

## Prayer Resource



**Week Beginning:** 11 May 2020

**Theme:** Prayer and Service

**Reflection:** I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.

**Readings:** Acts 6:1-7; Psalm 32; 1 Peter 2:4-9; John 14:1-12

When Moses meets God at the burning bush he falls to his knees takes off his shoes in worship and upon asking what God's name is, he is told: "I am who I am." Jesus identifies himself with God with a number of 'I am' sayings. Last week Jesus referred to himself as the 'Good Shepherd' and

the 'Gate.' This week he tells us that he is 'The Way the Truth and the Life.' To follow his Way, his Truth and his Life is not simple as the early church soon discovered, and often it requires making changes.

The Hellenists (converts, whose main language was Greek), complained that their widows were not getting a fair share of the Jerusalem community's social services. The apostles' solution to the problem shows how some changes are vitally needed for the health of the church.

Their solution has two sides: prayer and service; and our Christian vocation requires a balance between the two. Each of us is called to prayer, to personally worship our God; and we are also called to service. No matter what we do in life, we should be of some service to our neighbours; and no task we do for others is a menial task. Prayer and preaching were the primary duties of the apostles; but service to the widows and the needy in the community was also vital, so they appointed seven trusted men to attend to it, and initiated them by an ordination ceremony, the laying-on of hands.

Partly due to this good change, the disciples in Jerusalem increased in numbers. We may wonder how this kind of growth in the church could be revived in our day. Is the word of the Lord still spreading and the number of disciples increasing? In St Peter's letter, the church is imagined as a spiritual temple, with ourselves as living stones making up a living house of God. Every time we say the Lord's Prayer we say 'thy kingdom come.' This implies taking on our responsibility for spreading the word and doing something to build up the church. We can work for God's kingdom by our daily conduct and attitudes.

The cornerstone of our church is Christ himself, and he offers us encouragement even today. If he is going away, it is to prepare a place for us in his Father's house, which has many rooms. If we had any doubt about the relationship between Jesus and God the Father, John's gospel passage explains the existing intimacy between Jesus and the Father; but not only that; it invites us to discover the relationship between Jesus Christ and his disciples. "After I have gone and prepared a place for you, I shall come again and take you to me, so that where I am, you also may be" These words of Jesus, not only place his disciples in a perspective of future, but also exhort them to keep on faithfully following the course they had begun. To share with the Lord the glorious life, they also have to partake the same way that takes Jesus Christ towards the dwellings of his Father.

"Lord, we don't know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus answers: "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me. If you know me, you will know the Father also; indeed you know him and you have seen him." Jesus does not certainly propose a simple way, but he points out the path to follow. In fact, He becomes himself the Way to the Father; through his resurrection. He becomes the Walker who is to guide us; with the gift of the Holy Spirit,

He encourages and fortifies us so that we do not lose heart in our pilgrimage: "Do not be troubled; trust in God and trust in me" (John 14:1).

In the invitation Jesus makes to us, to go to the Father through Him, with Him and in Him, his deepest mission and most intimate desires are revealed. Jesus is the cornerstone of all that we need and his good news is here for all, for we have been given...a Way to walk...a Truth to proclaim...a Life to share and enjoy: Jesus Christ.

### **A Transliteration for Sharing**

#### **Prayers**

Our response to our prayers this week is: You are the Way the Truth and the Life. Alleluia!

(Amen)

Monday: For the unity of all Christians - that we find new energy to reach out to each other across the divide of denominations and forge anew the unity reflected in Jesus' words, 'I am in the Father and the Father is in me.' R/.

Tuesday: For leaders of nations - that they be people of grace, empathy, integrity and dignity, showing in their own lives, how people might build societies that are just and compassionate. R/.

Wednesday: For those who struggle with mental illness or anxiety - that they learn, not to let their hearts be troubled, but rather come to trust in the goodness and providence of God. R/.

Thursday: For all who grieve the loss of a loved one - that grief will give way to calm acceptance, sorrow to new hope, and lethargy to fullness of life. R/.

Friday: For all whose homes have become places of violence during Covid-19 self-isolation - that those who inflict pain on others develop self-discipline and compassion, and that those who have been hurt, find safety and healing. R/