



COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 17 MAY 2026 – Seventh Sunday of Easter

COLLECT

O God the King of glory,
you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ
with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:
we beseech you, leave us not comfortless,
but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us
and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Psalm 68. 1-10, 32-25

- 1 Let God arise and let his enemies be scattered; ♦
let those that hate him flee before him.
- 2 As the smoke vanishes, so may they vanish away; ♦
as wax melts at the fire,
so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.
- 3 But let the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; ♦
let them make merry with gladness.
- 4 Sing to God, sing praises to his name;
exalt him who rides on the clouds. ♦
The Lord is his name; rejoice before him.
- 5 Father of the fatherless, defender of widows, ♦
God in his holy habitation!
- 6 God gives the solitary a home
and brings forth prisoners to songs of welcome, ♦
but the rebellious inhabit a burning desert.
- 7 O God, when you went forth before your people, ♦
when you marched through the wilderness,
- 8 The earth shook and the heavens dropped down rain,
at the presence of God, the Lord of Sinai, ♦
at the presence of God, the God of Israel.
- 9 You sent down a gracious rain, O God; ♦
you refreshed your inheritance when it was weary.
- 10 Your people came to dwell there; ♦
in your goodness, O God, you provide for the poor.
- 32 Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth; ♦
make music in praise of the Lord;
- 33 He rides on the ancient heaven of heavens ♦
and sends forth his voice, a mighty voice.
- 34 Ascribe power to God, whose splendour is over Israel, ♦
whose power is above the clouds.

35 How terrible is God in his holy sanctuary, ♦
the God of Israel, who gives power and strength to his people!
Blessed be God.

A reading from the first epistle of Peter, chapter 4, verses 12-14; chapter 5, verses 6-11.

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in so far as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. Discipline yourselves; keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters throughout the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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 John, chapter 17, verses 1-11.

and then at the end:

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

For Eucharists/ Communion people stand to hear the Gospel. Everywhere except Fitz introduces it with an Acclamation (the blue bit), and then we all use the introduction and ending (the green bit):

Alleluia. **Alleluia.**

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

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to John, Chapter 17, verses 1-11.

Glorify to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

A Reflection from Hannah

'I amar prestar aen.'- that's Elvish(!). It's Elvish for 'the world is changed.' We have been rewatching the *Lord of the Rings* films with our niece recently, and it's clear that J.R.R. Tolkien understood that only two well as he wrote his great epic in the wake of two world wars- looking back, looking around, looking forward. What would a changed world mean? Where was desolation, and where was hope? That sense also loomed large in the collective psyche of the disciples in this ten-day gap between Ascension and Pentecost- as they stayed in Jerusalem, went to the temple, worshipped and waited.

It's little wonder then, that the punchline of the high priestly prayer (the prayer Jesus prayed before his death, and which we heard a bit of in our gospel reading today) is to pray for unity- 'Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one'.

When all around is changing and unsteady, there is always a risk of things falling into factions, people becoming polarised, relationships breaking down. When the life is difficult- when family members become ill for example, or when there is a close, shocking bereavement, the statistics show that marriages are much more likely to break down- that the challenges of living with whatever it is, can cause disunity and fracture.

So we really need Christ's prayer for unity. Today, we pray that the ascended Christ prays for us to be as one in this changing world. We may be tempted to run away or ignore it- but perhaps that Ascension Day command 'Do not leave Jerusalem' can help us. So much is unsteady today, uncomfortable and baffling- but when we 'stay in Jerusalem', what do we see? We have issues of equality, there is both a health and a mental health crisis. We have a government in fairly chronic turmoil, we have wars and the threat of war, we have climate issues escalating fast, and yet our consumer attitudes are much the same. The spiritual texture of our nation is different, and the assumed place of Christianity is changing fast. We can feel despondent. We can, in our gut and quite literally want to leave Jerusalem- to run off, rather than to understand. And yet, and yet if we linger, if we glimpse the perspective of heaven as well as earth, we notice there is a yearning and a beauty in the brokenness of each of us that shows us as we really are, in which deep calls to deep, and where we are privileged to glimpse the image of God in another.

And that prayerful reflection is indeed an answer to Christ's prayer that we will all be one. When we see the face of others, when we give them a name- we recognise the sacred nature of everything. There is brilliant poem written by Caleb Femi- it's a poem from the perspective of two spiders observing a human house party, and knowing that they are not included. It contains this line:

'Things with names deserve deliverance. That's why you don't name the spiders you find scuttering across your kitchen floor: otherwise your house becomes a sanctuary'.

Otherwise your house becomes a sanctuary- sometimes it's easier to 'not see' the full extent of Christ's love- to turn our face away and avoid the more challenging business of staying in Jerusalem, devoting ourselves to prayer. But perhaps today we can commit to doing that- to inviting Jesus to work in us and through us, in unity, recognising that our commonalities are so much greater than our differences and to help us see the whole world as a sanctuary- a holy place, full of God's presence, in which we can play our part.