

**COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION**  
**SUNDAY 23 JULY 2023 - TRINITY 7**

**COLLECT**

Lord of all power and might,  
the author and giver of all good things:  
graft in our hearts the love of your name,  
increase in us true religion,  
nourish us with all goodness,  
and of your great mercy keep us in the same;  
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.

**Psalm 86.11-17**

- 11 Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; ♦  
knit my heart to you, that I may fear your name.
- 12 I will thank you, O Lord my God, with all my heart, ♦  
and glorify your name for evermore;
- 13 For great is your steadfast love towards me, ♦  
for you have delivered my soul from the depths of the grave.
- 14 O God, the proud rise up against me and a ruthless horde seek after my life; ♦  
they have not set you before their eyes.
- 15 But you, Lord, are gracious and full of compassion, ♦  
slow to anger and full of kindness and truth.
- 16 Turn to me and have mercy upon me; ♦  
give your strength to your servant and save the child of your handmaid.
- 17 Show me a token of your favour, that those who hate me may see it and be ashamed; ♦  
because you, O Lord, have helped and comforted me.

### **A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans, chapter 8:12-25**

So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Gospel Acclamation**

**Alleluia! Alleluia!**

The word of God is alive and active: it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.  
**Alleluia!**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Matthew, chapter 13: 24-30 and 36-43.

### **Glory to you, O Lord**

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." '

Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.' He answered, 'The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

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

The parable in this week's Gospel reading- of the weeds and the wheat- reminds us that we are not God. That may be an obvious point, but it's good to remember! Our perspective is flawed. We don't have the skill, the wisdom to pick weed from wheat- as the servants are told pretty quickly when they want to be the ones policing the situation and stripping out the things they think are bad. The owner (God) responds that we need to wait, because our perceptions are not good enough. If we try, we will pull up the wheat with the weeds. We lack the patience God has.

And that question of patience is at the heart of this parable. So often, we might jump to make a judgement, and miss the potential blessings of a situation, or the truth of whether something is indeed full of goodness... or not.

In Jesus we have a wonderful example of patience, that we would do well to take note of. He waited- he was content in the muddiness, the messiness of everyday life where people are a complex mixture of wheat and weeds. Jesus lived in the fullness of it, knowing there was so much that wasn't right, but naming the good, being gracious with those who'd got it wrong, and being patient, hospitable, loving- even to those who would betray him, who would disown him. He waits with us still. This is the patience of God at work in the world. God's timing is different to ours; God's wisdom is 'other' than ours. And that, as Paul alludes to in the letter to the Romans, is where we put our hope.