.’ When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?’ Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, ‘Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to him in Hebrew, ‘Rabbouni!’ (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, ‘Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, “I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.” ’ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord’; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Mary Magdalene was celebrated by the early Church as the ‘Apostle to the Apostles’ because, as the passage from John’s Gospel shows, she was the first witness to the Resurrection of Jesus. She was directed by Jesus to proclaim his resurrection to the other disciples. There is no proof that she was a prostitute, as she has traditionally been depicted. It is more likely that she was one of the respected leaders of the early Church, ranking alongside Peter initially.

Monday 24 July

Greater than Solomon

Matthew 12: 38-42

[Psalm 24: 7-10]

Some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Jesus, ‘Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.’ But he answered them, ‘An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was for three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth. The

people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgement with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here! The queen of the South will rise up at the judgement with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and see, something greater than Solomon is here!’

Tuesday 25 July
JAMES, APOSTLE & MARTYR

Matthew 20: 20-28

[Psalm 126]

The mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favour of him. And he said to her, ‘What do you want?’ She said to him, ‘Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.’ But Jesus answered, ‘You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?’ They said to him, ‘We are able.’ He said to them, ‘You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.’

When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to him and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.’

James, the brother of John, was one of the sons of Zebedee the Galilean fisherman, initially called by Jesus from their fishing boats to follow him. James and John, with Peter, became prominent among the disciples. James was martyred by King Herod Agrippa in AD 44 because of his leading role in the early Church community.

Wednesday 26 July

The parable of the sower

Matthew 13:1-9

[Psalm 78: 21-30]

Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the lake. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: ‘Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!’

Thursday 27 July

Teaching in parables

Matthew 13: 10-17

[Song of 3YM, APBA p.399]

The disciples came and asked Jesus, ‘Why do you speak to them in parables?’ He answered, ‘To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For to those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken

away. The reason I speak to them in parables is that “seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand”. With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that says: “You will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive. For this people’s heart has grown, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn— and I would heal them.” But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. Truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it.’

Friday 28 July

The parable of the sower

Matthew 13: 18-23

[Psalm 19: 7 -14]

Jesus said, ‘Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.’

Saturday 29 July

The wheat and the weeds

Matthew 13: 24-30

[Psalm 50: 1-6]

Jesus put before them another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, “Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?” He answered, “An enemy has done this”. The slaves said to him, “Then do you want us to go and gather them?” But he replied, “No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, “Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn”. ’

Sunday 30 July

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Matthew 13: 44-58

[Psalm 119:129-136]

Jesus said: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put

the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Have you understood all this?’ They answered, ‘Yes.’

And he said to them, ‘Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.’ When Jesus had finished these parables, he left that place.

He came to his home town and began to teach the people in their synagogue, so that they were astounded and said, ‘Where did this man get this wisdom and these deeds of power? Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all this?’ And they took offence at him. But Jesus said to them, ‘Prophets are not without honour except in their own country and in their own house.’ And he did not do many deeds of power there, because of their unbelief.

Monday 31 July

The kingdom of heaven

Matthew 13:31-35

[Psalm 106:20-24]

Jesus put before them another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.’

He told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.'

Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables; without a parable he told them nothing. This was to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet: 'I will open my mouth to speak in parables; I will proclaim what has been hidden from the foundation of the world.'

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