

The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity YEAR B October 4 2015

Human beings are not created to live alone, but for connection, community and relationship. Our relationships are not just with one another, but with the God who created us as well. But, all of these relationships are destroyed when we become unfaithful, or we when we allow our commitments to be weakened or broken by life's turmoil, or by our own hardness of heart. But, when we remain faithful, our relationships become the place where we experience the grace and salvation of God, and where the Reign of God is dramatically revealed.

May our worship lead us deeper into faithful commitment to God and one another this week.

INTRODUCTIONS

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

Job 1 : 1, 2 : 1-10

The book of Job is a kind of drama. We shall hear some of the long speeches over the coming weeks, as the writer explores the problem of human suffering within the will of a loving God. The scene opens in heaven, where permission is given for Job to be harmed, apparently to see how much he can take without cursing God.

or **Genesis 2 : 18-24**

This passage ends with words we shall hear Jesus quote. God made the human race as male and female, and in his intention a man and woman become as one when they marry each other.

Psalm 26: The Psalmist pleads with God to save and protect him, because he has stayed away from foolish and evil people, preferring to spend time in God's house and to bless God in the congregation.

Or **Psalm 8:** God is majestic, yet notices human beings, making them just a little lower than the angels and putting them over all of creation as God's stewards.

Hebrews 1 : 1-4, 2 : 5-12

Readings from this long essay on Christ's saving work will now take us to the end of our year. Throughout the book, Christ is praised as supreme in all creation, the one who had been glorified though suffering and has opened for all of us the way to God and to glory.

Mark 10 : 2-16

Husbands, wives and children feature here in Jesus's teaching. he affirms marriage as intended by God to be lifelong, although the Jewish Law made provision for divorce. Children, and all who are childlike, are welcome in his kingdom

TEXT OF READINGS

http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearB_RCL/Pentecost/BProp22_RCL.html

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

Lord, we beseech thee,
Grant thy people grace to withstand the temptations
of the world, the flesh, and the devil,

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and with pure hearts and minds to follow thee
the only God;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Collect Two

Almighty and everlasting God:
Increase in us your gift of faith
that, forsaking what lies behind,
we may run the way of your commandments
and win the crown of everlasting joy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 1

Presider or deacon

Let us offer prayers to God who took little children in his arms and blessed them.

Deacon or other leader

For believers everywhere, made one in a covenant of fidelity and love.

Lord, have mercy.

For all peoples of the earth, children of God and members of the human family.

Lord, have mercy.

For the good earth and its fragile resources.

Lord, have mercy.

For the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, and the fish of the sea.

Lord, have mercy.

For the married people of our community, and for those who have experienced the pain of separation and divorce.

Lord, have mercy.

For all whose lives are marked by sickness and suffering.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who have died in Christ and for all the dead.

Lord, have mercy.

Lifting our voices with all creation, with Saint ————, and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ. To you, O Lord.

Presider

Living God, who created all things through your Son and spoke to us through his Word, hear our prayers for mercy and crown your people in glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 2

Lord, tell us to encourage all who work in your name, and remind us that the joys of the kingdom are worthy of our sacrifice. And so we pray, "Grant us joy in what we do for you", and respond, "For your kingdom's sake, hear us, Lord".

Lord who listens, we pray for the nations of the world and the witness of the church among them. May our goals, and our means to accomplish them, be worthy of your name. By your power cast down what is false and corrupting, and grant us joy in what we do for you. **For your kingdom's sake, hear us, Lord.**

Lord who knows the end from the beginning, we pray for the United Nations and ask that its security council may choose wisely in dealing with the world's many needs. May its finances be corrected for better service. Let the leaders learn to say: Grant us joy in what we do for you. **For your kingdom's sake, hear us, Lord.**

Lord who cares for us, we lift before you those who work in the medical arts: doctors, specialists of all sorts, nurses, nursing aides, laboratory technicians, and all hospital staff. We pray that their labor may exemplify your compassion. Teach us with them to say: Grant us joy in what we do for you. **For your kingdom's sake, hear us, Lord.**

Lord who acts on our behalf, we remember the street people, who live without shelter and adequate nourishment, who often follow a perilous way and know the emptiness of unemployment. As we seek help for them, teach us to pray: Grant us joy in what we do for you. **For your kingdom's sake, hear us, Lord.**

Lord who knows our lack of will, forgive our waywardness in matters of service, simple justice, and true peace. When we turn our hearts again to you, grant us joy in what we do for you. **For your kingdom's sake, hear us, Lord.**

Into your hands, Christ Jesus, we commend all that we are and do.

Amen.

POST COMMUNION

All praise and thanks, O Christ,
for this sacred banquet,
in which by faith we receive you,
the memory of your passion is renewed,
our lives are filled with grace,
and a pledge of future glory given,
to feast at that table where you reign
with all your saints for ever.

PRAYERS

Eternal One, whose thoughts and ways are not ours,
you alone are God, awesome, holy, and most high.
School us in the ways of faith and wisdom,
that we, like Job,

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may learn to truly see and hear,
and in humility find blessing. 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 neighbours as ourselves,
we offer our thanksgivings and our petitions
on behalf of the church and the world.

Mighty and powerful God,
through Jesus Christ our Saviour
you come to save people in all times and places,
offering them new life in your presence.
Give us open hearts to receive your Chosen One,
that through him we may dwell with you
as faithful and committed disciples. Amen.

Sovereign God,
you make us for each other,
to live in loving community
as friends, sons and daughters,
sisters and brothers, wives and husband,
partners and companions.
Teach us to choose love
that is committed and devoted;
teach us like little children
to wonder and to trust,
that our loving may reflect the image of Christ. Amen.

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

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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,
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.

LECTIONARY NOTES 1

Job 1:1, 2:1-10:

- Satan, in the book of Job, isn't a creature of hell, but part of the heavenly council, actually "the devil's advocate" in a way. How does this differ from our typical conception of Satan?
- "He will curse you to your face." Satan is trying to figure out what will push Job to curse God. What would make you curse God? How mad have you ever gotten at God?
- "In all this Job did not sin with his lips." Of course, we're only on chapter two. But, still, sometimes people can handle a remarkable amount of pain and still remain hopeful. Can you? How do you think people do this?

Psalm 26:

- "I have trusted in the Lord without wavering . . . test my heart and mind." Are you bold enough in your faith to ask God to test your heart in mind? Ties in well with our Job passage.
- "I walk in my integrity; redeem me, and be gracious to me." Are you willing to ask for and receive God's grace? In today's world, what does it mean to have integrity? Do you have integrity?

Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12:

- Hebrews talks of Jesus as the reflection of God's glory. I think we are also reflections of God's glory, if we let ourselves be, let God makes us into these reflections. This is what it means to be created in God's image, isn't it?
- "exact imprint of God's very being" - This makes fingerprints come to mind, or plaster casts of babies' feet.
- We are brothers and sisters with Christ, children of the same Parent. How intimate is that? With that intimacy comes responsibility - we are part of God's family.

Mark 10:2-16:

- "Some Pharisees came, and to test [Jesus] they asked" The Pharisees just don't get it. What kind of answer do you think they expected Jesus to give? What answer would they have given to their own question?
- These teachings from Jesus are hard for modern-day congregations to hear, because so many have experience the pain of divorce themselves, or in their families. I think that, when preaching on these texts, it is important to be clear that Jesus is *not* saying that people belong in abusive, harmful relationships at all costs. I think Jesus' point is that the Pharisees, as ever, are interested only in the laws and details, not in the heart of God's plan for people. I think that would be a better focus.
- What does it mean to welcome a child? This is the third week in a row that the gospel lesson mentions children and welcoming them to really understand the kingdom. The repeated emphasis tells us Jesus thinks this is REALLY important.

By Beth Quick

LECTIONARY NOTES 2

REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

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The connections in this week's Lectionary are fascinating and challenging. While Job suffers innocently under his affliction, he remains faithful, even as the Psalmist, in Psalm 26, pleads with God for deliverance from suffering. The call to faithfulness, though, extends beyond just our tough times. It reaches into our families, and our attitudes, both to creation and to the God who made it. In Genesis, the man is given a fitting companion – a woman – with whom to work as stewards of creation. The miracle, as Psalm 8 reflects, is that these human beings have been made a little lower than angels, and crowned with glory. As much as this is primarily true for the one who fulfilled humanity's purpose – Jesus – it is also true for all those who are called by Jesus to share in God's salvation and glory. So, as stewards of creation, and children of God, we are called to faithful devotion to God, and care of all that God has made. Finally, in the Gospel, Jesus speaks about how faithfulness to God must be reflected in our treatment of others. Our relationship with our spouses is not to be lightly discarded – even when it gets tough (as with Job and his wife) – but to be nurtured, sustained and honoured. So, too the place of our children in God's Reign must be nurtured and honoured, both for their sakes and for our own – for our hearts need to learn childlikeness in order to follow Jesus.

The message of the Lectionary, this week, then, is focussed on relationships as a reflection of our place in God's Reign, and of our faithfulness to the ways of God. When we remain faithful to Jesus, our relationships will enjoy the benefits and blessings of our faithfulness, and, in the healing and unity that our relationships bring, we will grow more faithful in touching the world with the grace and salvation of God.

CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

Global Application:

Family relationships are an important foundation in the well-being of society. These relationships can be broken down in two ways – through moral and ethical choices that undermine monogamy, fidelity and compassionate child care, and through rigid, one-dimensional definitions of family that ignore the realities and challenges of today's world, and that keep God's grace from those who seek to create faithful monogamous families outside of the "norm". Both lack grace, and both fail to reflect God's love and compassion in the way that family relationships were intended to. However, when we graciously celebrate and support those who seek to build faithful relationships, and create meaningful and stable families in whatever form they may take, they reveal God's grace, and help to provide a strong foundation for a faithful and compassionate society. Our faithfulness in working for justice and in building God's grace, then, is necessarily and powerfully reflected in how we work for support, recognition and resources to build strong, faithful and life-giving relationships in our world, especially in the family context. This means we are called to support at-risk children, orphans and child-headed families however we can. It also means we are called to sustain good, committed and faithful relationships, ensuring that intimacy, mutual care and self-giving become the norm, rather than the exception in our communities. Anytime we fight against legislation that makes

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committed relationships (of any kind) harder, we risk standing against the relational call of the Gospel, and we risk becoming contributors to the injustice in our world.

Local Application:

In every community there are families in need of care and support. Many of these families are ignored because the way they do family life is different from the narrow definitions we generally consider “normal.” And so families break down, and society is harmed, and one of the best pictures we have of God’s love and commitment to human beings is distorted. When we can begin to offer guidance, care, support, and love for all families, and allow them to reach their full potential in Christ, not only do they benefit, but our community grows stronger, more loving and more aware of God’s grace, as these families again become the parables God intended them to be. In addition, when we work to sustain the integrity and faithfulness of our own families and communities, even when it is hard and we are threatened or suffering, we reflect the grace and glory of God to the world. When we recognise that our love and faithfulness to God must overflow into love and faithfulness to each other, we are able to open ourselves to the presence and strength of God that sustains us, and we are able to enter all of our relationships with the self-giving of Christ, and with the intentionality to commit, to connect, and to grow into deeper intimacy and faithfulness together.

SERMON OUTLINE

Mark 10:2-16 Some Pharisees came...

Jesus again uses every opportunity to teach the people important lessons of life & living – now *beyond the Jordan* – in Herod’s jurisdiction - & *crowds again gathered around him; & as was his custom, he again taught them.*

1. Testing 2: *Some Pharisees came, & to test him they asked, ‘Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?’* Jesus had to be careful in his reply – the Pharisees were hoping to engineer a situation where Herod would do to Jesus what he had done to John the Baptist over his criticism of Herod’s marital arrangements with Herodias, Philip’s wife.

2. Teaching 3-12: Jesus refers them to Moses’ teaching –

a) Human Intervention *Jesus said to them, ‘Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you - ref Deut 24:1-4 where a man is permitted to write for his wife a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her (4)*

b) Divine Intention: *“from the beginning of creation, God made them male & female.”⁶ “For this reason a man shall leave his father & mother & be joined to his wife, ⁸& the two shall become one flesh.” So they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.’*

Recently Abp Harper: *Marriage is understood by the Church to comprise a lifelong and exclusive commitment by one man and one woman to each other. Sept 2011*

3. Touching 13-16: The passage moves on to the beautiful scenario – *as people were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them;*

a) Rebuke of the Disciples - *spoke sternly to them....*

b) Reply of the Lord - *Let the little children come to me...*

By Norman Porteous

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ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

"Let The Little Ones Come Unto Me," Bishop William H. Willimon, *Day 1*,
http://day1.org/1472-let_the_little_ones_come_unto_me

"Becoming Like a Child," Frederick Buechner Sermon Illustrations.
<http://frederickbuechner.com/content/weekly-sermon-illustration-becoming-child>

"A Call to a Higher Standard," the Rev. Dr. Wiley Stephens, *Day 1*
http://day1.org/4206-a_call_to_a_higher_standard

CHILDREN

"[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 27, at word-sunday.com: A Catholic Resource for the Lectionary by Larry Broding.
<http://www.word-sunday.com/index.html>

"[The Presence of God](#)," 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-or27sesn.php>

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

Crown Him With Many Crowns
Fairest Lord Jesus
Blest Be The Tie That Binds
For The Beauty Of The Earth
Always Forever (Link to YouTube video)
How Can I Keep From Singing (Link to YouTube video)
The Power Of Your Love (Link to YouTube video)
I'm So Secure (Link to YouTube video)
You Are