

Reflection by Diana Johnson

Common Worship Lectionary: Romans 6: 12-end; Matthew 10: 40-end

St Mary and St Michael, Trumpington

28th June 2020 (Trinity 3)

8am BCP Communion Service



O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully to hear us; and grant that we, to whom thou hast given an hearty desire to pray, may by thy mighty aid be defended and comforted in all dangers and adversities; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of all our hearts be acceptable to you, O Lord, our rock and our Redeemer. (Ps 19.14 alt.)

In this Collect we recognize our total dependence upon the protection, strength, holiness, mercy, providence and guidance of God our heavenly Father for the true living of the Christian life in this secular age and world full of wrongs and hurt, and in preparation for the world to come.

We ask not only for the increase of God's mercy towards us but that it may also be multiplied. It is as though we have in mind the increase in the widow's oil in the ministry of Elijah (1 Kings 17:10-17) and the multiplication of the bread and fishes by our Lord (John 6:5-15). We are as those who have experienced God's mercy in part - yet who know that they need it urgently in greater part - and need it to be not only increased but also multiplied! What a daring thing to ask 'give me more', like Oliver in the book (and film)!

The world we live in is made by God but is poisoned by sin. Thus in it we experience both blessings and temptations, encouragements and tribulation. We rise and we fall; we feel good and we feel bad. It is possible to pass through this world and be wholly absorbed by it - as we clearly see happening to many at the present time in the West. It is possible virtually to forget God as Creator, Judge and Redeemer, and live in this world as though we are responsible only to ourselves and that we are merely creatures of space and time who exercise our civic and economic rights in full. And is that so bad?. No.

But we are **also** made to enjoy and glorify God for ever; we are called to serve him in this world and the next and to enter into the next through the resurrection of the dead and the redemption of the body. If we see ourselves as made for eternity and not simply for space

and time, then we shall pass through this world as those whose eyes are set upon Christ Jesus, the Lord, and in obedience to his command and call. It is not, I believe an 'either... or' question, but a 'both... and'. Just as Jesus was both divine and human, so we live both in the world, and beyond it..



We certainly need God's mercy to surround and fill us, his rule over us and his guidance known in our souls, if we are to negotiate our way through this world in such a way as always to remain **also** citizens of heaven and disciples of Jesus Christ, the Lord of the new Jerusalem. In this world we are to live as those who reflect in their lives the character and virtue of the life that is to come, as the Gospel declares.

So our prayer ends with the intense verb, 'Grant'. Grant all this, we ask of our heavenly Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ, his Son and our Lord.

O Lord, we beseech thee mercifully to hear us; and grant that we, to whom thou hast given an hearty desire to pray, may by thy mighty aid be defended and comforted in all dangers and adversities; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Thanks to The Revd Dr Peter Toon for this commentary, and the Prayer Book Society for making it available

Word count: 540 Time: 3.5 minutes
Approx. 125 words min⁻¹