

Shellrock Benefice Service Sheet for Trinity 11, 23rd August 2020

Collect

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. Amen

Readings

Psalms 138; Romans 12, 1-8; Matt 16, 13-20

A Reflection

Many of us will be familiar with the television programme, "Who do you think you are?". Sometimes the stories that emerge are enlightening; it's amazing what back stories people have.

In this morning's gospel we don't see Jesus asking the disciples, "Who do you think you are" but "Who do you say that I am? It's an interesting question and actually one that many people down the centuries have asked. One would assume that the disciples would have had a pretty good idea who Jesus was. After all, they had dropped everything to follow him! The timing of Jesus' question also was a bit surprising because they had witnessed Jesus performing miracles, feeding the multitudes, walking on water, teaching and inspiring. They've seen all this. Could there really be any doubt about who Jesus was, and yet Jesus still asks. Was it a trick question? If anyone should have been able to answer, it should have been the whole group of 12 disciples and yet it was only one, Peter, who responded.

Peter replied "you are the Christ, the Son of the living God". When Jesus replies to this, he doesn't tell Peter he's judged correctly. He doesn't say anything about Peter's personal qualities or his ability to analyse. Jesus rather credits God, the Father in heaven, for the revelation. The revelation about who Jesus was came to Peter spiritually. It was essentially for him an act of faith.

We find our way to Jesus in different ways. Sometimes it will be through an example of another person whom we admire. Sometimes it will be reflecting, as we read scripture. Sometimes it will be after a time of trouble during which we ask for help or healing and our prayers are answered. Sometimes it comes after a time of searching. Sometimes, it comes as a result of a sudden realisation, a "Damascus experience", a sense of overwhelming rightness that Jesus is the one I want to follow as a disciple. It seems to me that none of these is necessarily the "right" way. But after we have "discovered" Jesus, as the collect for the day says, "help us ----- to give all that we have to gain the pearl beyond all price". Amen

Suggestions for prayer

Thanks for all that is good in the fellowship of people one to another in our communities

Thanks for all who help and sustain us in the church and community

For all people known to us who are ill or in any kind of trouble or hardship at this time

For our schools as they are preparing for a return for the Autumn Term

For all young people who have been disappointed by their assessments, even when revised this week, and who have lost a place in education or work of their choice.

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