

The Fourth Sunday after Trinity YEAR C June 19, 2016

There is a lovely progression in these first few weeks of Ordinary Time. Two weeks ago we faced a challenge to prioritise God's strength and grace, and to reject the idea that mission and justice oriented faith leans only on human resources and abilities. Last week we were reminded of God's call to be forgiven and to forgive. In the face of the world's challenges and the work of justice, forgiveness is the Gospel response. This week the call to grace continues with a challenge to define good and evil not according to law, but in the light of God's grace and liberation.

May we embrace a marriage of grace and justice, of inclusion and of confrontation with legalism and exclusivity as we worship this week, and may our experience of grace deepen as we do.

INTRODUCTIONS

For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines

1 Kings 19:1-4, (5-7), 8-15a: God instructs Elijah to go to Mount Sinai, and comes to him there. At Elijah's cave he experiences wind, earthquake and fire, but God's voice is only heard in the whisper that follows. In spite of his fear at the threats against his life, God leads him back into ministry.

Or **Isaiah 65:1-9**: A prophecy of judgment against the wickedness of God's people, with the promise of a remnant who will be saved.

Psalms 42 & 43: A song of lament, with a commitment to praise God in the face of persecution of suffering.

Or **Psalms 22:19-28**: A prayer for God's help in the midst of persecution and a commitment to worship and stay faithful to God.

Galatians 3:23-29: Now that the way of faith in Christ has come, the law is no longer needed. Those who trust in Christ are God's children, and we are all equal in God's family.

Luke 8:26-39: Jesus liberates the Gerasene demoniac, who begs to go with Jesus once he has been healed. But Jesus sends him home to tell of what God did for him.

[Click here to view the readings](#)

http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=1%20Kings%2019:%201-4,%205-7,%208-15a%0Acw%20Psalms%2042,%2043%0AGalatians%203:%2023-29%0ALuke%208:%2026-39

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

O God, the protector of all that trust in thee,
without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy;
Increase and multiply upon us thy mercy;
that, thou being our ruler and guide,
we may so pass through things temporal,
that we finally lose not the things eternal:
Grant this, O heavenly Father,
for Jesus Christ's sake our Lord.

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Collect Two

O God, the protector of all who trust in you,
without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy:
Increase and multiply upon us your mercy;
that with you as our ruler and guide,
we may so pass through things temporal
that we finally lose not the things eternal:
Grant this, heavenly Father,
for Jesus Christ's sake, our Lord.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 1

With all our heart and mind, let us pray to God, saying, "**God of grace, be with us.**"

In this time of confusion, grief, vulnerability and loss, let us pray to God, God of grace, be with us.

That those who serve you in all countries and all traditions may remember your love, embrace your forgiveness, and hold fast to your hope. Let us pray to God, God of grace, be with us.

That the leaders of this nation, ----- and all others in authority, may be guided by your Wisdom, and find strength and courage to know and accomplish your purposes in the midst of the evil of these days. Let us pray to God, God of grace, be with us.

That all peoples of the earth, especially those who suffer loss due to political or religious persecution or terrorism, may have the hope of healing. Let us pray to God, God of grace, be with us.

That those who have died may find peace and joy among the communion of saints. Let us pray to God, God of grace, be with us.

God whose vision spans all the ages of the earth, help us to see beyond this moment and to embrace the wider perspective of your whole creation. Deliver us from hatred, cruelty, and revenge, and lead us into a way of love and justice that makes room for all peoples. Let us pray to God, God of grace, be with us.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 2

Gathered before the throne of the Lamb, let us pray for the needs of the flock of God throughout the world.

Deacon or other leader

For the holy churches in every place, and for the unity of all.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For this holy assembly and for all who gather in the name of the risen Christ.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

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For *NN* and all illumined by the light of Christ. **Glory and praise to you, O living God.**

For *N* our bishop and the presbyters, the deacons and all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For the world and its leaders, our nation and its people.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For all those in danger and need, the sick and the suffering, the strayed and the lost.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For those who walk in death's dark valley.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For ourselves, our families, and those we love.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

Remembering our most glorious, *N*, and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ. **To you, O Lord.**

Presider

Blessed are you, God our Father, whose Son lay down his life to take it up again. Hear the prayers we offer for every need, and make us one through your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

POST COMMUNION

Eternal God,
comfort of the afflicted and healer of the broken,
you have fed us at the table of life and hope.
Teach us the ways of gentleness and peace,
that all the world may acknowledge
the kingdom of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS

Beckoning God,
as you moved in the lives of Elijah and Elisha,
move in our lives,
inviting us to journey to unknown territory,
to listen for your voice,
and to speak your prophetic word
in a world that does not want to hear.
empowered by your Spirit,
grant us the courage we need
to journey, trust, listen, speak,

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and accept your commission
to be your faithful servant people. Amen.

Friends in Christ,
God invites us to hold the needs of our sisters and brothers
as dear to us as our own needs.
Loving our neighbors as ourselves,
we offer our thanksgivings and our petitions
on behalf of the church and the world.
Hear our prayers, God of power,
and through the ministry of your Son
free us from the grip of the tomb,
that we may desire you as the fullness of life
and proclaim your saving deeds to all the world. Amen.

As you heard the prayer of Isaac and Rebekah, O God,
and guided them in the way of your love,
so listen now to those who call upon you.
Move us to praise your gracious will,
for in Christ Jesus you have saved us from the deeds of death
and opened for us the hidden ways of your love.
We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord God, friend of those in need,
your Son Jesus has untied our burdens
and healed our spirits.
We lift up the prayers of our hearts for those still burdened,
those seeking healing,
those in need within the church and the world.
Hear our prayers
that we may love you with our whole being
and willingly share the concerns of our neighbors. Amen.

Creator God,
you call us to love and serve you
with body, mind, and spirit
through loving your creation
and our sisters and brothers.
Open our hearts in compassion
and receive these petitions
on behalf of the needs of the church and the world.
Holy One,
hear our prayers and make us faithful stewards
of the fragile bounty of this earth
so that we may be entrusted with the riches of heaven. Amen.

We praise your abiding guidance, O God,
for you sent us Jesus, our Teacher and Messiah,
to model for us the way of love for the whole universe.
We offer these prayers of love
on behalf of ourselves and our neighbors,
on behalf of your creation and our fellow creatures.

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Loving God,
open our ears to hear your word
and draw us closer to you,
that the whole world may be one with you
as you are one with us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of mercy and healing,
you who hear the cries of those in need,
receive these petitions of your people
that all who are troubled
may know peace, comfort, and courage.
Life-giving God,
heal our lives,
that we may acknowledge your wonderful deeds
and offer you thanks from generation to generation
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God of salvation,
who sent your Son to seek out and save what is lost,
hear our prayers
on behalf of those who are lost in our day,
receiving these petitions and thanksgivings
with your unending compassion.
Redeeming Sustainer,
visit your people
and pour out your strength and courage upon us,
that we may hurry to make you welcome
not only in our concern for others,
but by serving them
generously and faithfully in your name. Amen.

God our refuge and hope,
when race, status, or gender divide us,
when despondency and despair haunt and afflict us,
when community lies shattered:
comfort and convict us with the stillness of your presence,
that we may confess all you have done,
through Christ to whom we belong
and in whom we are one. Amen.

Most holy and eternal God,
you dwell in the heights of heaven,
yet you walk among those who refuse to see you.
Hold out your hand to those who rebel against you,
and free us from the chains that bind us,
that we may be healed by Christ
and proclaim his saving deeds to all the world. Amen.

LECTIONARY NOTES

REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

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The reality of evil and the destruction it brings is brought into sharp focus in this week's readings. The threat that the forces of darkness pose to justice and to those who work for it is shown by Elijah's isolation in the face of Jezebel's threat, in the cries of the psalmists facing persecution, and in the diseased mind and body of the Gerasene demoniac. The hope of God's people, though, is that evil does not have the last word. God's presence and help is assured for those in need, God comes to strengthen and guide Elijah, Christ frees the demonised man, and Paul assures us of our place of belonging in Christ's family, in which there is no privilege based on gender, social status, race or anything else. In Christ the divisive tools of evil are removed, and the power of evil is neutralised. Now, we who follow Christ are called, like Elijah, as prophets who live according to a different order, a different set of values, and who invite others into the freedom that Christ offers. This is an appropriate next step after the call to trust in God's Spirit and the invitation to forgiveness that we have explored in the last two weeks.

CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

GLOBAL APPLICATION: As we engage, as Church, with the big issues in our world, it is disturbing to see how the "big issues" are sometimes defined. Are issues of sexuality and the exclusivity of Christ really the main issues of good and evil in our time? Or does the Gospel call us to define global evil differently – using this week's readings of God's grace, protection of the threatened, and liberation as a basis? Could it be that any economic or political policies that deprive the poor of the opportunity to support themselves is evil? Could it be that ignoring the damage that our greed and exploitation of natural resources does to our planet is evil (especially in the light of the Deepwater oil spill crisis)? Could it be that any faith that leads us to justify violent conflict with people who are different from us, or who believe differently from us, is evil? And could it be that using "the law" – whether human or 'divine' – to justify these evils is equally evil? How would we stand against evil if we used God's grace, protection and liberation as the lens through which we looked at the world? What good might we celebrate and embrace if we used these lenses? What role would we seek to play in the policy-making, opinion-forming, global-crisis-addressing work that goes on in our world. In reality, it is easier to defend law, and condemn law-breakers, than it is to offer grace and stand against those who deny grace to others. But, the work of the Gospel was never about what is easy.

LOCAL APPLICATION: As we seek to resist the work of evil in our churches and communities, it is important that we are careful in what we identify as evil. Jesus correctly recognises the forces at work within the demoniac, but does not label the person as evil. In contrast, Elijah, finds himself in confrontation with people who have given themselves over to evil purposes and actions. As Paul points out, it is tempting to use the law as the basis for deciding what is good or what is bad, and obedience to the law as the basis for deciding who is good and who isn't. But, from the basis of grace, and of Christ's inclusive invitation, good and evil look very different. Anything that would persecute another (as the Psalmists experienced), anything that would oppress another (like the demoniac) or anything that would deny grace to another (as Paul teaches) violates God's grace and love, and brings division and destruction. As we seek to stand for God's justice, it is important that we keep God's grace and love in mind, and that we rightly choose what to oppose and what to embrace.

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

["The Friend at Midnight: A Father's Day Sermon,"](#) Alyce McKenzie, *Patheos*

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<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/faithforward/2010/06/the-friend-at-midnight-a-fathers-day-sermon/>

"When Jesus Comes to Visit," the Rev. James T. Moor, *Day 1*, 2007.

http://day1.org/1047-when_jesus_comes_to_visit

Proper 7, AKM Adam, *Flesh and Bones*, 2001. (Download is one long PDF file for book of sermons.)

<http://akma.disseminary.org/images/FleshBones.pdf>

CHILDREN

Worshipping with Children, Proper 7, Including children in the congregation's worship, using the Revised Common Lectionary, Carolyn C. Brown

<http://worshippingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2013/06/year-c-proper-7-12th-sunday-in-ordinary.html>

That's What's Best About Getting Dressed - On the Chancel Steps, children's resources by Frances Woodruff

<https://onthechancelsteps.wordpress.com/2013/06/11/dressed/>

Story for Children's Worship and Family Activity - Ordinary 12, at word-sunday.com: A Catholic Resource for the Lectionary by Larry Broding.

<http://www.word-sunday.com/index.html>

The Surprise Disciple - On Luke reading for today - Sermon Suite

http://www.sermonsuite.com/c15397_proper_7_ordinary_time_.html

Sermons for kids

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/>

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

It Is Well With My Soul

Blessed Assurance

If Thou But Suffer God To Guide Thee

We'll Understand It Better By And By

Sing Praise To God Who Reigns Above

Song We The King Who Is Coming To Reign

Above All (YouTube video)

God Of Justice (YouTube video)

How Long

Hear Our Praises (YouTube video)

I, The Lord Of Sea And Sky