



**Readings, Reflection & Prayers**  
**Fifth Sunday after Trinity**  
**4 July 2021**



StJohnsAL5

[www.stjohnsharpenden.org.uk](http://www.stjohnsharpenden.org.uk)

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## Readings for this Sunday

These are the readings for this Sunday which you may like to read in your bibles at home.

Ezekiel 2: 1-5

2 Corinthians 12: 2-10

**Mark 6: 1-13**

### **The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth**

He left that place and came to his home town, and his disciples followed him. On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, 'Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?' And they took offence at him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Prophets are not without honour, except in their home town, and among their own kin, and in their own house.' And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he was amazed at their unbelief.

### **The Mission of the Twelve**

Then he went about among the villages teaching. He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. He said to them, 'Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. If any place will not welcome you and they

refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.’ So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

### Reflection

In the synagogue we find Jesus teaching the disciples and some other interested listeners. He generates dispute and, ultimately, rejection. This does not lead to retreat, however. Jesus gathers his followers and sends them off on a journey of experience. Some might have preferred to continue arguing in the synagogue, marshalling intellectual ideas to convince the opposition. But actions speak louder than words. Jesus doesn't engage in argument; he moves on and encourages the disciples to be active. It can be tempting for Christians to get sidetracked from action by arguments about credibility and intellectual credentials. But the proof about Jesus is in the actions we take. It is not staying in but going out.

Three chapters have passed since the disciples' 'first call' (Mark 3.13-15). They were told then what was involved. Now, after a period of observation, they are going to do it themselves. This is a time-honoured method of training people, formerly known as 'Learning from Nellie', and is exemplified in the TV game show *The Cube*. The disciples know the risks and they can go into the task realistically. They must identify people in the local context who will be strategically supportive, and be prepared and realistic about the local situation.

Many organisations, from the Scouts to management training groups, participate in survival exercises, where people are sent to face challenging circumstances with little to help them. The purpose of this is to develop teamwork. In the situation in which they find themselves, members of the group very quickly become dependent on each other, and on the environment they are in. Relationships have to be made and they have to work. The disciples are sent out with very little, not for ascetic reasons, but so they have to make relationships. There are many stories, historical and contemporary, of missionaries finding the house that welcomes them.

There are some shining contemporary examples of mission in pairs. Some years ago, the Catholic and Anglican bishops of Liverpool, Derek Worlock

and David Sheppard, worked in partnership to inspire Christians in their then troubled city.

The challenge for those involved in mission is discerning when it is time to move on. The gospel is not to be forced on people: if visitors are not welcome, they need to leave. There is a balance to be struck between long-term faithful commitment to a place or a role, and the value of the new broom. How do we discern what God is calling us to? How can we persuade others that it is time for a change?

## Prayers

### Collect for this Sunday

Almighty and everlasting God,  
by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified:  
hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people,  
that in their vocation and ministry  
they may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of your name;  
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Creator God,  
you made us all in your image:  
may we discern you in all that we see,  
and serve you in all that we do;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Give us honest hearts, O God,  
and send your kindly Spirit  
to help us confess our sins  
and bring us the peace of your forgiveness;  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Lord God, whose Son, Jesus Christ,  
understood people's fear and pain  
before they spoke of them,  
we pray for those in hospital;

surround the frightened with your tenderness;  
give strength to those in pain;  
hold the weak in your arms of love,  
and give hope and patience  
to those who are recovering;  
we ask this through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
Amen.

### Parish Prayers for the week ahead

#### **In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer:**

Sunday	The Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea
Monday	The Diocese of Connor – The Church of Ireland
Tuesday	The Diocese of Cork, Cloyne & Ross – The Church of Ireland
Wednesday	The Diocese of Costa Rica – The Anglican Church of Central America
Thursday	The Diocese of Coventry – The Church of England
Friday	The Diocese of Cuba – The Episcopal Church
Saturday	The Diocese of Cueibet – The Province of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan

#### **In our Diocesan Cycle of Prayer:**

Sunday	Parish of Apsley End (Deanery of Hemel Hempstead)
Monday	Parish of Bennetts End (Deanery of Hemel Hempstead)
Tuesday	Parish of Boxmoor (Deanery of Hemel Hempstead)
Wednesday	Parish of Hemel Hempstead, Grovehill and Woodhall Farm (Deanery of Hemel Hempstead)
Thursday	Parish of Hemel Hempstead, St Barnabas, Adeyfield (Deanery of Hemel Hempstead)
Friday	Parish of Hemel Hempstead, St Mary and St Paul (Deanery of Hemel Hempstead)
Saturday	Parish of Hemel Hempstead, Warners End and Gadebridge (Deanery of Hemel Hempstead)

#### **For the homes and families in:**

Sunday	Barlings Road, Barnfield Road
Monday	Barrons Row, Beech Close
Tuesday	Beeson End Lane, Bewdley Close

Wednesday	Birch Way, Bowling Close
Thursday	Broadstone Road, Burnsall Place
Friday	Burywick, Camberley Place
Saturday	Chaucer Close, The Chowns

### **The Sick:**

Claire, Sue, Christine, Hermione, Karen, Chris and all whose names are entered on our St Luke's Cell Prayer List.

### **On their year's mind:**

Alan Sutton, Mary Hanson, Geraldine Gladwell, Mark Fletcher, Joan Bishop.

## Church Opening times

### Other services / in Church congregation

- Evening Prayer on Wednesdays at 5.00pm
- Sunday 9.30am Parish Eucharist
- Short family service on Sunday 18 July at 4.00pm

### Private Prayer

- Saturday opening (in addition to Sunday), 11.00am – 4.00pm

### A reminder... of this phone service:

**Daily Hope** – dial 0800 804 8044 for prayer, reflection, music and worship services from the Church of England. A weekly service is available from 9 am every Sunday.

### Church at home:

We are delighted to produce each week these printed papers. If you would prefer not to receive these papers each week, please let Julie in the parish office know. If you are aware of others in the parish who would also value the opportunity to worship at home in this way, do please contact a member of the Ministry team or Julie (Parish Office Tel: 01582 712776).

Our Reflection this week is from *Rootsontheweb*.