

REFLECTIONS

In our epistle, written to a largely gentile congregation, Paul lays bare his 'great sorrow and unceasing anguish' for the majority of his fellow Jews who were failing to recognise Jesus as their Messiah. Paul will show that God had certainly not abandoned the Jewish people, but planned, from the beginning, a worldwide family marked by a simple confession: 'Jesus is Lord'. Israel's past inheritance, even his fellow Jews' current unbelief, were serving, in a mysterious way, God's purposes for *all* people.

The feeding of the five thousand is one of the best-known miracles of Jesus, appearing in all four gospels. Jesus has compassion on the crowd, heals their sick and uses the meagre provisions offered to feed everyone. There was more to this than first met the eye. Later Jesus would say to his the disciples, 'Do you still not perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand?' (Matt.16.9) There was a deeper meaning.

In the middle east, as in other cultures, eating together is a sign of unity and here Jesus offers fellowship to all. Ordering the crowd to sit down indicated that it would be no quick take-away meal to ward off hunger pains, but a more formal affair imbued with significance. Jesus was welcoming all present into a new community, with him as its head. It was not just physical needs being met, but spiritual ones as well. The abundance of all that Jesus provides is revealed in the basketfuls left over.

Matthew closes by pointing out that besides the five thousand men, there were women and children too. This may seem an almost trivial remark, but in a culture where women and children were very much secondary, Matthew shows us how in Jesus' new community no one is excluded, whatever the prevailing social conventions.

I wonder...

For those of us who have unbelieving family and friends can we recognise that God gives up on no one, neither does he have favourites, but that every life is precious and meaningful to him? How can we show this through our response to others?

Andy Colebrooke

THIS WEEK'S SERVICES SUNDAY IN CHURCH

St Marys, 8am	Holy Communion BCP
SW	President: Michael Lovegrove
Hadstock	9.30am Family Communion President: Paula Griffiths
Ashdon	9.30am Holy Communion President: Caroline Currier
Wimbish	9.15am Service of the Word Leader: John Saxon

THIS WEEK'S SERVICES ONLINE

SUNDAY

9.30am Holy Communion President: Chris Bishop
Youtube Act of Worship Leader: Chris Bishop
Debden - Zoom 11.00am Holy Communion John Saxon

TUESDAY

- Zoom 5.00pm Evening Prayer Leader: Paula Griffiths

WEDNESDAY

- Zoom 9.30am Holy Communion Leader: Caroline Currier

BIBLE READINGS FOR THIS WEEK

Mon 3 rd	Morning Psalm 30 & Luke 23:13-25 Evening Psalm 28
Tue 4 th	Morning Psalm 36 & Luke 23:26-43 Evening Psalm 33 & James 2:14-end
Wed 5 th	Morning Psalm 34 & Luke 23:44-56a Evening Psalm 119:33-56
Thurs 6 th	Morning Psalm 27 & 1 John 3:1-3 Evening Psalm 72
Fri 7 th	Morning Psalm 31 & Luke 24:13-35 Evening Psalm 35
Sat 8 th	Morning Psalm 42 & Luke 24:36-end Evening Psalm 46



See St Mary's church, SW, website at www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org to find out more.
Please 'Like' our Facebook page so we reach more people! Click on the link on our website, or go to: www.facebook.com/saintmaryschurchsaffronwalden

SAFFRON WALDEN & VILLAGES TEAM MINISTRY

The Grapevine

COVERING THE PARISHES OF SAFFRON WALDEN, WIMBISH,
DEBDEN, ASHDON AND HADSTOCK.

Eighth Sunday after Trinity
2nd August 2020

Collect

Almighty Lord and everlasting God, we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of your laws and the works of your commandments; that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

First Reading: *Romans 9.1-5*

I am speaking the truth in Christ – I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit – I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

Gospel: *Matthew 14.13-21*

When Jesus heard that Herod had beheaded John the Baptist, he withdrew in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.' Jesus said to them, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.' They replied, 'We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.' And he said, 'Bring them here to me.' Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Post Communion

Strengthen for service, Lord, the hands that have taken holy things; may the ears which have heard your word be deaf to clamour and dispute; may the tongues which have sung your praise be free from deceit; may the eyes which have seen the tokens of your love shine with the light of hope; and may the bodies which have been fed with your body be refreshed with the fullness of your life; glory to you for ever.

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Churches Together Prayer Cycle: In August please pray for:

Saffron Walden Baptist Church, R A Butler Schools

The family and friends of those who have died recently:

Betty Barker

Those who are unwell:

Pamela Bray

MINISTER'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

The latest scientific and medical judgement is that face masks do give some measure of protection from Covid-19 - not to the wearer themselves, but to those with whom they come into close contact. Therefore, wearing a mask is something we can do for the good of others and to limit the spread of the disease. Face masks have now become compulsory in all shops, banks, post offices, railway stations and airports; they are also highly advised whenever attending church services, unless there are justifiable reasons why not. Negative references to the wearers of the burka looking like letterboxes may come back to haunt some people, as we are now all behind the veil!

A search of the internet to purchase face masks reveals a bewildering array of options: washable or disposable; colourful or plain; stylish or medically professional. Straight away, just as in any supermarket today, one is confronted with the challenge of choice. Do I see myself in sombre black or a floral motif? What mask will most be 'me', what image of myself do I want my mask to project to the world?

Of course, this is nothing new. We have been wearing masks all our lives, masks that cover our vulnerabilities, masks that project an appearance of confidence, marks that hide our real selves. Fearing that no one will love us or want to associate with us, we protect and cultivate these masks never leaving home without them. Since we know that we all wear masks we are naturally careful about other people, even suspicious of them and their true motives.

This may have a bearing on our approach to God too. Do we fear that God might wear a variety of divine masks - perhaps an angry one, or a judgemental one on some occasions, and then a loving one, a merciful one on others? If we fear that we can't be sure what God is going to be like, we are never going to be confident of our relationship with him. It may even make us want to keep away from God altogether.

I love a saying of Michael Ramsey's, a previous Archbishop of Canterbury, who used words reminiscent of James 1.17 (AV): 'God is Christlike, and in him there is no unChristlikeness at all.' God does not wear a mask labelled 'Christlike', rather he is in his very being Christlike, and this, surely, is the greatest good news we can imagine.

Whilst we are now required to wear masks to cover our faces, for the protection of others, God's face, God's character, is revealed to us in the face of Jesus. If we want to understand what God is like, we have only to look at the extraordinarily loving, forgiving, self-sacrificial life of Jesus Christ: 'Our lives filled up with light as we saw and understood God in the face of Christ, all bright and beautiful.' (2 Cor. 4.6, The Message Translation)

With love and prayers,
Andy Colebrooke

PRAYER FOR THIS WEEK

And I pray thee, merciful Jesus, that as Thou has graciously granted me to drink down sweetly from the Word which tells of Thee, so wilt Thou kindly grant that I may come at length to Thee, the fount of all wisdom, and stand before Thy face for ever.

Bede 675-735

NEWS

CHURCH SERVICES Some of our churches are open for services this weekend. Please see the list of services on the back page. In order to book your place at a Sunday Service at St Mary's, please email or telephone the Parish Office before noon on the previous Friday, giving your name, telephone number and postcode. You are welcome to just turn up on the day but, if the new capacity for each church has already been reached, you may not be able to join the service.

PRIVATE PRAYER St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden, is open for private prayer on Wednesday and Sunday 12-4. All Saints, Ashdon is open for private prayer on Wednesday and Sunday between 11am and 6.00pm.

EMAIL BULLETINS are issued each week that highlight information from the website, attach the Grapevine and service sheet and provide the Zoom links for live services that weekend. Please email Dawn at office@stmaryssaffronwalden.org if you would like to be added to the distribution list.

WORSHIP ONLINE will continue as shown on the back page. There are several ways of joining in our team worship which can be accessed from links on St Mary's Church at Home webpage. <http://www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/churchathome> You can watch pre-recorded services and you can participate in live Zoom Services around the team. The service sheets and Grapevine are also available on the webpage.

YOU CAN NOW JOIN LIVE WORSHIP BY PHONE - you don't need a computer or tablet. If you would like to know more please contact John Saxon on 541619 debdewimbishcurate@gmail.com

DISASTERS EMERGENCY COMMITTEE (DEC):

Coronavirus appeal for refugees in Yemen, Syria and South Sudan. In normal circumstances St Mary's SW would have supported this DEC appeal with special collections at services for 3 weeks. Contributions may be made direct to the DEC online, at banks or by post (see details in the press and on TV). Thank you. *Denis & Gill*

PLAINSONG WORKSHOP & SERVICE OF COMPLINE

Our Director of Music, Oli King, is leading a Plainsong workshop via Zoom on **Friday 14th August**, from 7.30 - 8.30pm. It will be followed by a zoom service of Compline at 8.30pm, led by Tim Hardingham and Marisa Baltrock to which all are invited. Anyone wishing to be actively involved in the singing workshop should email Oli or Bron at music@stmaryssaffronwalden.org to register interest by **Wednesday 5th August**. Anyone wishing to join the workshop as an observer needs to register by Saturday 8th August. People just wishing to join the service of Compline can obtain the zoom link from the same address by Wednesday 12th August. *Bron Ferland*

PARISH NEWS August/September edition now available on St Mary's website at <http://www.stmaryssaffronwalden.org/parishnews>

MINISTRY TEAM

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