

The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity YEAR C August 18, 2013

INTRODUCTIONS

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

Isaiah 5:1-7: A metaphorical prophecy of judgement against Israel and Judah, pictured as God's vineyard, for their lack of justice.

OR **Jeremiah 23:23-29**: A prophecy against false prophets who make up lies in God's name, compared to God's true word which burns like fire and smashes rock like a hammer.

Psalms 80:1-2, 8-19: A Psalm of repentance for abandoning God, and praying for God to once again tend and protect God's people as a vineyard that is well cared for.

OR **Psalms 82**: This Psalm, picturing a 'council of the gods', has God speaking judgement over the gods of nations who oppress the poor and allow injustice to continue unchecked.

Hebrews 11:29-12:2: A reminder of the "great cloud of witnesses" – people of faith who suffered for their message and stayed committed to God through great trial and heartache – who surround us. They encourage us to stay firm, and follow Christ – the one who endured the cross – faithfully.

Luke 12:49-56: Jesus grieves his coming suffering, recognising the conflict that will arise over his message, and challenging people to discern the true nature of the time they live in, in the same way that they interpret the weather.

For individual readings click references above - for all readings click here -

http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Isaiah%205:%201-7%0Acw%20Psalm%2080:%201-2,%209-20%0AHebrews%2011:%2029%20-%2012:%202%0ALuke%2012:%2049-56

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

Almighty and everlasting God,
who art always more ready to hear than we to pray,
and art wont to give more than either we desire, or deserve;
Pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy;
forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid,
and giving us those good things
which we are not worthy to ask,
but through the merits and mediation
of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord.

Collect Two

Almighty and everlasting God,
you are always more ready to hear than we to pray
and to give more than either we desire, or deserve:
Pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy,
forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid,
and giving us those good things
which we are not worthy to ask

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save through the merits and mediation
of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Presider or deacon

Surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, let us pray to God who strengthens the weak.

Deacon or other leader

For this holy gathering, and for the people of God in every place.

Lord, have mercy.

For all nations and their leaders, and for mercy, justice, and peace in the world.

Lord, have mercy.

For students and teachers, and all those returning to their studies.

Lord, have mercy.

For good weather and abundant crops, and for travelers and those on vacation.

Lord, have mercy.

For the sick and the suffering, prisoners and their families, the hungry and the oppressed,
and all in danger and need.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who rest in Christ and for all the dead.

Lord, have mercy.

For our city/town/parish and those who live in it, and for our families, companions, and all
those we

love.

Lord, have mercy.

Lifting our voices with all creation, with _____ and all the saints, let us offer
ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ.

To you, O Lord.

Presider

God of all times and places, whose word is like fire, grant our prayers for all the world
and bring peace to the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

POST COMMUNION

God of compassion,

in this eucharist we know again your forgiveness

and the healing power of your love.

Grant that we who are made whole in Christ

may bring that forgiveness and healing to this broken world,

in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

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Lord of all mercy, we your faithful people have celebrated that one true sacrifice which takes away our sins and brings pardon and peace: by our communion keep us firm on the foundation of the gospel and preserve us from all sin; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of our pilgrimage, you have willed that the gates of mercy should stand open for those who trust in you: look upon us with your favour that we who follow the path of your will may never wander from the way of life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

PRAYERS

God of justice,
your word is light and truth.
Let your face shine on us to restore us,
that we may walk in your way,
seeking justice and doing good. Amen.

Friends in Christ,
God invites us to hold the needs of our sisters and brothers
as dear to us as our own needs.
Loving our neighbors as ourselves,
we offer our thanksgivings and our petitions
on behalf of the church and the world.
Hear our prayers, God of power,
and through the ministry of your Son
free us from the grip of the tomb,
that we may desire you as the fullness of life
and proclaim your saving deeds to all the world. Amen.

As you heard the prayer of Isaac and Rebekah, O God,
and guided them in the way of your love,
so listen now to those who call upon you.
Move us to praise your gracious will,
for in Christ Jesus you have saved us from the deeds of death
and opened for us the hidden ways of your love.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord God, friend of those in need,
your Son Jesus has untied our burdens
and healed our spirits.
We lift up the prayers of our hearts for those still burdened,
those seeking healing,
those in need within the church and the world.
Hear our prayers
that we may love you with our whole being
and willingly share the concerns of our neighbours. Amen.

Creator God,
you call us to love and serve you
with body, mind, and spirit
through loving your creation
and our sisters and brothers.

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Open our hearts in compassion
and receive these petitions
on behalf of the needs of the church and the world.
Holy One,
hear our prayers and make us faithful stewards
of the fragile bounty of this earth
so that we may be entrusted with the riches of heaven. Amen.

We praise your abiding guidance, O God,
for you sent us Jesus, our Teacher and Messiah,
to model for us the way of love for the whole universe.
We offer these prayers of love
on behalf of ourselves and our neighbours,
on behalf of your creation and our fellow creatures.

Loving God,
open our ears to hear your word
and draw us closer to you,
that the whole world may be one with you
as you are one with us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of mercy and healing,
you who hear the cries of those in need,
receive these petitions of your people
that all who are troubled
may know peace, comfort, and courage.
Life-giving God,
heal our lives,
that we may acknowledge your wonderful deeds
and offer you thanks from generation to generation
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of salvation,
who sent your Son to seek out and save what is lost,
hear our prayers
on behalf of those who are lost in our day,
receiving these petitions and thanksgivings
with your unending compassion.
Redeeming Sustainer,
visit your people
and pour out your strength and courage upon us,
that we may hurry to make you welcome
not only in our concern for others,
but by serving them
generously and faithfully in your name. Amen.

Judge eternal,
you love justice and hate oppression;
you give peace to those who seek it,
and you condemn the rage of violence.
Give us courage to take our stand
with all victims of bloodshed and greed,

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and, following your servants and prophets,
look to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. Amen.

God of all the nations,
you rescued your people out of the Red Sea
and delivered Rahab from battle;
you rescue the lowly and needy from injustice and tribulation.
Surround us with so great a cloud of witnesses
that we may have faith to live by your word in our time,
courage to persevere in the race set before us,
and endurance in the time of trial. Amen.

O God you declare your almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity: mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace, that we, running the way of your commandments, may receive your gracious promises, and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure; 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. *Common Worship*

God of glory, the end of our searching, help us to lay aside all that prevents us from seeking your kingdom, and to give all that we have to gain the pearl beyond all price, through our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Common Worship Shorter Collect*

God of the nations, to whose table all are invited and in whose kingdom no one is a stranger: hear the cries of the hungry and mercifully extend to all the peoples on earth the joy of your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen *Methodist Worship*

To set the earth ablaze, O God, your Son submitted to death on the cross, and from his cup of suffering you call the church to drink. When we are tempted give us strength to run the race that lies before us, and to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. *Methodist Worship*

You are the great God — he who is in heaven. You are the creator of life, you make the regions above. You are the hunter who hunts for souls. You are the leader who goes before us. You are he whose hands are with wounds. You are he whose feet are with wounds. You are he whose blood is a trickling stream, You are he whose blood was spilled for us. *Prayer of a Xhosa Christian from Africa*

O thou, from whom to be turned is to fall, to whom to be turned is to rise, and in whom to stand is to abide for ever; Grant us in all our duties thy help, in all our perplexities thy guidance, In all our dangers thy protection, And in all our sorrows thy peace; Through Jesus Christ our Lord. *St. Augustine (340—430)*

Father, I am seeking: I am hesitant and uncertain, but will you, O God, watch over each step of mine and guide me. *St. Augustine (354-430)*

Blessed are you, creator of all, to you be praise and glory for ever. As your dawn renews the face of the earth bringing light and life to all creation, may we wake refreshed from the depths of sleep, open our eyes to behold your presence and strengthen our hands to do your will, that the world may rejoice and give you praise. Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Blessed be God forever. (After Lancelot Andrewes, 1626. Common Worship)

Let me know you, my knower; let me know you as I am known. You are the energy in my
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soul: enter it and shape it to yourself, so that you may hold it as your possession, without fault or blemish. This is my hope; this is why I speak as I do. This is the hope that brings me delight; for I delight in the source of my salvation. (*St Augustine 354-430*)

Ever-loving God, your Son Jesus Christ gave Himself as living bread for the life of the world; give us such a knowledge of His presence that we may be strengthened and sustained by His risen life to serve you continually; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**
(New Zealand Prayer Book)

Saviour God, humanity longs to live in peace. We pray for your healing peace; for those racked by guilt or regret, for those caught up in turbulent relationships, for those burdened by illness or sorrow. Humanity longs to live in peace, but not peace at any price. We pray for those who stir up dissension; by questioning the ways of society, by being open and honest, and by searching for the truth. **Amen**

Spirit of God, your church longs to live in peace. We pray for your healing peace; between denominations, within individual churches, in our own hearts. Your church longs to live in peace, but not peace at any price. We pray for those who stir up dissension; disturbing us with new visions and ideas, criticising our apathy and complacency, and provoking us to think afresh about our calling. **Amen** *From Companion to the Revised Common Lectionary, Intercessions, Christine Odell*

Here, O Lord, is my poor heart, an empty vessel ready to be filled with your grace. Here, O Lord, is my sinful soul, waiting to be refreshed by your love. Here, O Lord, is my mouth created for your praise and ready to proclaim the glory of your name, now and for ever.
Amen Dwight Lyman Moody, 1837-1899

God, who from old, taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of you Holy Spirit: grant to us by the same spirit to have a right judgment in all things and to evermore rejoice in his holy comfort. Amen.

Heavenly Father, help us to live this day and each day, as if it were our last. Amen

Take my body, O Christ, to do your work, for here on earth you have no body now but mine. Take my hands to be your hands and my feet to walk in the ways of your feet. Take my eyes to be the eyes of your own compassion shining forth upon a troubled world; for your own mercy's sake. Amen Teresa of Avila, 1515-1582

God our Father, be near to our children growing up in the peril and confusion of these times. Guard them from the forces of evil at work in our society, and lead them in the paths of goodness and truth; enable us as parents, grandparents, family members or as friends to give them at all times the security of our love and the help of our example and our prayers. Amen (Edward Peck)

O God, you are my God, for you I long;
for you my soul is thirsting.
I long for you like dry, weary land without water.
Give me your strength and your glory.
I wish to praise you all my life fill my soul as with a banquet.
I cling to you; hold me close in your hands.
Psalm 63

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Increase your grace in us, O Lord, that we may fear your Name beyond which nothing is more holy; that we may love you, beyond whom nothing is more loveable; that we may glorify you beyond whom nothing is more worthy of praise, and that we may long for you beyond whom nothing is more desirable; and grant that thus fearing, loving, glorifying and longing we may see you, face to face; through Christ our Lord. Amen Desiderius Erasmus, 1466-1536

LECTIONARY NOTES 1

Erring for Generosity

Isaiah 58:9b-14; Psalm 103:1-8; Hebrews 12:18-29; Luke 13:10-17

The God of the gospel is one who heals. Israel, in its psalms, never tired of celebrating the God who “forgives, heals, redeems, crowns, and satisfies” (see Psalm 103:3-5). The healing narrative in Luke is a case study in the claims of the psalm. Jesus does the healing work of God for “a daughter of Abraham,” thus evidencing God’s abiding fidelity to the old Abrahamic promises. It is only a surprise that the disabled woman counts among the family of Abraham.

The opposition to Jesus can’t reach beyond their “sacred duty” of Sabbath to the transformative generosity exhibited by Jesus. They reckon their Sabbath observance to take priority over urgent human need. But Jesus, with an illustration about animal care (verse 15), inverts the order of things. Healing takes priority over observance. No wonder they left the meeting embarrassed over their punctilious requirements.

The juxtaposition of healing and Sabbath in Isaiah is dominated by the repeated conditional “if.” The community is urged to look beyond “pursuing your own interests on my holy day” (verse 13). Jesus is always looking beyond his own interests to the interests of the needy. The issue is a reordering of religious priorities. In Hebrews 12 the issue in dispute is cast as Mount Zion (site of joy) and Mount Sinai (site of obligatory scruple). These texts imagine a gospel freedom for those who open their faith to the disability of the world.

Walter Brueggemann

LECTIONARY NOTES 2

REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

The Gospel reading this week is a difficult one, a deeply uncomfortable one, but a very significant one. The key is in Jesus’ call to discern the times, which in the Gospel refers to the growing frustration with Rome’s rule over Israel, and the inevitable destruction that would result if the people choose to try and resist Rome (which is, of course, exactly what happened). The division that Jesus speaks about flows from our responses to the times we live in, whether we will do the work of discernment or not, and whether we will choose the way of God’s Reign – the way of the cross – or not. When justice is ignored, and the poor and vulnerable are oppressed, God is angered, and, as indicated in both Isaiah’s prophecy and Psalm 82, judgement is prophesied. The image of the well-tended vineyard that is allowed to be destroyed for failing to produce good fruit is a powerful metaphor for this judgement. In the face of such injustice, there will always be those who refuse to do the work of discerning the times that Jesus called for, and who will prophecy what is untrue (as in Jeremiah), comfortable and expedient. However, there will also always be those who will repent, as in Psalm 80, and who will embrace the sacrifice and rejection that comes

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from speaking the truth, confronting injustice and working for a more compassionate, peaceful world. Unfortunately, there will always be division between truth speakers and truth deniers, between defenders of justice and defenders of the status quo. This is the cross we are called to carry.

CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

GLOBAL APPLICATION: The Gospel call of justice is bringing division to our world and even to the Church, as Jesus predicted it would. In the face of economic struggle, there are those who are eager to 'prophesy' prosperity, without the need to change the underlying systemic flaws that bring about inequality and injustice. Those who insist on pointing this out, are rejected and scoffed at. In the face of climate change, there are those who are eager to 'prophesy' that there is no problem, and that the world is to be destroyed by God anyway. But, those who insist on challenging oil companies, energy companies and government, those who insist on calling attention to the danger of our consumption, are scoffed at, questioned or ignored. There are many voices in our world that want to 'prophesy' lies – to ignore the signs of injustice, poverty, excessive consumption, and health care and education failure. And those who insist on proclaiming the Gospel message of repentance, justice and simplicity will need to embrace the cross, for they will not avoid it in the divisive responses that result. The big challenge we face is whether we are willing to embrace the suffering of living out the Gospel message that we preach, while also embracing the suffering of the mocking, accusations and rejection that will come from those who refuse to live differently or to acknowledge the brokenness of our economic, political, healthcare, education, immigration, security and justice systems.

LOCAL APPLICATION: Every Christ-following community and individual is faced, daily, with a choice. We can choose to adopt an 'escapist' faith, ignoring the pain of the world while waiting for heavenly bliss after we die, or we can do the work of listening, watching and understanding our societies and neighbourhoods, and the times in which we live. We can prophecy what is easy, comfortable and expedient for us – what requires little sacrifice and work, what makes us feel good, but changes little – or we can draw attention to the signs of injustice among us, we can call out corruption and exploitation, and we can hold ourselves and our leaders accountable to care for the marginalised and vulnerable. Ultimately, if we take the latter course, we will face the suffering of getting involved, for we will have to actually do something about the issues we expose. We will also, inevitably, face the aggression and threats of those who are invested in the status quo. We will find ourselves upsetting the peace, and being labelled "divisive", "rabble-rousers" and other names. The question is whether we have the conviction and courage to follow the great cloud of witnesses in service of God's reign, or not. This is a choice we will face every single day.

SERMON OUTLINE

Lk 12:49-56 I came to earth to bring fire...

Jesus continues in the **Sermon on the Plain** to proclaim various truths of his Mission to the world - *to bring fire*... Fire in itself speaks of light, heat, energy, enthusiasm - we are called to be 'fired up for Christ & by Christ'!! Fire speaks of many things -

- a) love** - for God/Christ/church/neighbour/those in need...
- b) judgement** - hell for those who have rejected X...
- c) purification** - refining & strengthening Xians (**1Pet1.7**)
- d) H Spirit** - coming upon disciples of every generation..

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1. Division:- those who are for or against him - even in families - *a household (52) will be divided - father agnst son, mothers agnst daughter*. It is still so in many parts of the world... We see something of the incredible pressure J was under - *I have a baptism with which to be baptised & what stress I am under (50) until it is completed* - a true baptism of fire - crucifixion & death on the cross. As he died it was completed - *It is finished!*

2. Decision:- Accordingly, people have to decide where they stand in relation to faith in JC. There is no middle ground when it comes to allegiance to X - *He who is not for me is against me (Matt 12.30)*. We **must** know where we stand - for or against X!

3. Discernment: People in 1stC didn't need weather forecasts - they could read the signs of Nature - important for farmers in
- *when you see a cloud rising in the west (Mediterranean Sea), you say it is going to rain - when you see the south wind blowing (desert) you say there will be scorching heat*. J then hits hard with the punchline - *You hypocrites! you know how to interpret the appearance of earth & sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?* He still says the same to us in 21stC - with modern science & long range weather forecasting, we still need to spiritually discerning - *wise unto salvation (2Tim 3.15)*

By Norman Porteous

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

["Postcard from Heaven,"](#) the Rev. Dr. Charles Reeb, *Day 1*
Good intro from Dead Poets Society
http://day1.org/2111-postcard_from_heaven

["Connecting the Dots?"](#) Alyce McKenzie, *Patheos*, 2010.
The worst sermons I've ever preached were those that tried to "connect the lectionary dots" but didn't offer a coherent message that tied them together. It would be a cruel trick to publish a "connect the dots" picture in a children's magazine and, when the little hand took the pencil and connected the dots, they made random lines on the page, but no coherent picture. This week I did discern a thread that connected three of the lectionary text dots: texts from Isaiah 5, Psalm 80 and Luke 12. First, let's look at the dots.
<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/faithforward/2010/08/connecting-the-dots-lectionary-reflection-for-august-15-2010/>

["Sermon for Proper 15,"](#) the Most Rev. Frank T. Griswold, *Day 1* The Most Rev. Frank T. Griswold was the 25th Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church USA, headquartered in New York, NY. He is retired.

"You hypocrites, you know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?"

These are harsh and difficult words from Jesus who is often portrayed as the epitome of gentleness and compassion. And so I'd like to begin by spending a few moments reflecting on Jesus' own sense of himself, Jesus' own sense of identity, vocation, and mission, as the way of understanding more deeply what I think Jesus is trying to convey in his very harsh and direct words.

http://day1.org/609-sermon_for_proper_15

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["Run with Perseverance,"](#) sermon discussion from Frederick Buechner, Frederick Buechner Blog
[Hebrews 12:1-2](#)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

The following is an excerpt called "Game" originally published in [Whistling in the Dark](#) and later in [Beyond Words](#):

Games are supposed to build character. The Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton and all that. Healthy competition is supposed to be good for you.

Is competition ever healthy--the desire to do better, be better, look better than somebody else? Do you write better poetry or play better tennis or do better in business or stand in higher esteem generally, even in self-esteem, if your chief motivation is to be head of the pack? Even if you win the rat race, as somebody has said, are you any less a rat?

Who wants to win if somebody else has to lose? Who dares to lose if it's crucial to win?

"Ah, but it's not winning that counts. It's how you play the game," they say. Maybe neither of them counts. Maybe it's not competition but cooperation and comradeship that build the only character worth building. If it's by playing games together that we learn to win battles, maybe it's by playing, say, music together that we learn to avoid them.

There are moments when Saint Paul sounds like a competitor with a vengeance, but there are happily other moments as well. "Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us," he says (Hebrews 12:1), where the object is not to get there first but just to get there. And "Fight the good fight," he says (1 Timothy 6:12), where it's not the fight to overcome the best of the competition that he's talking about but the fight to overcome the worst in ourselves.

<http://frederickbuechner.com/content/weekly-sermon-illustration-run-perseverance>

CHILDREN

Church of Scotland - Children's address and other resources for this sunday

http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/15621/18_august_2013.pdf

["Sermon of the Week,"](#) / ["Mensajes para ninos,"](#) Sermons 4 Kids, Charles Kirkpatrick, Object Lessons & Children's Sermons, Coloring Pages, Puzzles. Sermons4Kids.com.
<http://www.sermons4kids.com/>

[Mustard Seeds](#), "Sticking with God," Proper 15 / Ordinary 20 / Pentecost 12, 2010. A lectionary-based ideas resource for leaders of contemporary worship, Ann Scull, Gippsland, Australia.
<http://seedstuff.blogspot.co.uk/2010/08/proper-15-ordinary-20-pentecost-12-c.html>

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[Story for Children's Worship and Family Activity](#), Ordinary 20, at *word-sunday.com*: A
Catholic Resource for the Lectionary by Larry Broding.
<http://www.word-sunday.com/index.html>