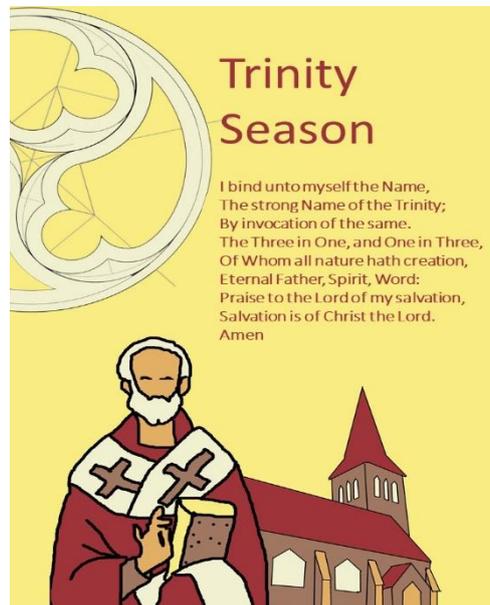


**Worship at St. Nicholas, Sutton
for Trinity 2 on 21 June 2020
Collect, hymns, readings and sermon**



Please join me for our service at 10.30am today (or at another convenient time) by following the Order of Service and singing in your own home.

I will be thinking of you all and praying for you at The Rectory at the same time and longing for our future reunion in Church.

Frances

Revd Frances Arnold, Priest-in-Charge

Duty Warden: John Kerr

Server: Cedric Burge

Musician: Paul Waton

Sound desk: Roger Barnes

Old & New Testament: Jenny Gillbe

Gospel: Matthew Phillips

Sidespersons: Mary Meldrum, Peter Wilson

Refreshments: Margaret Ager, Glynis Osborne

Welcomers: Jean Chappell, Sylvia Cowling

Collect (prayer of the week)

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 of 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.**

Hymns

Opening *Praise, my soul, the King of heaven*

Gradual *Great is thy faithfulness*

Readings

Jeremiah 20.7-13

Jeremiah Denounces His Persecutors

⁷ O LORD, you have enticed me,
and I was enticed;
you have overpowered me,
and you have prevailed.
I have become a laughing-stock all day long;
everyone mocks me.
⁸ For whenever I speak, I must cry out,
I must shout, 'Violence and destruction!'
For the word of the LORD has become for me
a reproach and derision all day long.
⁹ If I say, 'I will not mention him,
or speak any more in his name',
then within me there is something like a burning fire
shut up in my bones;
I am weary with holding it in,
and I cannot.
¹⁰ For I hear many whispering:
'Terror is all around!
Denounce him! Let us denounce him!'
All my close friends
are watching for me to stumble.
'Perhaps he can be enticed,
and we can prevail against him,
and take our revenge on him.'
¹¹ But the LORD is with me like a dread warrior;
therefore my persecutors will stumble,
and they will not prevail.
They will be greatly shamed,
for they will not succeed.
Their eternal dishonour
will never be forgotten.
¹² O LORD of hosts, you test the righteous,
you see the heart and the mind;
let me see your retribution upon them,
for to you I have committed my cause.

¹³ Sing to the LORD;
praise the LORD!
For he has delivered the life of the needy
from the hands of evildoers.

Romans 6.1b-11

Dying and Rising with Christ

⁶What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? ²By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? ³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For whoever has died is freed from sin. ⁸But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 10.24-39

*Coming Persecutions, Whom to Fear,
Not Peace, but a Sword*

²⁴ 'A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; ²⁵it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

²⁶ 'So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. ²⁷What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. ²⁸Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.* ²⁹Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father. ³⁰And even the hairs of your head are all counted. ³¹So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

32 'Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; ³³but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

34 'Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father,
and a daughter against her mother,
and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;

³⁶ and one's foes will be members of one's own household.

³⁷Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

³⁹Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

Sermon

Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth;
I have not come to bring peace, but a sword (Matthew 10.34)

Jesus' words sound like a rallying call to protest. They remind us that there has always been a need to shake up the *status quo*. Reading them now we might wonder if this phrase and the warnings of division and death that follow were really said by Jesus. The idea that your foes will be members of your own household is even more uncomfortable during lockdown! What's going on? How can we get our minds around these strange sayings? Can they really mean that we shouldn't care for one another within the family? That we should neglect our dependents and only spend our time on the Lord's work? They are stern and uncomfortable words.

We do know that Jesus came to establish a new way of being God's people – the coming kingdom - and that this is not the first time he has said something radical. The Lent groups this year studied the Beatitudes, the opening verses of the Sermon on the Mount. It is hard for us to comprehend how ground-breaking and revolutionary the Sermon is. In the Beatitudes, Jesus (the coming king) declares who are his citizens. They are not the people Jesus' contemporaries would have expected: the poor, not the rich; mourners, not those who rejoice. His subjects were to live in a certain way: developing an active strategy in peace making. This was a radical concept to those living under Roman rule in the first century. Jesus came to begin and establish the new way of being God's people and perhaps it is not surprising that he came up against those who didn't like having their way of life disturbed.

We shouldn't get distracted by the alarming language about rejecting members of your family. The passage about sons and fathers, daughters and mothers, and so on, is what would have been a well-known quotation from the Old Testament prophet Micah (7.6). It is used here to tell the disciples that they shouldn't be surprised when there is dissension even within families. Something similar is happening with regard to Brexit in our own day. It has happened before and doubtless will happen again.

What Jesus is talking about is priorities and he is making remarkable claims. He is saying that what matters is loyalty. Loyalty to Jesus is the absolute priority. We know how difficult that turned out to be even for those who knew him personally: Peter denied him; Judas betrayed him; the rest all ran away and hid. But the challenge remains for disciples through the centuries including us: embracing everything, demanding everything, offering everything, promising everything.

The challenge of Jesus' sayings is matched by the remarkable promise that he makes to those who accept them and live by them. He will 'own' us before his father in heaven. Those who lose their lives will find them. We need Jesus to show us how to take up our crosses in love and forgiveness for our enemies, whoever they might be. And we need to bring that message to the world around us. **Amen.**