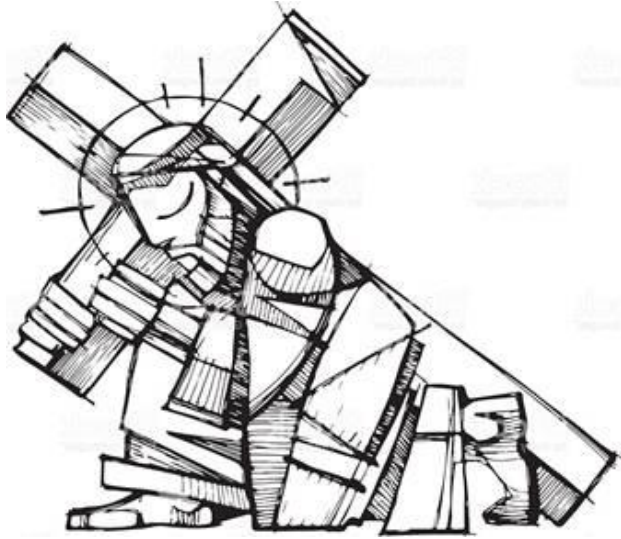


Prayers during week commencing 21 June 2020

Our prayers this week invite us to look at the image below and ask ourselves what carrying the cross daily means.



In Jesus' day, a cross was a symbol of suffering; but not only that, it was a symbol of death.

What parts of our lives we need to put to death? Thoughts, actions, patterns of behaviour....

*Father God you hear out thoughts better than we can express them in words.
Do not let us stop challenging ourselves daily.*

Other Lectionary readings for 21 June

- [Genesis 21: 8-21](#)
- [Psalm 86: 1-10, 16-17](#)
- [Romans 6: 1b-11](#)

Bible passages are quoted from New Revised Standard (Anglicised) Version

SHARING IN PRAYER FOR OUR DISTRICT AND OUR WORLD

*Lord, when I cannot pray or worship
help me be aware of all your people
and your saints and angels
hovering around me, lifting me up.
When I feel alone, let me feel you near me,
even if only for a moment that enables me to go on.
Let me hear you say "Peace be with you".*

*Lord, I will praise you.
Let all the peoples praise you.*

Rev Kenneth Howcroft

This week as we pray for our circuits: We invite you to pray for all the fathers and grandfathers.

Day / Psalm	For our District	For our Wider World
Sun 21st June Ps 69b	Castle Eden Circuit	As we end refugee week, we pray for everyone who work with refugees globally
Mon 22nd June Ps 61	Stokesley Circuit	People of different backgrounds involved in offering hospitality
Tues 23rd June Ps 62	Cleveland & Danby Circuit	Greater understanding of those we see as strangers
Wed 24th June Ps 80	Bishop Auckland and Shildon Circuit	Fear over loss of jobs for many
Thur 25th June Ps 63a	Durham and Deerness Valley Circuit	Fears over a second wave of Covid-19
Fri 26th June Ps 65	West Durham Circuit	Safe easing of lockdown measures
Sat 27th June Ps 66a	Barnard Castle and Teesdale Circuit	Natural disasters

Praying with Psalms and with Hymns – a psalm is suggested for each day in the table above. Hymn [StF 509](#) is based on psalm 61 - we can trust in God.

Lectio divina during week beginning Sunday 21 June 2020

Lectionary Reading Matthew 10:24-39

²⁴ 'A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; ²⁵ it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

²⁶ 'So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. ²⁷ What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. ²⁸ Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.^[a] ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father. ³⁰ And even the hairs of your head are all counted. ³¹ So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

³² 'Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; ³³ but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

³⁴ 'Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; ³⁶ and one's foes will be members of one's own household.

³⁷ Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸ and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

REFLECTION on the lectionary Gospel reading

Jesus had been teaching, proclaiming and healing (9:35) and had now sent his disciples to do the same (10:7f). In Mark and Luke we can read of their dispatch and return, but in Matthew we find emphasis upon their not becoming discouraged by the difficulties they will face, the hardships they will endure. In v24 Jesus uses the examples of disciples of a teacher and slaves of a master to make the point that they are defined by their relationship to him: not 'above him' but 'like him'. They may and we may expect people to react to them, to us as they would react to Jesus. Some folk had already accused Jesus of being in league with the devil (9:34) so his disciples then and now might expect the same.

This whole passage is very uncomfortable: it reminds us that following Jesus, doing God-stuff in the world comes with a health warning. This played out in the lives of the early Christians, in the experience of the first Methodists and currently for Jesus' followers in some places in our time. Sometimes this goes beyond bad names, as it did for Jesus.

Jesus speaks against the temptation into which we can so easily fall of thinking that following Jesus is all about 'us'. In the words of the Covenant service there are some services to be done which are contrary to 'our natural inclinations and material interests'. If we follow Jesus expecting fame and fortune we are likely to be disappointed. But before we despair we might look into v30, where Jesus tells us 'even the hairs of your head are counted'... we are not forgotten or alone.

LECTIO: READING

As you read the words again underline or highlight words which stand out for you. Notice and appreciate what is written.

MEDITATIO: MEDITATING

What does the passage mean for you today? What is Jesus saying to you?

ORATIO: PRAYER

Respond sharing all you have noticed with God. Listen for God to respond to you.

CONTEMPLATIO: CONTEMPLATION

Be still before God. Invite God to be with you. Give time for the words you have read and the meaning you have found to suggest action in your own discipleship. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what God wants you to see and how to respond.