

Closing Prayer

Christ our Teacher,
gentle and humble of heart,
give us an attentive ear for your word,
and a mind ready to contemplate what we hear,
so that we may discover the wisdom hidden from the wise,
and manifest it before this generation
in all we say and do.
So shall you be glorified,
with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
now and always, for ever and ever.

Celebrating the Christian Year, Proper 9, Year A³

CPL • LBC Year A Proper 09.odt • 2020-06-08

³ *Celebrating the Christian year : prayers and resources for Sundays, holy days and festivals, years A, B and C / compiled by Alan Griffiths. – 3 vols. – Norwich : Canterbury Press, 2004-5.*

Proper 9

Sunday between 3 and 9 July inclusive

Principal Service readings

Zechariah 9.9-12	The coming King and the release of prisoners
Psalms 145.8-14	In praise of our glorious and generous God
Romans 7.15-25a	The inner struggle of sin and goodness
Matthew 11.16-19,25-30	Jesus' judges his critics; good news revealed to the simple

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
speak to our hearts in the stillness,
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

Gospel Reading

Parable of the playing children

At that time Jesus said, ¹⁶“To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one another,

¹⁷“We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;
we wailed, and you did not mourn.”

¹⁸For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, “He has a demon”;
¹⁹the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, “Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!” Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.

Good news revealed to the simple

²⁵I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants;
²⁶yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. ²⁷All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

²⁸Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and

humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

Matthew 11.16-19,25-30 NRSV¹

Comments and Questions

'What you see is what you get' is a slogan for our times. But we do not always live like that. We can ignore – purposely or inadvertently – what is really going on. Perhaps its like that with pollution and global heating – we don't really notice the impact of our use of plastics, or don't want to notice. It was like that for Jesus too. People wanted not to take prophets seriously, and so they criticise John the Baptist for being too austere, and Jesus for being too indulgent. However, in the end the truth will come out (11.19).

What is it to be an adult? and what is it to be a child? What is it to be intelligent and what is it to be simple? The Old Testament tells us that clever people can miss the point, and that for humble people God's law is a lamp (Isaiah 29.4; Psalm 197). We can be too sophisticated, too cynical, too sceptical, so that we deny ourselves the opportunity to accept what God offers. Jesus called those who responded to him 'little children'. Children (in contrast to those in vv.16-17) are often trusting and straightforward, not blinded by cleverness, superiority and pride. The sort of people who are trusting, open, and child-like, who will discover the secrets – the 'hidden' things – of the kingdom of God. We might be reminded of the beatitudes and the poor in spirit and the pure of heart.

A yoke is part of the harness of an animal. The 'burden' that Jesus give his disciples rather than being heavy and oppressive, is bearable – easy and light. This is the loving rule of God. It is a path of service that involves commitment, discipline and hard work, but it is not onerous or oppressive; we can bear it without fear and serve without strain.

¹ *New Revised Standard Version Bible* is copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

Quotations

1

Prayer in action is love, and love in action is service. Try to give unconditionally whatever a person needs in the moment. The point is to do something, however small, and show you care through your actions by giving your time ... We are all God's children so it is important to share his gifts. Do not worry about why problems exist in the world – just respond to people's needs ... We feel what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean, but that ocean would be less without that drop.

Saint Teresa of Calcutta, 1910–1997

2

I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve.

Albert Schweitzer, 1875–1965

3

We can only know ourselves and the meaning of creation and re-creation in the light which comes from eternity, in which each one of us in the differing vocations of the Body of Christ reflects as in a mirror the splendour of the Lord, being transfigured into his likeness from splendour to splendour.

Gilbert Shaw, 1886–1967²

Related topics

For further study:

Word of God; Trinity; God; Jesus Christ; Holy Spirit; image of God; ministry of the word; prophets; conversion; sin and grace; spirituality; prayer; paschal mystery; discipleship

² 'The service of love', a retreat given by Gilbert Shaw to the Sisters of the Love of God, at the Convent of the Incarnation, Fairacres, Oxford, September 1963.