

Shellrock Benefice Service Sheet for Trinity 8, August 2nd 2020

Collect

Lord God, your Son left the riches of heaven and became poor for our sake: when we prosper save us from pride, when we are needy, save us from despair: that we may trust in you alone; through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen.

Readings

Genesis 32, 22-31; Isaiah 55, 1-5 ; Psalm 17 , 1-7 and 16; Psalm 145, 8-9 and 15-22; Romans 9, 1-5; Matt 14, 13-21

A Reflection

The account of the feeding of the five thousand as told in Matthew has been an inspiration to Christians in many diverse situations. It occurs immediately after Jesus and the disciples hear of the brutal murder of John the Baptist and after a long day with large and desperate crowds. The disciples understandably were seeking to get away. They were grief stricken and in similar circumstances as we probably would --- they tell the crowds to go away. We read however that Jesus had compassion and invited the crowd to sit and to eat. "But we have only barely enough for ourselves", we hear the disciples cry. As so often, they were in for a shock; surprise that all the thousands were fed with so little; amazement at the miraculous power of God's love.

This is the only miracle story found in all four gospels. It was obviously of great importance to the early church. This account of the feeding of the five thousand was treasured because it taught Christians the very heart of the gospel message and was a deep source of hope and inspiration for Christians who were seeking to be faithful against great odds.

First of all, the story teaches us, then and now, that God is love. Secondly the story teaches its hearers about the responsibilities that God entrusted to the disciples. If we look at the passage very carefully, we can see that Jesus did not himself feed the crowds, he told the disciples to do it. As disciples of Jesus, we share in these responsibilities.

The story reminds us all that when we need it most, God will give us the power to work for good in the world. When the disciples worked together and followed Jesus there was more than enough to feed everyone. When we co-operate with each other and share resources, miracles do indeed happen, at a local level as well as a national and international level. Amen

Suggestions for prayer with a response: *"O Lord, Hear our Prayer"*

For thanks that we have been able to re-start our services in the benefice of Shellrock

For guidance from the Holy Spirit as we move ahead and plan for the future

For thanks for all in the church and community that have worked so hard to provide care for people who have needed help through the time of the lockdown

For those who are suffering the pain of loss, who have had a relative or a friend who has died

For all people known to us who are ill at this time, especially those in the benefice

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, For ever and ever Amen

Blessing

The love of God enfold us, the power of Christ protect us, and the leading of the Spirit guide us. And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen