

Shellrock Benefice Service Sheet for Trinity 2, June 21st 2020

Collect

Lord you have taught us that all our doings without love are nothing worth, send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love, the true bond of peace and all virtues, without which whoever lives is counted dead before you. Grant this for your only Son Jesus Christ's sake, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever. Amen

Readings

Genesis 21, 8-21; Psalm 86, 1-10, 16-end; Romans 6, 1b-11; Matt 10, 24-39

A Reflection

I remember being very troubled a few years back when I was preparing a sermon based on this gospel passage. It sounds as if Jesus is saying that rather than peace, he brings a sword and that he is advocating discord amongst family members. The word disciple means a learner, so what can we learn from Jesus' puzzling words? The context is that he is addressing followers who seek to live their Christian life while facing conflict and discouragement because of their calling. Sent on a mission of preaching and healing, the disciples quickly learned what it meant to face opposition, struggle, and of course in some cases, imprisonment and death. The passage is about the radical choices that constitute the life of discipleship.

Today, amidst the delight, there always will be some occasions when allegiance to Jesus does cause a crisis of loyalty to family members or friends. The gospel shakes up values, rearranges priorities, and re-orientates goals. Jesus invites us to try not to be afraid when there is conflict or disunity. It is not an easy message; standing up against the crowd can be a very lonely business.

Suggestions for prayer:

For courage to stand up for our beliefs even when it is difficult to do so.

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

For all who care for the needs of others, in schools, in care homes, in hospitals

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 good and gracious Lord, grant us to know the glorious liberty of the children of God; and the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen