

24th – 29th August *Compiled by Canon Janet Chapman (Rector)*

Monday 24th August (St Bartholomew, Apostle (probably also called Nathaniel))

Psalms 145 : 1-7

Luke 22 : 24 -30

Imagine being invited to lunch by the Archbishop. You sit down at table with about 40 other people. The Archbishop says Grace and the food is ready to be served. Just picture that scene, you and the others, the smell of dinner, the Archbishop and his Chaplain and maybe a couple of Archdeacons. But they aren't sitting down. They are moving over to the trolleys of food and start laying it before you and the other guests. This is what happened to me at Bishopthorpe Palace back in 1996. Women had only just been ordained priest and the Archbishop of York did NOT approve, but he graciously invited the women priests of the Diocese of York for lunch and served us well. Who do you not (always) agree with – and how can you serve them?

Tuesday 25th August

Psalms 128

Matthew 23 : 23-26

Picture yourself with a great pile of washing up to do – by hand! How do you feel as you look at it? And it is not just the washing up to do but the drying and putting away. Spare a thought for those large families which the psalmist rejoices over, especially those who don't have the luxury of a dishwasher. Spare a thought for those who long for larger families even with all the washing-up! Now take 3 bowls..... what colours are they? Fill one with justice, one with mercy and one with faith. Choose 3 things to put in each bowl and think about which coloured bowl to choose for each one. If you are feeling creative you could even draw or paint them....

Wednesday 26th August

Psalms 98

Matthew 23 : 27-32

'Clean yourself outside and in!' – a line I vaguely recall from my days as a Brownie but which took on new meaning when I accidentally fried the mushrooms in a very golden washing-up liquid! How can you clean your inside from hypocrisy and lawlessness (v28)? Picture yourself being washed clean on the inside from head to toe and all the dirty water being thrown away. Now join the psalmist in singing a hymn of praise.... *Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvellous things!*

Thursday 27th August (Monica, Mother of St Augustine of Hippo, 387)

Psalms 121

Matthew 24 : 42-end

'Look busy, Jesus is coming!' says the t-shirt. Think about a time when you've been slacking and have suddenly started working hard, holding your breath in fear that you may be caught out! Imagine that you have been caught out..... what do you say to 'the boss' and what is their reply? Do you need to make some adjustments to your plans for the day ahead? Maybe make praying for those who are modern-day slaves one of them, and also, looking out for the Son of Man, not just at an unexpected hour but in unexpected ways.

Friday 28th August (Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, 430)

Psalm 33 : 6-12

Matthew 25 : 1-13

Imagine that you are one of the wise bridesmaids, your spare flask of oil hanging from your belt. The evening draws on and still the bridegroom doesn't appear; it gets darker and darker but your lamp is burning bright. Just as it starts to burn low the bridegroom appears on the horizon. As you refill your lamp (carefully) you are asked to share your oil with one who has none left. How do you respond? And how do you feel about your response? Do you need to say, 'No,' more often? Pray about it

Saturday 29th August (The Beheading of John the Baptist)

Psalm 33 : 12-15, 20-end

Matthew 25 : 14-30

Enter the joy of the Master (end of v 21). Picture yourself on an Olympic podium. The National Anthem of your nation is being played, the flag is being hoisted. You have won a Gold Medal! Who else is entering your joy? How can your talents, gifts or wealth(!) bring joy to others today?

And with all this gnashing of teeth pray for dentists and those with toothache.

31st August – 5th September *Compiled by Theresa Morton (Assistant Curate)*

Monday 31st August

Psalm 33 : 12-21

Luke 4:16-30

How confident do you feel in proclaiming God's goodness to others? How do you think you would feel if they didn't listen? What could you do to make you feel more able to do this?

Tuesday 1st September

Psalm 145 : 10-17

Luke 4: 31-37

Jesus obviously made a big impression in the way he taught in the synagogue. Luke tells us he "spoke with authority" and that the people were "astounded". And that was even before they saw his tremendous power over the "unclean spirits".

Who's made a big impression on you recently? How have your thinking or behaviours changed as a result? What sort of impression do you think you have on others?

Wednesday 2nd September

Psalm 62

Luke 4 : 38-end

Luke tells us here of more examples of Jesus healing the sick. We often bring before God those we know who are ill, and it can be heartbreaking when God doesn't seem to be answering our prayers for healing. But as the psalmist reminds us, God is our rock and our salvation. We are blessed with a future hope, that even though our bodies may not be healed, our relationship with God can be, and for all eternity. As you pray for the sick today, perhaps also pray that they will find strength and refuge in God.

Thursday 3rd September

Psalm 24 : 1-6

Luke 5 : 1-11

Luke's story of the calling of Simon echoes earlier accounts of individuals being called from their daily tasks to join God's mission; for example, Moses tending the sheep (Exodus 3), Gideon threshing wheat (Judges 6), and Isaiah in the temple (Isaiah 6). Reflect on how God called you to follow him.

Friday 4th September

Psalm 37 : 3-8

Luke 5 : 33-end

The parable recounted in Luke's gospel contrasts the traditional and the new ways Jesus brings, which are hard for some people to accept.

But old isn't always bad. Today we live in a 'throwaway society'; all too often when things are broken or worn out we replace them with new ones rather than trying to mend them. Perhaps today think about anything you have that could be mended rather than thrown away, or consider whether you could improve recycling in other ways.

Saturday 5th September

Psalm 145 : 18-end

Luke 6 : 1-5

"The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath." Some of us (perhaps the older ones amongst us!) may have been brought up in families where the Sabbath meant a number of trips to church and doing things that were absolutely no fun at all! Things feel very different today, with 24/7 opportunities for entertainment and shopping – online if not currently in person. Whereas in the past the Sabbath may have been notably different from all the others, now the day can pass just like any other, not noticeably different. We have to make time for the Sabbath. The psalmist reminds us that "the Lord is near to all who call on him" (verse 18). Can you find some Sabbath time now, to sit peacefully with God, to call on him and feel his presence?

7th – 12th September *Compiled by Fr John Richards*

Monday 7th September

Psalm 5 : 5-9a.

Luke 6 : 6-11

The man in the story didn't argue when Jesus told him to stretch out his hand: he tried and, in the strength Jesus gave him, he succeeded. We often say we believe in the strength of Jesus to do all sorts of things, but more often we doubt his power. Our trust is not in him, but in ourselves. Are there times when you haven't had the courage to trust in Jesus?

Tuesday 8th September (The Birth of The Blessed Virgin Mary)

Psalm 12

Luke 1 : 46-55

Many of us are familiar with the lovely words of The Magnificat. It is a hymn of praise, and speaks to us of humility and obedience. Mary, the Mother of our Lord, gives thanks to God for his wonderful blessing. Say the words to yourself and think of the many blessings God has given you. Then thank Him for them.

Wednesday 9th September

Psalm 45 : 11-end

Luke 6 : 20- 26

Luke wrote down these words of Jesus and they are known as the Sermon on the Plain. It might be interesting to compare it with Matthew chapter 5, the Sermon on the Mount.

They are well known words to us but the first people to hear them would have been shocked. Each beatitude is like an explosion, and each one is a challenge. Reading the passage see how the words fit into your life; are you able to understand what Jesus is saying? Does it all seem too difficult or maybe too painful? Don't try to do them all at once.

Thursday 10th September

Psalm 139 : 1-9.

Luke 6 : 27-38

Jesus continues his sermon and hits every one of his followers with a breath-taking commandment to "love our enemies". This is a hard one. We must always remember that God loves all of us, the good and the bad, the just and the unjust. He embraces saints and sinners alike, and he wants us to do the same. We may not have many enemies, but we would do well to think of those we dislike and to pray for them. Our relationship may improve and that would please God and bring us closer to Him.

Friday 11th September

Psalm 84 : 1-6

Luke 6 : 39-42

These verses demonstrate that Jesus has a sense of humour and isn't afraid to use it. However, his humour does contain a serious point. He points out that we have no right to criticise other people without looking firstly at ourselves. How do you think others see us? What do they see in our behaviour and in our Christian life?

Saturday 12th September

Psalm 116 : 10 – end

Luke 6 : 43 – end

This parable right at the end of chapter 6 reinforces the point to make sure our lives and our faith have good foundations. It shows us not to take the easy way out, as that could prove to be folly. We do well to think about our faith; is it easily swept away when life gets difficult? Are we taking the easy way out of a particular problem? Be reminded of the words of the old hymn, "Will your anchor hold in the storms of life?" How firm is your anchor? What has it been like for you during this pandemic?

14th – 19th September *Compiled by Fr David (Associate Priest)*

Monday 14th Sept

Psalm 22 : 23-28

John 3 : 13-17

Imagine walking up an isolated hillside with two friends and a spiritual leader. After a while you sit down with your friends as the spiritual leader goes ahead short distance. Perhaps you talk about who you have met recently and what news they have brought you. You look up to see the spiritual leader's clothes glowing iridescently, then, before your eyes, the spiritual leader dissolves into the cloud and vanishes. Do you feel anxious or bemused? Read the passage again. What does it mean to you that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life? Do you believe that God loves you so much that he sent his Son so that you might have life eternal? Try to carry the picture of someone ascending whilst alive in your mind for the rest of the day. Be prepared as it may cause you to smile or react unexpectedly as you meet people!

Tuesday 15th September

Psalms 100

Luke 7 : 11-17

Do you know someone whose son or daughter died young? How would you feel approaching a town to see a funeral procession for an only child? Simon Wiesenthal in *The Sunflower* describes how the Jewish prisoners of war in Austria felt that God had deserted them. He also writes about a young boy whose body weight was too little for the noose to tighten round his neck; the soldiers pulled his body down. Can you feel the compassion that Jesus felt? Do you wish to say "Young man, arise"? How do you imagine those around would react? Would this demonstrate the power and love of God? Would you be ready to be acclaimed a prophet or faith healer? Read the passage again and imagine being present.

Wednesday 16th September

Psalms 33 : 1-12

Luke 7 : 31-35

Imagine that you are walking into and through a small village in a far off, hot country. Smell the air, feel the heat on your head and back. There are people sat around their simple homes. What are they doing? They have water; where do they get it from? Is it quiet or is their singing or chattering? What are the children doing? There are two groups. They are calling challenges to each other. One taps out a dance rhythm but no one dances. The other group responds with the wailing of a lament that might be used at a funeral.

The adults are talking about a recluse, John the Baptist, and say how he did not drink wine or eat fine food; they say he could be extreme in his views, a little crazy. Other adults comment on how Jesus of Nazareth ate and drank with everyone; he was a glutton, a friend of tax collectors and sinners. What would you say to them?

Thursday 17th September

Psalms 118 : 1-2, 17-20

Luke 7 : 36 – end

As you sit who do you see at the table? Do you see ordinary people or wealthy and powerful people? Do you recognise them? Are they leaders of the faith? What food is on the table? A woman carrying an alabaster jar of perfume enters the room. How is she dressed? Does the way that she is dressed suggest anything about her. Does she fit in with this gathering? What do you think about her presence? Can you imagine what the others might be thinking; what about Simon, the host? Simon is fixated on the woman and Jesus. Before he can find words to speak Jesus tells him the parable of the two debtors, looking intently at Simon as he speaks. Jesus comments that Simon did not offer him water to wash his feet. Jesus is an itinerant preacher from a small village. Is Simon's failure to provide Jesus with water to wash his feet a regional, social prejudice or simply a sign of disregard? Jesus diverts the attention from the woman, then he says to her "Woman your faith has saved you; go in peace." From what do you need saving? Will your faith save you? Is Jesus telling you to go in peace?

Friday 18th August

Psalms 17 : 1 - 8

Luke 8 : 1-3

Today you continue your imaginary walk as you go on to the next village. On your way you come across a Rabbi and his followers. You walk with them for a while. What do Matthew, Mark, Luke, Thomas, Andrew, James, John, Simon Peter, Philip, Bartholomew and Judas say to you? What do Mary, Joanna (Chuzza's wife) and Susanna say to you? What do you learn from them about how they proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God; What do they say to you about this? At the next village you take your leave of the group. Why do you wish to go your own way? Has your time with this group changed what you hope to do today?

Saturday 19th September

Psalm 30 : 1 - 5

Luke 8 : 4 – 15

No doubt during lockdown you have come to know more about sowing and growing from seed. Have you followed the instructions carefully placing your seeds in rows? Have you sown grass seed only to find that none of it seems to have grown? Did you carefully water your seeds and plants to nurture them? If you have been growing beans have you noticed how stems rampantly entwine around one another?

Who do you know that is like the seed sown on the path, the seed that falls on the rocks, like the seed that falls among the thorns, like the seed that falls on the good soil?

Which seed are you like? Pray for yourself and for those you know. What do you pray for those from whom the devil has taken away the word, what do you pray for those with no roots, what do you pray for those who are choked by the riches and distractions of life, and for those who bear fruit with abundance?

21st – 26th September *Compiled by Claire Whitmore (Ordinand)*

Monday 21st September

Psalm 119 : 65-72

Matthew 9 : 9-13

When you read these passages, who do your immediate sympathies lie with? Do you see yourself as a sinner, in need of Jesus? Perhaps the words of the psalmist are a better fit for your life – you have followed God faithfully for a long time. Of course, the reality is that all of us are sin-sick, in need of Jesus, the Great Physician. Whether turning anew to Jesus or giving thanks for a long journey walked with God, take time to talk to God today.

Tuesday 22nd September

Psalm 119 : 1-8

Luke 8 : 19-21

“My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.” This incredible statement from Jesus is not a rejection of family ties – indeed we know that Mary was a follower of God’s word, and fit this definition – but a widening of the definition of family. Families come in all shapes and sizes, and our call to care for one another stretches beyond blood ties to something far more radical – a kinship with Jesus that is offered to all.

Wednesday 23rd September

Psalm 119 : 105-112

Luke 9 : 1-6

This passage in Psalm 119 contains a beloved metaphor of the word of God lighting our way, and delights in the law that is a sign of God’s covenant. Perhaps it is trust in God’s faithfulness that gives the twelve the courage to go out with no supplies to travel and declare the good news. What are the signs of God’s faithfulness in your life? Give thanks for them today.

Thursday 24th September

Psalm 90 : 1-6

Luke 9 : 7-9

Jesus and his followers have come to the attention of the rich and powerful – and Herod is curious about him. If you read this passage in a Bible, you will see that the next story Luke records about Jesus is the feeding of the five thousand. The rich and powerful may be interested in Jesus, but Jesus is primarily concerned with ordinary people, who he heals and feeds. What does the balance between attention to the powerful and to the ordinary look like in your life?

Friday 25th September

Psalm 144 : 1-4

Luke 9:18-22

In Luke today we see again that people are speculating over who Jesus is – and the names of John the Baptist and Elijah appear again. But Peter, one of the small group that spent the most time with Jesus, can see that Jesus is even more special than these prophets – he is the Messiah. Spend some time today reflecting on who Jesus is to you.

Saturday 26th September

Psalm 90 : 1-2, 12-end

Luke 9: 43b-45

Not only do the disciples not understand what Jesus is saying, but they are also afraid to ask. Sometimes reading the Bible is like this – we don't understand what a passage means, or the images of God in it are contradictory. We can respond by not engaging and being afraid, or by asking challenging questions, praying for open minds as we wrestle with what the Scriptures might be saying to us. If we are willing to look beyond the surface to see the richness of the Bible, we are better able to hear and understand what Jesus is saying to us. What are the parts of the Bible that you find hardest to understand? How might you begin to engage with them? Perhaps reading a book or article about that passage might help, or a conversation with a trusted friend.

28th September – 3rd October *Compiled by Janice Wones (Reader)*

Monday 28th September

Psalm 17: 1 - 11

Luke 9: 46 - 50

Do you accept blessings and gifts from God with simple gratitude? Do you recognise them as gifts from God? Or do you think that you have earned them? Or do you take them for granted? Think about this - and then say 'thank you'.

"Let judgement in my cause issue from thy lips."

Tuesday 29th September

Psalm 103:19 - 22

John 1: 47 - 51

Do you believe in angels? Surely you can remember a time when someone appeared at just the right moment and said the right word or gave you just the help that you needed; then, when you looked again, they had just disappeared into the crowd.

"Bless the Lord, all his hosts, his ministers who serve his will."

Wednesday 30th September

Psalm 88: 1 – 6, 11

Luke 9: 57 - 62

How often have you made excuses so that you were not able to do what you had a strong feeling that you ought to do? Was there a time when you should have stepped forward to help someone or to defend someone? Was there a time when you could have witnessed to God's love and you didn't?

"Will they speak of your love in the grave?"

Thursday 1st October

Psalm 27: 13 - 16

Luke 10: 1 - 12

Do you feel that you could tell someone about Jesus? Do you have a story of a prayer that was answered? Do you feel God's love welling up in you? Pray for the opportunity to tell, and the guidance as to who is the right person to tell.

"Wait for the Lord; be strong, take courage, and wait for the Lord."

Friday 2nd October

Psalm 139: 6 - 11

Luke 10: 13 - 16

Do you know people who do not seem to be open to the message of God's love? Are there people you have spoken to but who have not accepted what you had to say? Do you know of people who seem to be taken up with status and possessions? Pray for them.

"Such knowledge is beyond my understanding, so high I can not reach it."

Saturday 3rd October

Psalm 119: 169 - 176

Luke 10: 17 - 24

Think about some of the things you know about God. Think about the things that you believe, the things that you hope, the things that you trust about him.

Thank God for all that you understand.

"Let thy praise pour from my lips, because thou teachest me thy statutes."