

The Seventh Sunday of Easter - Year B - 17th May, 2015

INTRODUCTIONS

For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines

The First Reading - Acts 1:15-17, 21-26

Peter suggests that the disciples should find a replacement for Judas, so they select two candidates and draw lots, and Matthias is added as an apostle to join the other eleven.
or Exodus 28:1-4, 9-10

The Psalm - Psalm 1

Those who love God's instruction and refuse to join in the company and works of the wicked are truly happy and bear fruit, while the wicked are ultimately destroyed.

The Second Reading - 1 John 5:9-13

God has testified about Jesus that life is in him, and whoever has God's Son has life eternal, so if we believe God's testimony, we have this life.

The Gospel Reading - John 17: 6-19

Jesus prays for his followers, the ones to whom he has revealed God's name and God's word which is truth. He prays that God would keep them safe, would make them one as he and the Father are one, and would make them holy in the truth.

Click here to view the readings

http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Acts%201:15-17,%2021-26%0A%2BORAExodus%2028:1-4,%209-10%0AAcw%20Psalm%201%0A1%20John%205:9-13%0AJohn%2017:%206-19

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

O God the King of glory,
who hast exalted thine only Son Jesus Christ
with great triumph unto thy kingdom in heaven;
We beseech thee, leave us not comfortless;
but send to us thine Holy Spirit to comfort us,
and exalt us unto the same place
whither our Saviour Christ is gone before,
who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit,
one God, world without end.

Collect Two

O God the King of Glory,
you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ
with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:
Mercifully give us faith to know
that, as he promised,
he abides with us on earth to the end of time;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

The Seventh Sunday of Easter - Year B - 17th May, 2015

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Presider or deacon

Not belonging to the world, we intercede for the world. Let us offer prayers to God for all persons everywhere, to protect them from the evil one.

Deacon or other leader

For this holy gathering and all who enter our circle of faith.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For the newly baptized illumined by the light of Christ.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For our leaders, and all the holy people of God in every place.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For the leaders of the nations and peace in the world.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For this city/town/village and the community around us.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For all in any pain and all who sorrow.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For the dying and the dead.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For ourselves, our families, and those we love.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

Lifting our voices with St _____, Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ. **To you, O Lord.**

Presider

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, who sent your Son into the world. Hear our prayers for all your creation and sanctify us in the truth of your word; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

POST COMMUNION

Eternal Giver of love and power,
your Son Jesus Christ has sent us into all the world
to preach the gospel of his kingdom.
Confirm us in this mission,
and help us to live the good news we proclaim;

The Seventh Sunday of Easter - Year B - 17th May, 2015

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS

Mighty God,
in whom we know the power of redemption,
you stand among us in the shadows of our time.
As we move through every sorrow and trial of this life,
uphold us with knowledge of the final morning
when, in the glorious presence of your risen Son,
we will share in his resurrection,
redeemed and restored to the fullness of life
and forever freed to be your people. Amen.

Living God,
long ago, faithful women
proclaimed the good news
of Jesus' resurrection,
and the world was changed forever.
Teach us to keep faith with them,
that our witness may be as bold,
our love as deep,
and our faith as true. Amen.

Creator of the universe,
you made the world in beauty,
and restore all things in glory
through the victory of Jesus Christ.
We pray that, wherever your image is still disfigured
by poverty, sickness, selfishness, war and greed,
the new creation in Jesus Christ may appear in justice, love, and peace,
to the glory of your name. Amen.

O God, your Son remained with his disciples after his resurrection,
teaching them to love all people as neighbors.
As his disciples in this age,
we offer our prayers on behalf of the universe
in which we are privileged to live
and our neighbours with whom we share it.
Open our hearts to your power moving
around us and between us and within us,
until your glory is revealed in our love of both friend and enemy,
in communities transformed by justice and compassion,
and in the healing of all that is broken. Amen.

Holy God,
you have called us to follow in the way of your risen Son,
and to care for those who are our companions,
not only with words of comfort, but with acts of love.
Seeking to be true friends of all,
we offer our prayers on behalf of the church and the world.
Guide us in the path of discipleship,

The Seventh Sunday of Easter - Year B - 17th May, 2015

so that, as you have blessed us,
we may be a blessing for others,
bringing the promise of the kingdom near
by our words and deeds. Amen.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,
God invites us to bring our doubts and fears,
our joys and concerns, our petitions and praise,
and offer them for the earth and all its creatures.
Receive these prayers, O God,
and transform us through them,
that we may have eyes to see and hearts to understand
not only what you do on our behalf,
but what you call us to do
so that your realm will come to fruition in glory. Amen.

Gracious God,
in the resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ,
you have given us eternal life
and glorified your name in all the world.
Refresh our souls with the living streams of your truth,
that in our unity, your joy may be complete. Amen.

LECTIONARY NOTES

REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

This last Sunday of Easter before Pentecost closes out the Easter season in a strange way. Although at first glance, the readings seem to be rather disparate, a deeper examination reveals that through each of them two themes are repeated. The first is the call to holiness. In Acts, the apostles seek to complete their number again in order to continue Christ's work effectively. In Psalm 1 the righteous person is praised and revealed to be one who bears fruit and who is truly blessed. In John's letter, the holy person is shown to be one who receives God's testimony about Jesus and who receives life from Jesus. Finally, in Jesus' prayer in John 17, Jesus asks that God would keep his disciples safe and would make them holy through God's truth in God's word. The second theme is that of unity with God and with one another, which flows out of the call to love of the previous few weeks in the Lectionary. In Acts, the unity of the apostles is extended to include the new appointment of Matthias. In Psalm 1, the righteous person is one who rejects the company of the wicked but who, unlike the wicked, finds a place among the company of the righteous. In John's letter, believing in Jesus as the one who brings life connects us with God and in Jesus' prayer in John 17, Jesus prays for the unity of the disciples with one another even as he is one with God. In the end, these two themes merge and become one, because it is in our union with God and one another that true holiness is expressed and lived. It is wickedness that divides and separates, while holiness (which John Wesley defined as perfect love) unites and joins and creates community. The message of the Lectionary this week, then, is for us to embrace the life that God gives us in Christ and allow it to bring us into loving communion with God and with others.

CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

GLOBAL APPLICATION: In the quest for global justice the idea of "holiness" may seem out of place and irrelevant. However, when we define holiness in the way the Lectionary

The Seventh Sunday of Easter - Year B - 17th May, 2015

seems to be inviting us to this week, it turns out to a very relevant and important characteristic to develop. When we think of holiness as a sharing of the life of Christ in unity, we discover that the quest for such holiness leads us right into issues of justice. As we seek to connect and share life with others, we inevitably find ourselves seeking to address the causes of inequality and poverty, we work for power sharing and collaboration and we recognise our connectedness, which leads us to seek the best for all people. In addition, we discover our connectedness with all life, resulting in a greater awareness of our need to care for creation. When holiness is about sharing life in community, the quest for holiness becomes inseparable from the quest for justice – the two are really synonymous. As we strive for holiness, then, we will find ourselves reaching out to one another across the lines of ideology, religion, race, nationality, education and economic station. If there is anything our world needs today, it's people who seek to recognise and strengthen our connectedness, rather than preserve what divides us – and the holiness which is presented in the Scriptures this week is exactly the guide that will lead us to become such people.

LOCAL APPLICATION: It's tragic that holiness has so often been defined, especially in Christian circles, as separation from – from other people, from particular ideas, from religions or groups that are different from us. I'm not sure where we got this idea, since Jesus, who we all agree was the epitome of holiness, was a connector, bringing together people of vastly different ideological, religious, theological, political and economic positions. In addition, Jesus calls us to follow him – to do as he did – which should mean that, as we seek to be "righteous" or holy, we should also be seeking to share life with others in whatever way we can. The call of the Lectionary this week, and of the Gospel, then, is not to separate ourselves, but to connect ourselves, to take the risk of reaching out to others and welcoming them into our circle – as the apostles did with Matthias. Ironically, it is through this obsession with connection rather than division that we cease to be "of" the world. We live in the world, but we are oriented toward God's unifying love and life, rather than toward the divisiveness which characterises so much of the agendas of those who ignore God's life. The question we might want to ask in our worship this week is this: how do we become people who foster Christlike connectedness?

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

Sermons that work - We have arrived at the end of the Easter season in the church calendar. Throughout the season we heard the stories once again recounting the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, and we read about how the apostles, disciples, and followers of Jesus adjusted to the idea of Scripture fulfilled.

Like the apostles, we have been given time, through the stories, to understand how this journey and especially how the resurrection helps us to be what we have been called to be. This has been a period of discernment as we redefine what Easter means and how it changes who we are and our lives.

Today's gospel takes it to the next level. This is the point in our journey where we ask ourselves how God is calling us and what God is calling us to be and to do.

Discernment is no easy task. When each of the disciples was called by Jesus to follow him, we remember that most of them dropped what they were doing with hardly a second thought. We were amazed by their clarity and direction, and we certainly had to acknowledge the obvious charisma of Jesus. But now, when the disciples needed to fill the spot vacated by Judas, it becomes clear that discernment is not an easy process. Jesus

The Seventh Sunday of Easter - Year B - 17th May, 2015

has not called the next apostle; it is up to the community to act, using the model he left them.

<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/2009/05/24/seventh-sunday-of-easter-may-24-2009/>

Sermons that work - The opposite of scoffing.

"Once there was a little girl who always laughed and grinned
and made fun of everyone, of all her blood and kin,
and once when there was company and old folks was there,
she mocked them and she shocked them, and said she didn't care.
And just as she turned on her heels to go and run and hide,
there was two great big black things a-standing by her side.
They snatched her through the ceiling 'fore she knew what she's about,
and the goblins will get ya if ya don't watch out!"

Did any of you go to bed as children having the poems of James Whitcomb Riley read to you? Well, for those of you who did, you might recall what was just read from the poem "Little Orphan Annie."

So what has this to do with the major themes from our Bible readings of this week?
Everything.

It is not that our little girl lost cannot be found, it is that she is on a bad road. "Scoffers" or, depending on your translation, "the scornful," is something we encounter in our reading from the First Psalm this Sunday. "Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of the scoffers."
<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/2012/04/30/7-easter-b-may-20-2012/>

CHILDREN

Worshiping with Children, Easter 7/Ascension, Including children in the congregation's worship, using the Revised Common Lectionary, Carolyn C. Brown
<http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2015/03/year-b-seventh-sunday-of-easter-may-17.html>

Sermon of the Week, Sermons 4 Kids, Charles Kirkpatrick, Object Lessons & Children's Sermons, Colouring Pages, Puzzles.
Sermons4Kids.com.

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

Blest Are The Pure In Heart
For All Thy Saints, O Lord
For The Healing Of The Nations
Christ From Whom All Blessings Flow
A Charge To Keep I Have
Everyone Belongs
Join Our Hearts
We Are One Body (Link to YouTube video)
I, The Lord Of Sea And Sky (Link to YouTube video)

The Seventh Sunday of Easter - Year B - 17th May, 2015

Please commend this resource to colleagues - they simply send an email to churchnewsireland@gmail.com with the message Passwords in the title