

## Holy Week 2020

### Tuesday

#### Readings (pp.3-5)

Isaiah 49:1-7

Ps.71:1-14

1 Cor.1:18-31

John 12:20-36

#### Revd. Helen's reflection:

Wisdom and foolishness, strength and weakness, light and darkness, death and life are all pairs of opposites that speak to me in today's readings. As always, God turns all our ideals and understandings upside down – *'For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.'*

Holy Week confronts us with these opposites, never more fully than in the Cross. As followers of Jesus, who held and redeemed our light and shadow as he lived out the call on his life, may we also reflect on our call as his disciples.

When I took an autumnal walk recently, in the context of our Covid-19 'isolation bubbles' the neighbourhood spoke to me of these things:



\* Children of light had chalked rainbows on the footpath and hopscotch/fitness trails full of fun and creativity for the young and young at heart to enjoy

\* Kindness was revealed in the smile and hello of strangers

\* Generosity in the produce and paper bags left outside a local property

\* Nature expressed Her dying in flamboyant colours, whispering the promise of new life to come



*'Consider your own call, brothers and sisters...'* writes Paul to the Corinthians. As we walk the way of the Cross this week, in our current context, how does this speak to us?

I share a prayer gifted to me by a colleague this week:

*Dear Lord, please let this Covid-19 pandemic bring out the best in each of us.*

*Let kindness and goodness drown out all the negativities in this world.*

*Touch the hearts of those who fear the worst and heal their troubled minds.*

*Protect us, our family, friends, those we love and those we do not personally know.*

*Give the front-liners the strength, wisdom and will every day that they go out on the field to face this virus. Protect the medical workers as they administer to the sick and needy.*

*Heal those who are suffering.*

*And above all, let love, goodness, kindness, and compassion rule our land during these difficult times.*

*Through Christ Jesus we pray. Amen.*

## Seed

*The seed of you,  
 released in life's gracious sowing,  
 descends in darkest soil,  
 where the fingers of God,  
 earthy and rank,  
 smelling of root and rot,  
 work open your shell,  
 pry loose your outer being  
 and let you spill into earth,  
 blood outflowing its veins.  
 Hands of darkness hold you  
 still, deathly still,  
 longer than you want,  
 close and unknowing,  
 until you are earth.  
 The grave that enwraps you  
 knows it is purely in the hands  
 of the One who changes everything  
 into life,  
 who has the only power.  
 In time the original light,  
 set free, swells in you,  
 and who you are,  
 who God is in you,  
 drains upward into light,  
 and a green blade appears,  
 changed, bewildered and radiant,  
 still yet to become freely  
 what you shall become.*



*The light in you knows this,  
 and proclaims  
 even to your own amazement  
 as you fall,  
 the good news.*

**Tuesday Readings:****Isaiah 49:1-7***The Servant's Mission*

Listen to me, O coastlands,  
pay attention, you peoples from far away!  
The Lord called me before I was born,  
while I was in my mother's womb he named me.  
He made my mouth like a sharp sword,  
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;  
he made me a polished arrow,  
in his quiver he hid me away.  
And he said to me, 'You are my servant,  
Israel, in whom I will be glorified.'  
But I said, 'I have laboured in vain,  
I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;  
yet surely my cause is with the Lord,  
and my reward with my God.'

And now the Lord says,  
who formed me in the womb to be his servant,  
to bring Jacob back to him,  
and that Israel might be gathered to him,  
for I am honoured in the sight of the Lord,  
and my God has become my strength—  
he says,  
'It is too light a thing that you should be my servant  
to raise up the tribes of Jacob  
and to restore the survivors of Israel;  
I will give you as a light to the nations,  
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.'

Thus says the Lord,  
the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,  
to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations,  
the slave of rulers,  
'Kings shall see and stand up,  
princes, and they shall prostrate themselves,  
because of the Lord, who is faithful,  
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.'

**Ps.71:1-14***Prayer for Lifelong Protection and Help*

In you, O Lord, I take refuge;  
 let me never be put to shame.  
 In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me;  
 incline your ear to me and save me.  
 Be to me a rock of refuge,  
 a strong fortress, to save me,  
 for you are my rock and my fortress.

Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked,  
 from the grasp of the unjust and cruel.  
 For you, O Lord, are my hope,  
 my trust, O Lord, from my youth.  
 Upon you I have leaned from my birth;  
 it was you who took me from my mother's womb.  
 My praise is continually of you.

I have been like a portent to many,  
 but you are my strong refuge.  
 My mouth is filled with your praise,  
 and with your glory all day long.  
 Do not cast me off in the time of old age;  
 do not forsake me when my strength is spent.  
 For my enemies speak concerning me,  
 and those who watch for my life consult together.  
 They say, 'Pursue and seize that person  
 whom God has forsaken,  
 for there is no one to deliver.'

O God, do not be far from me;  
 O my God, make haste to help me!  
 Let my accusers be put to shame and consumed;  
 let those who seek to hurt me  
 be covered with scorn and disgrace.  
 But I will hope continually,  
 and will praise you yet more and more.

**1 Cor.1:18-31***Christ the Power and Wisdom of God*

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written,  
 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
 and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.'

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews

demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, in order that, as it is written, 'Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.'

### **John 12:20-36**

#### *Some Greeks Wish to See Jesus*

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless

a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour.

#### *Jesus Speaks about His Death*

'Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—"Father, save me from this hour"? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.' Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.' The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, 'An angel has spoken to him.' Jesus answered, 'This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgement of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.' He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die. The crowd answered him, 'We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains for ever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?' Jesus said to them, 'The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going. While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become children of light.'

#### *The Unbelief of the People*

After Jesus had said this, he departed and hid from them.



*'Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies...'*