

COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 6 MAY 2023- 5th SUNDAY OF EASTER

COLLECT

Risen Christ,
your wounds declare your love for the world
and the wonder of your risen life:
give us compassion and courage
to risk ourselves for those we serve,
to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Psalm 31. 1-5, 15-16

- 1 In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame; ♦
deliver me in your righteousness.
- 2 Incline your ear to me; ♦
make haste to deliver me.
- 3 Be my strong rock, a fortress to save me,
for you are my rock and my stronghold; ♦
guide me, and lead me for your name's sake.
- 4 Take me out of the net
that they have laid secretly for me, ♦
for you are my strength.
- 5 Into your hands I commend my spirit, ♦
for you have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.
- 15 'My times are in your hand; ♦
deliver me from the hand of my enemies,
and from those who persecute me.
- 16 'Make your face to shine upon your servant, ♦
and save me for your mercy's sake.'

Acts 7. 55-60

But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 'Look,' he said, 'I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!' But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' When he had said this, he died.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia! **Alleluia!**

This is the day that the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Alleluia!

The Gospel

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John, chapter 14, verses 1 to 14

Glory to you, O Lord

John 14.1-14

Jesus the Way to the Father

'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.' Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.'

Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.'

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

A Reflection from Hannah...

The stoning of Stephen on the Coronation weekend! Sometimes the lectionary gifts us a remarkable resonance with times we are living in; and other times... well, not so much. It's a similar business with the gospel reading which, as many will remember, was one of the readings at the funeral of our late Queen. It's traditionally a reading that brings comfort to those who mourn, and a sense of assurance that in Christ nothing is lost- there is an infinity of space in those 'dwelling places'- room for all that is.

And so perhaps as we contemplate the joy, the ritual, the pageantry and the significance of this celebration weekend, alongside that sense of the glorious hospitality at the heart of God; we can still find something helpful and uplifting to encourage us along the way. At its best, the Coronation is intended to be an inclusive event, in which all are welcome and where there is a generous understanding of diversity and human dignity, which does model something of the Gospel in its intent... and models it afresh in every generation. And once crowned, we pray too that as His Majesty the King begins his reign, his faith in Christ as the way, the truth and the life will be his guiding light, and his strength. And even here, Stephen can still be an inspiration (!) as an example of someone who was unwavering in his convictions, no matter what the cost... all in the service of God.

*Almighty God, the fountain of all goodness,
bless our Sovereign Lord, King Charles,
and all who are in authority under him;
that they may order all things
in wisdom and equity, righteousness and peace,
to the honour of your name,
and the good of your Church and people;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*