

**The Rectorial Benefice of the East Vale  
Morning Prayer  
Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2020 | Trinity 17**

**Hymn**

**Christ triumphant, ever reigning,  
Saviour, Master, King!  
Lord of heaven, our lives sustaining,  
hear us as we sing:  
Yours the glory and the crown,  
the high renown, the eternal name.**

**Word incarnate, truth revealing,  
Son of Man on earth!  
power and majesty concealing  
by your humble birth:  
Yours the glory...**

**Suffering servant, scorned, ill - treated,  
victim crucified!  
death is through the cross defeated,  
sinners justified:  
Yours the glory...**

**Priestly king, enthroned for ever  
high in heaven above!  
sin and death and hell shall never  
stifle hymns of love:  
Yours the glory...**

**So, our hearts and voices raising  
through the ages long,  
ceaselessly upon you gazing,  
this shall be our song:  
Yours the glory and the crown,  
the high renown, the eternal name.**

**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, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you: teach us to offer ourselves to your service, that here we may have your peace, and in the world to come may see you face to face; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

*First Reading*

*(Isaiah 5:1-7)*

A reading from the prophecy of Isaiah.

Let me sing for my beloved my love-song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill. He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watch-tower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it; he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it? When I expected it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes? And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down. I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the people of Judah are his

pleasant planting; he expected justice, but saw bloodshed; righteousness, but heard a cry!

*The Gospel*

*(Matthew 21:33-46)*

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

*Responsorial Psalm*

*(Psalm 65)*

**R/ Turn us again, O God**

Turn us again, O God: show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved. You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. You made room around it: and when it had taken root, it filled the land. **R/**

The hills were covered with its shadow and the cedars of God by its boughs. It stretched out its branches to the Sea and its tendrils to the River. Why then have you broken down its wall, so that all who pass by pluck off its grapes? **R/**

The wild boar out of the wood tears it off and all the insects of the field devour it. Turn again, O God of hosts, look down from heaven and behold. Cherish this vine which your right hand has planted: and the branch that you made so strong for yourself. **R/**

*Second Reading*

*(Philippians 3:4b-14)*

A reading from Paul's letter to the Philippians

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Belovèd, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

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

**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.**

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, 'Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watch-tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, "They will respect my son." But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance." So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?' They said to him, 'He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.' Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures: "The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord's doing, and it is amazing in our eyes"?' Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.' When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realised that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

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*

*Fr Martyn*

During the months of lockdown wine consumption is supposed to have rocketed along with other alcoholic

beverages. There are tales of people creeping out to recycle their glass bottles, under the cover of darkness, when they are least likely to be spotted, with all the clinking of the glass. Although consumption of wine can be a problem if people overindulge, Jesus often speaks of wine and vineyards. In fact, his first miracle at Cana in Galilee was turning all that water into wine, when the wine had run out.

Last week was observed as Harvest Festival and the week before that, when I was last preaching, we again had a harvest themed gospel reading with the labourers working for different lengths of time in the vineyard. Well today, once again, we have a harvest theme and once again there is a reference to vineyards. The Old Testament Reading from Isaiah is all about the Song of the Unfruitful Vineyard, where Israel is described as the vine. Our Psalm also refers to this vineyard theme. Psalm 80 refers to Israel as the vine, that was brought out of Egypt and planted in the land that God had promised.

Working through Matthew's Gospel we see once again the reference to vineyards. It is the parable of the wicked tenants, again referring to a landowner who planted a vineyard. Those listening to Jesus will totally understand the context of the vineyard in this parable. The hedge would be thick set, designed to keep out the wild boars who would destroy the crop and eat everything, but also to protect it from thieves who might steal the grapes. The wine press consisted of two troughs, one higher than the other and connected by a channel. The grapes were pressed in the higher trough and the juice ran into the lower trough. The tower served as a watchtower in order to protect the vineyard, but also would house the workers when working in the vineyard. Those listening to Jesus completely understood all of this as the usual practice that a landowner would take in order to protect his crop.

This Gospel Reading is a direct reference to our Old Testament Reading, where Isaiah says that 'the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting.' It seems obvious who the characters are in this parable. The owner of the vineyard is God. The cultivators are the religious leaders. The messengers are the prophets. The son is Jesus. So, what is the parable saying to us? Firstly, there are three things; about God, about his People and about Jesus himself. The first thing is that God trusts us with the creation that he has given us; he has patience with us, yet he will judge us by how we behave; what we do with our lives and how we treat other people. The second thing is about God's People; that is, it is about us. We are all gifted by God and are called to use those gifts. Yet God does not force us; rather he gives us the freedom to do as we wish. We are all answerable to God for our actions, whether we use these gifts wisely and do the right thing, or whether we do the wrong thing and sin. We have

these choices. The third thing is about Jesus, who is seen as firmly lying in the succession of the prophets. This reading tells us of the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus. He is the Son who is killed, as Jesus is sacrificed on the Cross.

Psalm 118 verse 22 tells us that 'the stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.' The psalmist had meant this to refer to the People of Israel, but in the gospel reading today Jesus is seen as the stone that was to be rejected. Christ is the foundation stone on which everything else is built. Christ is the stone that holds everything else together.

We are all called to work as labourers in God's Vineyard and we are each responsible for how we respond to that challenge. God never forces us to do anything, we have the free will that means we can choose to follow the example of Jesus or to walk in the other direction. The choice is completely yours. The choice is completely mine. We have the example of the life of Jesus set before us. We have the example the sacrifice which was his death. We are called to follow him. He is our goal and he points us to the prize.

In the Letter of St Paul to the Philippians, our second reading this morning, Paul ends with these words of challenge for us today. 'I press on towards the goal, for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.'

### **Hymn**

**All heav'n declares  
the glory of the risen Lord.  
Who can compare  
with the beauty of the Lord?  
For ever he will be  
the Lamb upon the throne.  
I gladly bow the knee  
and worship Him alone.**

**I will proclaim  
the glory of the risen Lord.  
Who once was slain  
to reconcile man to God.  
For ever you will be  
the Lamb upon the throne  
I gladly bow the knee  
and worship you alone.**

**For ever you will be  
The Lamb upon the throne  
I gladly bow the knee  
and worship you alone.**

## **The Intercessions**

For increase of faith and the spirit of service, let pray to the Lord.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, keep the Church faithful to the teaching entrusted to her. Grant that she may reveal the loving power of God in her works and in her worship. Bless June, our bishop, and all who make you known to this generation. In our link parish prayer cycle we pray particularly today for all work with children in the parish of Lagunda and for all staff, pupils and their families at Pendoylan Church in Wales primary school.

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

Grant wisdom to all in authority care and consideration for those they serve. Stir up in all people the knowledge of your gifts, enabling them to seek the common good.

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

Have mercy on those whose work is heavy and brings little reward. Strengthen those who labour for the kingdom in difficulty and persecution.

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

Strengthen those who suffer, especially those who suffer unjustly at the hands of others because of their convictions and beliefs. We remember too those who are sick and especially those affected by the current surge of coronavirus infections.

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

We pray for those who have died, that they may find mercy through Jesus Christ who has destroyed death and brought new life. Grant them rest from their labours.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

As fellow labourers in the Lord's vineyard, let us offer our own prayers to the Father in a moment of stillness...

### **Merciful Father**

**accept these prayers**

**for the sake of your Son,**

**our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

## **Hymn**

**The day thou gavest, Lord, is ended:  
the darkness falls at thy behest;  
to thee our morning hymns ascended,  
thy praise shall sanctify our rest.**

**We thank thee that thy Church unsleeping,  
while earth rolls onward into light,  
through all the world her watch is keeping,  
and rests not now by day or night.**

**As o'er each continent and island  
the dawn leads on another day,  
the voice of prayer is never silent,  
nor dies the strain of praise away.**

**The sun that bids us rest is waking  
our brethren 'neath the western sky,  
and hour by hour fresh lips are making  
thy wondrous doings heard on high.**

**So be it, Lord; thy throne shall never,  
like earth's proud empires, pass away;  
thy kingdom stands, and grows for ever,  
till all thy creatures own thy sway.**