



St Nicolas Church, Cranleigh
WORSHIPPING AT HOME
Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity
27th September 2020

WELCOME

. . . . to our Church at Home resources for this Sunday. We hope you will feel connected to the life of the Church Community, with these resources. Thank you to Canon Roy Woodhams, The Rev'd Rutton Viccajee and Tim Clifford Hill for our Sunday Worship this week.

THIS WEEK

NOTE: Events in red will be 'virtual' events!

Sunday 27th September:

8am: Said Holy Communion (1662)

10am: Worshipping at Home

11.15: SEA Church (for young people)

(the Zoom joining code for these is ID: 148-785-166)

11am: Said Holy Communion (Common Worship)

(This Service will be live streamed on our Youtube Channel)

Tuesday 29th September:

12noon: Said Holy Communion (1662)

4pm: Virtual Afternoon Tea and Chat

(the Zoom joining code for this is ID: 804-694-233)

Wednesday 30th September:

7.30pm: Annual Church Meeting (live via Zoom)
(the Zoom joining code for this is ID: 804-694-233 – see Important Notice below)

Thursday 1st October:

10am: Quiet Time for Prayer

Sunday 4th October (HARVEST FESTIVAL):

8am: Said Holy Communion (1662)

11.15: SEA Church (for young people)

(the Zoom joining code for this is ID: 148-785-166)

11am: Said Holy Communion (Common Worship)

(This Service will be live streamed on our Youtube Channel)

4pm: Harvest Service in the Churchyard

The risk from the Coronovirus is still significant. Please read our safety notices before coming to worship at Church!

Face Coverings must be worn at all Church events!

We continue to welcome Home Worshippers from the Churches at Dunsfold and Hascombe – it's good to have you with us!

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY:

COLLECTS:

O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to
hear the prayers of your people who call upon you;
and grant that they may both perceive and
know what things they ought to do,
and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil them;
Through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

Lord of creation,
whose glory is around and within us:
open our eyes to your wonders,
that we may serve you with reverence
and know your peace at our lives' end,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

FIRST READING: *Philippians 2: 1-13*

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than

yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

GOSPEL READING: *Matthew 21: 23-32*

When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?” Jesus said to them, “I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ we are afraid of the

crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.” So they answered Jesus, “We do not know.” And he said to them, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. “What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ He answered, ‘I will not’; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, ‘I go, sir’; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

SERMON (*Written by The Rector, Canon Roy Woodhams*)

The word ‘authority’ is one of those words that can be used in all sorts of different ways (and I don’t need to list them)! But I probably do need to remind you that there is a huge difference between being ‘given’ authority, ‘having’ authority, and ‘taking’ authority! And linked with all of that, there are issues around how authority is used by those who have (or claim to have) it!

Today’s Gospel reading is all about authority, and it’s in two parts! The second part, which we’ve just heard, is Jesus’ Parable of the Two Sons – though I think I would prefer to call it the Parable of the Awkward Sons, or even the Parable of the Spoilt Sons!

It was suggested by Curate number one, earlier in the week, that I should do a re-write and call it the Parable of the Two Curates – and whilst tempting, I did tell him that it might lead to me being branded as an irresponsible Training Incumbent!

So back to Jesus version – the first part of the reading gives us a clue as to why Jesus told the story he did! Though to properly put this in context, we need to go back even further in the previous Chapters of Matthew's Gospel.

There, we discover that this is the last week of Jesus' life! Earlier in the week he has entered into Jerusalem – the holy city of Israel – riding on the back of a donkey. This event is Jesus self-proclamation of his kingship. Just as a victorious king rides into a city after a battle and is applauded by the people, so Jesus has ridden into the city of his destiny, to the shouts of "*Hosanna – save us!*"

Then he has gone straight to the temple, where he has found the merchants and money changers selling their wares instead of allowing people to worship. He has overturned their tables and has told the temple leaders that the temple will be destroyed and that he will rebuild it in three days. Of course, in hindsight, we know that he was talking metaphorically about dying and rising, but they weren't to know that – they hadn't a clue what he was talking about!

And by going to the Temple, Jesus knew that he would meet the chief priests and elders, and so his actions are a direct challenge to their authority! It is no surprise, then, that they counteract, by challenging his authority! The leaders of the temple, the powerhouses of Jewish society, approach him and ask why they should listen to what he has to say: *“By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?”*

Jesus, never one to be caught out, responds to their question with a question of his own, a question about the baptism of John – where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or from earth?”

The temple leaders had been opposed to John baptizing people. And you may also recall that John was not overly kind with the temple leaders and teachers of the law, calling them broods of vipers, liars and cheats! So, Jesus question is a stroke of genius! He has opened an old wound, and it doesn't take them long to realise that they are between a rock and a hard place!

If they say, *‘From heaven,’* Jesus will ask, *‘Then why didn't you believe it?’* And if they say, *‘From human origin,’* then they know that the followers of both John and Jesus will be whipped up into a frenzy! So, they concede that they don't know, to which Jesus responds, *“Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”* And then he tells them the parable.

As I said, this whole episode is about authority, and the perception of authority, and let me remind you what I said at the

beginning – that there is a huge difference between being ‘given’ authority, ‘having’ authority, and ‘taking’ it for yourself by force!

Authority was, always has been, and always will be, a problem, though that need not be the case, if only people were to realise that real authority, must always be conferred in recognition of worth! The problem is that all too often, people try to claim and act on an authority of which they are not deserving, and which is beyond their ‘pay grade’!

Such use of authority (perhaps I should say ‘misuse’ of authority), causes wars and insurrection, and is at the heart of so many of the world’s problems!

In regard to the Jewish Leaders, they weren’t actually interested in discovering the truth of who Jesus was – they had already pre-judged him, simply on the fact that they knew that, for them, he meant trouble!

He was a problem to their authority and status in society, and so all they are really interested in doing is trapping him into saying something that will give them an excuse to arrest him. Their minds were made up long before they asked their question about authority!

And this is one of the problems that we have today as a Church – you see, most people in our society have made up their minds about Jesus and have dismissed him out of hand without ever

really knowing him; without ever really genuinely asking about him. And they have made up their minds about his church and what it stands for!

Going back again to the parable – there's a question for us today: Are we like the second son or the first son? Do we give a 'yes' to God with our lips, but then deny him through our actions? Or do we recognize that once we disobeyed, but now we want to obey?

Simply put, the mission of the Church today is to 'model' the authority of Jesus in such a way that the people we meet will want to know him.

Jesus came to earth, and (in the words of our first reading this morning) and, “. . . . *humbled himself therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*”

The great truth about Jesus' authority is that it has been conferred on him – it is given to him because of his life, death, and resurrection!

And because of that life, death, and resurrection, we can find forgiveness for our failings, and we can have life, even in the face

of death! That life is called Eternal Life, it's a free gift, and it's life that is really worth living!

POST COMMUNION PRAYER:

Almighty God,
you have taught us through your Son
that love is the fulfilling of the law:
grant that we may love you with our whole heart
and our neighbours as ourselves;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

WEEKLY PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION:

Church and Christian Ministry:

- For all members of General Synod, especially those clergy and laity representing our own diocese. Keep them steadfast and united in love.
- For the Business of our Church APCM this week, and for those who will be elected to represent us as Churchwardens, PCC and Deanery Synod

National and World Affairs:

- For all in authority, that they may use their powers wisely

- For all affected by Coronavirus, and for the Governments and scientists across the world, seeking to find ways of combatting the virus

Community and Family:

- For all member of our Mothers' Union.
- All who live in Lashmere.

The Sick and those in Need:

- Robin Burnett, Mike Ford, Stefan Godier, Stella Goldsmith, Michael Hart, Louise Harbutt, Tony Kenison, Amy Loveless, Libby O'Brien, Brian Pettyfer, Jean Quallington, Dennis and Rosemary Talbot, Chrissie Thomson, Marion Tomkins, Mac Walker, Angela Wild, Henry Young Young (*and from Dunsfold and Hascombe: Amanda and Hugh, Barbara Crabb, Sally Rivett, Jackie Williams, Alli, Judy Bolt, Sue and Dennis Evans, Peter Hutley, Sally Davis, Lorna Thompson, Paul Wiltshire, Sami Bennewith, Dru Ridley*)

The Departed:

- All we have known and loved, and especially: Mike Maxwell (*and from Dunsfold and Hascombe: Des Crabb*)

NOTICES:

Rescheduled APCM: The Church Annual Meeting which had to be postponed in March will be held this Wednesday (30th September) at 7.30pm – The meeting was to have been in hybrid format, but due to the current worsening situation in relation to COVID-19, we have decided that it will only be via Zoom – there will be nothing live in Church! **(The Zoom joining code for this is ID: 837-3735-3734 and will be open from 7.15pm)**

Harvest Gifts: Due to the risk of spreading COVID-19 we will not be receiving or distributing Harvest Gifts this year. Instead, a donation can be made to the wonderful Charity Crisis, working with homeless people, at all Church Services or by posting through the Church Office door.

Plants: From Win Bracking (275573) – If you are dividing perennials that have outgrown their allotted space please remember the Church Plant Stall. I do not need any more Alchemilla, Sedum (Ice Plant) or the ubiquitous Crocosmia (Montbretia) but last year someone gave me some beautiful Hemerocallis (Day Lilies) which were red/bronze. I would love some more of those as they were popular in the sales

Tim's Ordination: Please pray for tim as he prepares for his ordination as a deacon. Although there is still a bit of uncertainty around the interpretation of the government's latest COVID-19 guidelines and regulations, it is hoped that Tim will be ordained by Bishop Andrew at St Bartholomew's, Hazlemere, on Saturday 10th

October at 9am. Although he will only be able to take a tiny group of 4 supporters, we are hoping that the service will be live-streamed, and we will give you details of this when we know them!

Nativity Festival: Regrettably, with the present worsening COVID-19 situation, we have made the decision to postpone the Nativity Festival which had been planned for the first weekend of December.

Parish Office: From 1st October, the interim Parish Administrator will be Nicola Craven-Smith. From 18th September until then please continue to use elise@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk to contact the Parish Office. This address will be redirected to Roy and Tim.

Traidcraft: Sue Knight is offering Traidcraft goods for sale by appointment or would be willing to deliver to Cranleigh on receipt of an order. She will have catalogues or you can go on line at traidcraftshop.co.uk to see the whole range and if she has to order it in, this usually takes about a week. You can pay for any orders by BACS or she will accept cheques. Call Sue on 275032 or 07950 025137.

Paying Money to the Church: If you wish to pay any monies to St Nicolas, cheques should be made payable to 'Cranleigh PCC'

Curate Visiting: Our Curates, Tim and Rutton, continue to safely visit parishioners during this time of change and uncertainty. If you would like one of them to visit you, either socially distantly in

your garden, on the telephone or on Zoom/Facetime, please contact them.

Please send notices for next week to Margie Nursey at 1, Elm Cottages, Smithwood Common (01483 273693) notices@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk by **7pm on Tuesday**

Keep in touch:

The Rector (Roy): 01483 800655 or email
roy@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

The Full time Curate (Tim Clifford Hill) 01483 276267 or email
tim@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

**The Part time Curate (Revd Rutton Viccajee,
works Wednesday, Friday, Sunday)**
rv@viccajee.com

Parish Office (Staff Vacancy): 01483 273620 or email
elise@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

Young People's Minister (Gabrielle Clarke): 07427 748408
gabrielle@stnicolascranleigh.org.uk

Church Website:
www.stnicolascranleigh.org.uk and on FaceBook

If you know of anybody who would like to receive a printed communication like this each week, please call us on one of the numbers above! Alternatively, with the church re-opening, if you no longer require this weekly publication delivered to you, please can you let Elise know