

**The Rectorial Benefice of the East Vale  
Morning Prayer  
Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 | Trinity 14**

**Hymn**

**Make me a channel of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love  
Where there is injury, your pardon Lord;  
and where there's doubt, true faith in you**

**O, Master, grant that I may never seek  
so much to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love with all my soul**

**Make me a channel of your peace.  
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope.  
Where there is darkness, only light,  
and where there's sadness, ever joy.**

**O, Master, grant that I may never seek  
so much to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love with all my soul**

**Make me a channel of your peace.  
It is pardoning that we are pardoned,  
in giving of ourselves that we receive,  
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.**

**The Gloria**

Glory to God, glory in the highest,  
peace to his people, peace on earth.  
**Glory to God, glory in the highest,  
peace to his people, peace on earth.**

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father.  
**Glory to God, glory in the highest,  
peace to his people, peace on earth.**

We worship you,  
**glory in the highest,**  
give you thanks,  
**glory in the highest,**  
praise you for your glory.  
**Glory to God, glory in the highest,  
peace to his people, peace on earth.**

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us,  
**have mercy on us;**

you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer,  
**receive our prayer.**

Glory to God, glory in the highest,  
peace to his people, peace on earth.  
**Glory to God, glory in the highest,  
peace to his people, peace on earth.**

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God, the glory of God the Father.

**Glory to God, glory in the highest,  
peace to his people, peace on earth.**

Amen. **Amen.**

**The Collect**

Almighty God, whose only Son has opened for us a new and living way into your presence: give us pure hearts and steadfast wills to worship you in spirit and in truth; 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. **Amen.**

*First Reading*

*(Genesis 50:15-21)*

A reading from the book of Genesis

Realising that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, 'What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?' So they approached Joseph, saying, 'Your father gave this instruction before he died, "Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you." Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father.' Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, 'We are here as your slaves.' But Joseph said to them, 'Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones.' In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

**R/ The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.**

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger and of great kindness. He will not always accuse us; neither will he keep his anger forever. **R/**

He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our wickedness. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his mercy upon those who fear him. **R/**

As far as the east is from the west, so far has he set our sins from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so is the Lord merciful towards those who fear him. **R/**

Second Reading

(Romans 14:1-12)

A reading from Paul's letter to the Romans

Welcome those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarrelling over opinions. Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgement on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. Who are you to pass judgement on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand. Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. Those who observe the day, observe it in honour of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honour of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honour of the Lord and give thanks to God. We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. Why do you pass judgement on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgement seat of God. For it is written, 'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.' So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

This is the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

The Gospel

(Matthew 18:21-35)

**Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Give thanks to the risen Lord.**

**Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Give praise to his name.**

**Jesus is Lord of all the earth,  
he is the king of creation.**

**Alleluia! Alleluia!...**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Listen to the gospel of Christ  
according to Saint Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

Peter came and said to Jesus, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything." And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow-slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe." Then his fellow-slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow-slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, "You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow-slave, as I had mercy on you?" And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he should pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.'

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

**Spread the good news o'er all the earth,  
Jesus has died and risen.**

**Alleluia! Alleluia!...**

**The Homily**

**Rev'd Angela**

The theme of the gospel reading this morning is FORGIVENESS, a word that we think we understand when God forgives us, but a word that is more difficult when we need to forgive others. It throws up for me lots of questions, just like Peter – Is there a limit to forgiveness? Is there a scale of things that we can forgive can and others that we cannot forgive? Disputes, yes; arguments, yes; accidents, yes; robbery, probably; adultery, possibly, violence, not so sure; abuse of others,

not so sure; murder, not so sure. How difficult is it to forgive?

At the end of August this year, I was watching the court case from New Zealand, when Brenton Tarrant a 29-year-old white supremacist was on trial for gunning down and killing 51 people and attempting to kill 40 others while they were worshipping at a mosque in Christchurch. The first three days of the case comprised of the victim impact statements - the families of the 51 who were killed spoke about their loved ones who had been murdered. They spoke directly to the perpetrator, many of course were very angry and very sad, one wife said 'I am never going to forgive you' another one said she was close to forgiving him and some families actually said to him in court 'I forgive you'. Fared Ahmed who lost his wife in the shooting said 'I don't have any grudge against him, I have forgiven him and I am praying for him that God will guide him and one day he will be a saviour.' Many powerful words and testimonies came out of that courtroom, brave people of faith, forgiving this killer for what he had done. How difficult would it be to forgive such an horrendous hate crime? How would we feel or deal with that situation? As Christians forgiveness should be in the heart of all that we do, offering that forgiveness allows our hearts to be open to Gods love and forgiveness for us.

The gospel reading today helps us start to understand forgiveness and how we apply it to our lives and the life of the church. We hear Peter's question, which seems practical and in fact a common-sense question. Jesus tells us to forgive but Peter wants to know who and how we should forgive and is there a limit to the forgiveness we offer. Jesus then explains by telling the parable of the Unforgiving Servant. Through this parable, Jesus is trying to explain that if you yourself are being forgiven, then your gratitude ought to make you forgive others in return, that sounds quite straight forward on paper. If someone does cross you, the hurt you feel may last a day or a week or in some cases annoyance can go on for months or years; if you can't forgive and let go of the grudge, it could affect your whole life with a sense of frustration and self-righteousness. God doesn't hold that grudge when we do things that might annoy him, he forgives us. Can you imagine turning up for Morning Prayer and God is in a mood and won't listen to us because of something we did to annoy him last week. We know that won't happen because he has forgiven us, and we should do the same.

Secondly, Jesus is asking us to acknowledge that forgiveness and love is a two-way process, it is a process of giving and receiving. If you shut down the part labelled forgiveness, you shut it down in both directions. Sometimes when we can't forgive our hearts become closed and the love of God cannot breakdown that barrier. I am sure that many of us have had a problem

with somebody and it ends up that we are hurting more than the person who has done wrong. In not forgiving we have closed our hearts to the love and forgiveness of God. Maybe today is a day to think of those people who have hurt us and try to open our hearts to forgive them?

Finally, back to Peter's question we need to understand that forgiveness is not limited it is constantly there for us and we should do the same for other people. Would 7 times be enough, Peter asks, and Jesus responds 70 x 7 or 490 times. However, I don't think Jesus wants us to keep a tally, marking off each time we forgive until we get to 491 and then we can take revenge. Jesus wants us always to forgive. Jesus' entire mission was about implementing Gods plan to deal with the evil that had infected the world. Forgiveness was not an incidental feature of Jesus' Kingdom building it is the foundation on which the Kingdom is built.

As Christians we must learn how to show forgiveness all the time not just 7 or 7x70 times but all the time where or whatever we are doing. It's what God is all about - love and forgiveness. Something that is not easy but something we should strive for in our lives and in our faith.

*Hymn [Requested by Ann Bryant in memory of her late husband Dennis who would have been 88 on 14th September]*

**And can it be that I should gain  
An int'rest in the Saviour's blood?  
Died He for me, who caused his pain?  
For me, who him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! how can it be  
That Thou, my God, should die for me?  
Amazing love! how can it be  
That Thou, my God, should die for me!**

**Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray,  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was free;  
I rose, went forth and followed Thee.  
My chains fell off, my heart was free;  
I rose, went forth and followed thee.**

**No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus, and all in him is mine!  
Alive in him, my living head,  
And clothed in righteousness divine,  
bold I approach the eternal throne,  
and claim the crown, through Christ my own.  
Bold, I approach the eternal throne,  
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.**

## **The Intercessions**

Let us pray to God, trusting that he will show mercy to all who call upon him in faith.

Give grace to your church and especially, June our bishop. Let all who confess the faith of Christ acknowledge the mercy they have received and in all things be slow to judge others, yet quick to forgive.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

In our cycle of prayer with our link parish, Lagunda, we remember all those starting at university or college, or who are returning to their studies. Despite the current challenges, may their experience be formative and enable them to flourish and grow in wisdom.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Have compassion on nations weigh down by debt. Renew a spirit of generosity in those who have much, that they be moved to relieve those who have little. May those who work in the world of finance be just and compassionate in their dealings. We pray especially for individuals imprisoned by personal debt and those whose financial worries have been exacerbated by Coronavirus.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

May those who suffer and struggle find comfort and strength in the awareness that you love them unconditionally. May they experience your compassion through the kindness of others, especially the Christian community.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Give to the departed pardon, peace and rest. At the hour of our death, grant us with them a share in your eternal kingdom.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

Let us offer in stillness our personal prayers and petitions to our compassionate Father...

## **Merciful Father**

**accept these prayers  
for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

## **Hymn** [*'Jubilate Deo' - 'Rejoice and Praise God'*]

**Jubilate, everybody,  
serve the Lord in all your ways and  
come before his presence singing;  
enter now his courts with praise.  
For the Lord our God is gracious  
and his mercy's everlasting.  
Jubilate, Jubilate, Jubilate Deo.**

**Repeat x3**