

**COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION**  
**SUNDAY 9 JULY 2023- TRINITY 5**

**COLLECT**

Almighty and everlasting God,  
by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church  
is governed and sanctified:  
hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people,  
that in their vocation and ministry  
they may serve you in holiness and truth  
to the glory of your name;  
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**Psalms 145. 8-15**

- 8 The Lord is gracious and merciful, ♦  
long-suffering and of great goodness.
- 9 The Lord is loving to everyone ♦  
and his mercy is over all his creatures.
- 10 All your works praise you, O Lord, ♦  
and your faithful servants bless you.
- 11 They tell of the glory of your kingdom ♦  
and speak of your mighty power,
- 12 To make known to all peoples your mighty acts ♦  
and the glorious splendour of your kingdom.
- 13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; ♦  
your dominion endures throughout all ages.
- 14 The Lord is sure in all his words ♦  
and faithful in all his deeds.
- 15 The Lord upholds all those who fall ♦  
and lifts up all those who are bowed down.

## Romans 7.15-25a

I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

***At Morning Prayer, the Gospel is simply the second reading, people sit to hear it and is introduced in the same way as the first:***

The second reading is from Matthew, chapter 11, verses 16-19 and 25-30.

***and then at the end:***

For the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

***For a Eucharist/Communion from the Book of Common Prayer (Fitz), there is no Gospel Acclamation- people stand to hear the Gospel, and it is introduced with the words:***

The Holy Gospel is written in the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Gospel according to St Matthew, beginning at the 16<sup>th</sup> verse.

**Glory be to thee, O Lord.**

***And then at the end:***

**Praise be to thee, O Christ.**

***For Eucharists/ Communion around the rest of Severn Loop, people stand to hear the Gospel and it is introduced with an Acclamation, as below:***

Alleluia! **Alleluia!**

Speak Lord, for your servant is listening. You have the words of eternal life.

**Alleluia!**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Matthew, chapter 11 verse 16-19 and 25-30.  
**Glory to you, O Lord**

***And then at the end:***

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

'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.'

## ***A Reflection from Hannah...***

For many of you are familiar with the Book of Common Prayer, those words of verse 28 will be better known as:

*"COME unto me all that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you."*

That short sentence was heard week on week as people gathered for worship- and still is in many places. They are words that many continue to find deeply comforting and a well-spring of hope amidst despair. Indeed, they are exactly what we need to hear when we feel like Christ did at the beginning of this week's passage- which could probably summed up in that well-known saying of utter exasperation 'I can't do right for wrong!'

And sometimes we can't! When we are at our wits end with the ups and downs of life together, Jesus says to each of us- come to me. Come to me and in me you will find rest. Rest. Rest from the fray, rest that restores, rest that enables us to reset and recommit to living with Christ as our guide and companion. Rest is a concept so elusive in our 24/7 culture, and in the busyness of life in summertime (especially with so much going on around the Loop!), it is easily forgotten. We can find ourselves with full-to-bursting diaries, and feeling rather frazzled.

Interestingly and by pure coincidence, Matthew 11.28 is the verse on our poster for the Shrawardine Quiet Day. Please do come along if you are available; far from being yet another exhausting but lovely date in the diary, we are hoping that it will be a moment of real rest. We are hoping that we will offer a sanctuary- make a space that opens up afresh the opportunity to take a step back from the busyness, and to recognise the loving gaze of Christ, who knows us better than we know ourselves.

More than that, it is a chance to embrace something of the rhythm of life that God has given us, but which we so easily forget. *The Message* version of the Bible paraphrases Matthew 11.28-30 in the following way:

*"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."*

Love it or hate it (and it is a controversial translation!), there is something special to hold onto in that phrase 'unforced rhythms of grace'- it is God's rhythm that we do well to find, and the stuff of God is pure grace.