

## The Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity YEAR B September 6, 2015

There can be no question, after reading the Scriptures for this week in the Revised Common Lectionary, that God is concerned for the poorest and most vulnerable in our world, and that God expects God's people to reject favouritism and show inclusive love, grace and compassion to all. It's a challenging week, but it goes to the heart of the Gospel.

May we learn, a little more, to be people of inclusivity and compassion through our worship this week.

### INTRODUCTIONS

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

#### **Proverbs 22 : 1-2, 8-9, 22-23**

This is a very brief sample of many sayings and aphorisms said to have been collected and written by Solomon. They form part of Israel's wisdom literature, and are often quite worldly rather than religious. Good reputation, justice, mercy, are virtues to be valued.

#### *or* **Isaiah 35 : 4-7a**

When the Lord comes, says the prophet, every ill and every pain will be healed. And when Jesus came these words came true wherever he went.

#### **Psalms 125**

A prayer of confidence in God's care and protection of God's people, and a plea that God would do good to good people, but reject evil doers.

#### *or* **Psalms 146**

A song of praise and an exhortation to God's people to trust in God and not in any human being. God makes heaven and earth, gives justice to the oppressed and food to the hungry, and God liberates prisoners, heals those with various ailments and protects the most vulnerable.

#### **James 2 : 1-10 [11-13], 14-1**

This letter is characterised by exhortations about putting faith to work. This passage deals with how the church should welcome visitors, and the uselessness of faith without charitable action.

#### **Mark 7 : 24-37**

Jesus moved for a while away from Jewish people into Gentile territory. His compassion and his healing power still reached out to all who came with faith at their time of need.

### TEXT OF READINGS

[http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearB\\_RCL/Pentecost/BProp18\\_RCL.html](http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearB_RCL/Pentecost/BProp18_RCL.html)

### COLLECTS OF THE DAY

#### **Collect One**

Almighty and everlasting God,  
Give unto us the increase of faith, hope, and charity;  
and, that we may obtain that which thou dost promise,  
make us to love that which thou dost command;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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### Collect Two

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 our Lord.

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 1

Lord Jesus, when we leave the heart of your Word, it is easy to become like the religious leaders who were caught in the trivia of tradition. We pray, "Help us to be true to your Word," and respond, "Amen! Hear us, Lord."

That the church catholic may not build barriers that keep member bodies separate from one another and from the glory of God. Help us to be true to your Word. **Amen! Hear us, Lord.**

That the strength of international corporate business may not usurp the needs of smaller national interests, nor weaken national economies we pray. Help us to be true to your Word. **Amen! Hear us, Lord.**

That those who plan and implement the worship services of our congregations, synods, and national church may always be ready to say: Help us to be true to your Word. **Amen! Hear us, Lord.**

That the vestries, committees, pastoral staff, and all who work for our congregations, may not neglect the will and wisdom of God in their serving, we ask. Help us to be true to your Word. **Amen! Hear us, Lord.**

That congregational endeavours to aid the needy citizens of our community may clearly demonstrate your love, we pray. Help us to be true to your Word. **Amen! Hear us, Lord.**

That parents who instruct their little ones in their homes may instill and reflect the Word of God, we pray. Help us to be true to your Word. **Amen! Hear us, Lord.**

Forgive us, O Christ, when we forget to forgive and hold high the cross. Help us to be true to your Word. **Amen! Hear us, Lord.**

Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, build us up in our common Christian confession.

Amen.

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 2

*Presider or deacon*

Let us pray to God for the poor in the world and for all in every danger and need.

*Deacon or other leader*

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For *N* our bishop and *N* our rector, for this holy gathering, and for the people of God in every place.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For all peoples, tribes, clans, and families and for mercy, justice, and peace in the world.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For abundant fruits of the earth, and for safety from violent storms.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the blind, the deaf, the lame, and the speechless, and for the dying and dead.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For our city and those who live in it, and for our families, companions, and all those we love.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For our deliverance from all affliction, strife, and need.

**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 healing and salvation, hear us as we beg your mercy, open our ears to receive your word, and release our tongues to sing your praise; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 3

P We give You thanks, O Lord, that You have invited Your people to pray, in the confidence that You will both hear and answer them according to Your merciful will. (Silence for prayer.)

P We praise You, O Lord, for the gift of work and for the gifts and skills which shape our earthly vocations. Teach us to labor not for earthly reward but for Your glory, knowing that nothing we do in Your service is ever in vain. Give comfort and direction to the unemployed and the underemployed, that they may find work appropriate to their needs and abilities. Lord, in Your mercy,  
C hear our prayer.

P We pray especially for those who labor on behalf of Your kingdom, for our bishops...., our pastor(s), and for all missionaries and church workers. Bless especially those who serve You on mission fields far from home and those who bring the light of Your Word to the blind. Lord, in Your mercy,  
C hear our prayer.

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- P We pray for our nation and those who labour on our behalf at every level of government, and for all who serve the public trust, that they may fulfil their duties with wisdom, honour, and justice. Lord, in Your mercy,  
C hear our prayer.
- P We pray for the men and women of our armed forces, especially those who labor against the forces of war, terrorism, and oppression. We ask Your blessing also upon those who protect and defend us here. Lord, in Your mercy,  
C hear our prayer.
- P We are mindful of the many whose lives are filled with pain and suffering, grief and sorrow. As You once showed Your mercy to those who called upon You long ago, so show Your mercy to those who cry to You today. According to Your will, grant them healing and peace, especially [\_\_\_\_\_ and] those whom we name now in our hearts. (Silence.) Lord, in Your mercy,  
C hear our prayer.
- P We ask Your blessing upon those assembled today, that we who come to Your Table may faithfully receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and be strengthened in faith, both now and to eternal life. Lord, in Your mercy,  
C hear our prayer.
- P We know Your blessings are new to us each morning. We pray You to teach us gratitude and how to use Your gifts responsibly. Accept, we pray, the tithes and offerings we bring today and the offering of our very selves made possible only in Jesus Christ. Lord, in Your mercy,  
C hear our prayer.
- P We recall the faithful who have gone before us and are with You, and we pray You to bring us at last with them to the everlasting life You have prepared for us in Jesus Christ. Inspire us by their faith, and encourage us by the mercy You showed to them, that we too may be found worthy of eternal life through Jesus Christ. Lord, in Your mercy,  
C hear our prayer.
- P We ask You for these and whatsoever things are needful for us and profitable for our salvation. Grant them to us for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord, in whose name we pray.  
C Amen.

### **POST COMMUNION**

Lord God,  
the source of truth and love:  
Keep us faithful to the apostles' teaching and fellowship,  
united in prayer and the breaking of bread,  
and one in joy and simplicity of heart,  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **PRAYERS**

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O God, Wisdom of the universe,  
you bear the pain of your people.  
Grant us the gift of wisdom,  
that we may discern your way  
and live justly and graciously  
amid the struggles of this world. 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.  
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,

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to model for us the way of love for the whole universe.

We offer these prayers of love  
on behalf of ourselves and our neighbors,  
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.

Holy Lord, maker of us all,  
you call us to love our neighbours as ourselves  
and teach us that faith without works is dead.  
Open us to the opportunities for ministry that lie before us,  
where faith and words and the need of our neighbor  
come together in name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

God, whose love streams like fresh water  
into the deserts of our hearts,  
you turn us from greed and partiality  
to healing and justice.  
Make us companions of those who long for your deliverance,  
and give us safe passage at the last into the land of your shalom. Amen.

## LECTIONARY NOTES 1

## **The Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity YEAR B September 6, 2015**

### **Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23:**

- "a good name" - What does it mean these days to have a 'good name,' when perhaps there is less emphasis on family of origin=prestige than there once was? Do you have a good name? Who would you say has a good name?
- "Whoever sows injustice will reap calamity" Can you think of times when you have been responsible for sowing injustice? I hope never to do so, but sometimes I'm afraid I don't sow anything at all instead.
- "for the Lord pleads their cause" - Imagine God as your attorney, God as your advocate in a dispute or argument where you felt you were treated unfairly.

### **Psalm 125:**

- "so the Lord surrounds his people" - great imagery. What image would you use to describe God's protection of you? Do you feel protected?
- "the scepter of wickedness shall not rest on the land allotted to the righteous" - another great image. Sometimes it seems that indeed some evil is on the land, the world, with all the fighting, war, injustice. But at heart, God is with us, and in us, and in our world.
- :5 This verse expresses the psalmist's desire to see evildoers receive some sort of punishment. I think it is natural to seek and desire revenge in some ways, but I think that the 'peace' the psalmist asks for in the same verse only comes when we move beyond a desire to see those who have wronged us suffer.

### **James 2:1-10, (11-13), 14-17:**

- Perhaps we think issues of how people are dressed in worship were only issues in James' day. But we still often associate how one dresses for worship with how serious one is about God and discipleship.
- :5 Like our text from Proverbs, here James highlights God's special relationship with the poor. Knowing how special those who are poor are to God, why can't we (I) seem to get more active at working for/with those who are poor?
- :10 Sounds harsh, extreme, but James is saying: if you follow all the laws except one, but that one is the heart of the law, crucial to faith/righteousness - how much does the rest matter?
- "law of liberty" - interesting phrase. Sounds constitutional, doesn't it?
- "Can faith save you?" Hm. Many would say yes. James stands and says loudly, "yeah right!" Not without works to support the faith. What do you think?
- "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill." Ah, too often our response to those in need.

### **Mark 7:24-37:**

- "Yet he could not escape notice." - No kidding. I can't imagine the stress of feeling constantly in demand. Really constantly, not just 'busy' like we are today. But how could they not come to one who was offering them so much?
- The first part of this text is one we have a hard time dealing with. "Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs" - A hard sentences to construct in a way flattering to Jesus. I don't have good answers. I don't want to explain away Jesus' words by trying to translate the Greek differently.



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Was Jesus just joking with the woman? I don't see it. What I see is a woman who is as persistent as the widow Jesus tells a parable about elsewhere in the gospels, and she receives her reward. And what I see is a Jesus who is focused on the mission he sees: to the Jews - who lets his own vision be expanded. The woman shows him a way to spread more grace.

- Even with his resistance, we can be comforted that Jesus heard her out, and really listened, until he recognized great faith in one whom he did not expect to find it.
- ephphatha - what a word! "Be opened!" A commandment we might try to follow in many situations...
- "he has done everything well." A sweet compliment, at last.

*By Beth Quick.*

### LECTIONARY NOTES 2

#### REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

In every reading this week God's preferential option for the poor and vulnerable is expressed. The Lectionary offers us a clear and unequivocal call to justice as we follow Christ. In Proverbs, those who are generous and just are blessed, and God is seen to be on the side of the poor and oppressed, while resisting those who are unjust. In Isaiah God is revealed to be gracious and merciful to God's people, especially those who are weak and vulnerable, and the promise is given that God will bring healing and restoration to the broken and oppressed. Both Psalms celebrate God's care for God's people, and God's healing, restoration and blessing on the poor and broken, and on those who live generously and justly. In the letter of James, favouritism is denounced as breaking the law of love, and the people of faith are challenged to put their into action in caring for the poor. Finally, Jesus is shown to be our example for compassionate living, as he heals both a Gentile woman's daughter (after being challenged by her in his initial reluctance) and a Jewish man. The basic and consistent message of the Lectionary this week is this: Our faith is seen in how we treat others, especially in our love for, protection of and inclusion of the poor, the marginalised, the broken and the vulnerable. As such, favouritism, prejudice and discrimination are to be rejected, and inclusive love and welcome are to be embraced and practiced as the most basic and fundamental ingredients of our faith.

#### CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

**GLOBAL APPLICATION:** If there is one thing that has brought tremendous pain, conflict and brokenness to our world, it is our tendency to polarise ourselves. Our divisions of rich and poor, men and women, believer and non-believer, gay and straight, western and eastern, white and black, powerful and weak, have done little to help us, but have left war, hunger, homelessness, and hatred in their wake. Yet, the Scriptures show clearly this week that God is the God of all, and God's grace and mercy are available to all. Unfortunately even in working for justice we have too easily allowed ourselves to become part of the polarisation – caricaturing our opponents in order to denounce and attack them in the hopes that this will help us to "win" a victory over them. This divisiveness has filtered through everything from theological and political discourse, to economic confrontation and even social activism. We need to recapture the radical inclusivity of the Gospel, following Jesus in his openness to serve and love even the rejected, marginalised and "unclean". We need to find a new Gospel-inspired collaboration across ideology, geography and economic status in order to address the great challenges facing us. And we need to allow the Church to become, once again, a welcome home for all who seek after God and God's



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ways, rather than an exclusive in-group trying to keep God for ourselves. It does not heal the world for us to hoard our wealth or our faith, while pointing judgmental fingers at those who are different from us. It does heal the world when we take the hands of others, and seek to connect with and understand them, in spite of our differences. May we constantly seek to allow our worship to change us in the direction of greater compassion, service and inclusivity.

**LOCAL APPLICATION:** In every home and community the temptation to show favouritism is present. In every neighbourhood and church the temptation to ignore the poorest and most vulnerable because of the pain and discomfort of reaching out is present. It is easy to build a safe and comfortable world around our faith, including only those who are like us in every way, and turning a blind eye to the injustice and suffering just outside our doors. But, to do this is to turn our backs on the Gospel (as James says). Sometimes we need to be confronted by those we ignore – even as Jesus was confronted by the Gentile mother – and we need our hearts and attitudes changed. This requires a humility and openness that is not easy, but is certainly Christlike. Then, as we begin to see our connectedness with those who are different from us, and as we learn to treat all people with equal compassion, sensitivity and respect, we begin to manifest the characteristics of God's Reign, and we begin to bring healing to others – and to ourselves. When we can stop blaming the poor for their plight, and stop believing that wealth and happiness are divine rewards for good behaviour, we can begin to touch others with the love and acceptance of Jesus. And then, as we live the Reign of God, we may just discover that we are more intimately connected with God than ever before, and that our lives have more meaning and joy than we could have believed possible. This is certainly the promise of the Gospel, and the call of this week's readings.

### SERMON OUTLINE

#### Mark 7: 24-37 the region of Tyre....

Jesus & the disciples travel some 30 m NW of Capernaum *to the region of Tyre* – pagan territory - modern Lebanon.

Josephus: *of the Phoenicians the Tyrians have the most ill-feeling towards us* - long-standing enmity with the Jews.

1. The Canaanite Woman:- with a very sick daughter..

a) Her Dilemma: she was a foreigner - *a Gentile, of Syrophoenician origin*. – a woman had no right to even speak to a Jewish rabbi – let alone seek for help...

b) Her Daughter: *had an unclean spirit* - a terrible affliction.. No wonder that she came seeking help from Jesus - *She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter*.

2. The Children's Food:- Jesus' mission was to the Jews first – the children of God - & he replies:- 27 *'Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.'* Jews considered Gentiles to be no better than dogs - who would ever think of depriving their children to feed a dog... But that gives her inspiration – as 28 *she answered him, 'Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.'*

3. The Caring Saviour:- always has time for those in need – even gentiles & foreigners!

All she was seeking was some crumb of comfort for her daughter & she wasn't disappointed! 29 *Then he said to her, 'For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.'* 30 *So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.* – a wonderful healing miracle...

Jesus is there for us all regardless of class, culture & creed!

By Norman Porteous

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### ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

"Standing in the Tragic Gap," the Rev. Dr. Trace Haythorn, *Day 1*  
[http://day1.org/1433-standing\\_in\\_the\\_tragic\\_gap](http://day1.org/1433-standing_in_the_tragic_gap)

"Back to the Present," Dianne Bergant, CSA, *America*  
[http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article\\_id=3139](http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=3139)

"A Partial God," John R. Donahue, SJ,  
[http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article\\_id=2130](http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=2130)

"Riches," Frederick Buechner Sermon Illustrations  
<http://frederickbuechner.com/content/weekly-sermon-illustration-riches>

"The Gospel is a Verb," the Rev. Kay Sylvester, Sermons that Work  
<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/2012/08/20/15-pentecost-proper-18-b-sept-9-2012/>

### CHILDREN

Worshiping with Children, Proper 18B, Including children in the congregation's worship, using the Revised Common Lectionary, Carolyn C. Brown  
<http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2012/08/year-b-proper-18-23rd-sunday-in.html>

"Cheese!" Frances Woodruff, On the Chancel Steps  
<https://onthechancelsteps.wordpress.com/2012/08/26/cheese/>

"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/>

[Story for Children's Worship and Family Activity](#), Ordinary 23, at word-sunday.com: A Catholic Resource for the Lectionary by Larry Broding.  
<http://www.word-sunday.com/index.html>

"Love Has No Favourites," Children's Time, in Sermons and Liturgies. Richard J. Fairchild. (Scroll down in liturgies to find Children's Time.)  
<http://www.rockies.net/~spirit/sermons/b-or23su.php>

### HYMN SUGGESTIONS

We Shall Go Out With Hope Of Resurrection  
Come Let Us All Unite And Sing: God Is Love  
There's A Wideness In God's Mercy  
Fearful Heart  
You Are  
Everyone Belongs  
God Of Justice  
A Song Of Peace