

Daily Prayer

St Matthias the Apostle

Wednesday, May 13, 2020

We enter into a time of quiet. We offer to God our selves and in the silence know that God embraces us as God's very own. We offer to God our hopes and our concerns through our prayers and in the silence listen for God. Today we honour St Matthias. Apostle (transferred from May 14).

We begin by saying

I chose you and appointed you, says the Lord;
that you should go and bear fruit, fruit that will last.

John 15.16

The Psalm

Lord, who may dwell in your tabernacle? *
who may abide upon your holy hill?

Whoever leads a blameless life and does what is right, *
who speaks the truth from his heart.

There is no guile upon his tongue;
he does no evil to his friend; *
he does not heap contempt upon his neighbour.

In his sight the wicked is rejected, *
but he honours those who fear the Lord.

He has sworn to do no wrong *
and does not take back his word.

He does not give his money in hope of gain, *
nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.

Whoever does these things *
shall never be overthrown.

Psalm 15

The Reading

We continue with the reading and the reflection that follows. In silence we ask what the reading has to say to us today. Is there something in the reflection that draws us more deeply into the reading? What does God have to say to us? What do we have to ask God?

'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.

John 15.1, 6-16

The Reflection

Jim Boyles

"I am the vine, you are the branches"

In the mid 1960s it was reported that the national Anglican Church had over one hundred and twenty-five committees and boards. The accounting/management firm, Price Waterhouse was hired to review the structure, and their report, which was adopted, reduced the number to seven. A major pruning, indeed.

One small group, however, persisted. It was called "the Subcommittee on Marriage and Related Matters". I think it survived for another decade or so because of the strong personalities of the members, but also because it was caught up in important work as the Canadian parliament considered amending legislation on divorce.

In the same decade the church engaged Pierre Berton to write a critique of Anglican church life, and his book, *The Comfortable Pew* was studied widely when it was published. The church also hired Charles Hendrie, a sociology professor at York University to review relations between church and Indigenous peoples. His book, *Beyond Traplines* led the way for the church to distance itself from its partnership with government, particularly in operating the residential schools, and move towards a renewed and strengthened partnership with Indigenous peoples, particularly Indigenous Anglicans.

In this gospel passage, it is God who is the vinedresser, the one who prunes and discards. Sometimes it's outsiders who shake us up and point the way to bearing more and better fruit. Sometimes we insiders are too attached to our ways, unable to see clearly what needs to be done.

This COVID-19 pandemic may present an opportunity to shake us up and point us in a direction that will nurture a healthy vine. I don't

mean to cast the death of thousands as a pruning exercise, as I think some fringe leaders are saying. In God's sight, every person is precious, deserving of life and of love.

In this time of pause, we have an opportunity to imagine what is of value for us in our lives, what might we, perhaps reluctantly, like to prune away. What new direction would we like to take? What new steps might we take so that we can be bearers of more and better fruit?

We have this opportunity to reflect on our lives, a second Lent this year. Also we can consider our church life, our church community, and the direction it might go in the years ahead. And perhaps even more importantly, how might we apply this image of pruning and nurturing to our civil society, to our governments, our civic institutions, our long term care homes, our prisons, our political culture? How do our values touch on income distribution, or on the current discussion of the relation of economic growth to happiness, or community well-being?

Jesus is the vine, which means that we are the branches, the bearers of fruit. May it be healthy and colourful and abundant fruit that we bear.

When the time is right, we conclude our time of silence with the canticle

The Canticle ~ Song of the First-Born

Christ is the image of the unseen God, *
the first-born of all creation,
for in him were all things made, *
in heaven and on earth.

Through him and for him were all things made,
before all he exists, holds all things in one. *
The Church is his body, and he is its head.

He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; *
in all things he alone is supreme.
God made all his fullness to dwell in him, *
to reconcile through him all creation to himself,
everything on earth and everything in heaven, *
all gathered into peace by his death on the cross.

Colossians 1.15-20

We continue in prayer for those people and situations that we hold up before God (The Intercessions) and continue with the concluding collect, the Lord's prayer and the closing sentences.

The Intercessions

Let us pray to the Lord,
who is our refuge and stronghold.

For the health and well-being of our nation,
that all who are fearful and anxious
may be at peace and free from worry:

Lord, hear us,

Lord, graciously hear us.

For the isolated and housebound,
that we may be alert to their needs,
and care for them in their vulnerability:

Lord, hear us,

Lord, graciously hear us.

For our homes and families,
our schools and young people,
and all in any kind of need or distress:

Lord, hear us,

Lord, graciously hear us.

For a blessing on our local community,
that our neighbourhoods may be places of trust and friendship,
where all are known and cared for:

Lord, hear us,

Lord, graciously hear us.

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,
to the mercy and protection of God.

Merciful Father,

accept these prayers

for the sake of your Son,

our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

We conclude our prayers

Shed upon your Church, O Lord,
the brightness of your light,
that we being illumined by the teaching
of your apostle and evangelist John,
may walk in the light of your truth,
and come at last to the fullness of eternal life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

[let us pray as our Saviour taught us,]

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins,

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial,

and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen

We conclude

Peace be to us all and love with faith,
from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen. Alleluia.

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The Concluding Sentence: A New Zealand Prayer Book © 1989

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