

Bulletin for Sunday 18 September 2022

Good morning friends.

Let's pause as we prepare to worship... and then praise God as we sing our first hymn:

Hymn: For the beauty of the earth (R&S 41)

Prayers: Gracious God, we praise you for your creation,
for your glory reflected in the world around us...
and we thank you for your loving care.
As we worship today, make us aware of your presence;
as we read your word and sing your praise
may we grow in understanding, and in commitment
to being your people and building your kingdom.
We ask your blessing on everything we do,
and on everything we give in your service,
today and every day. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Readings: 1 Timothy 2: 1-7

Reflection:

The writer of this letter can't have had any illusions about the political rulers of this world. Despite Monty Python's reminder that the Romans brought us sanitation, irrigation, education, and quite a lot else, the experience of the early church was that the authorities weren't at all supportive of their communities or their worship. Indeed persecution and even martyrdom were often handed out by those in political power. So why pray for "all who are in high positions"?

One suggestion is that, as well as building roads the Romans also suppressed much political discontent and conflict. While it seems wrong to describe this forcibly (indeed, viciously) controlled situation as 'peace', it's true that the Pax Romana probably benefitted the spread of the church. Within such relatively stable conditions the gospel could spread freely. Is that what this passage refers to?

Maybe. But shouldn't we, in any case, pray for everyone? That is the first thing this reading says, in fact. Rather than isolating those in high positions and treating them

differently in prayer, perhaps we should remember that they also are our neighbours, to be loved as Jesus commanded. That they, like all of us, have needs and anxieties, joys and sorrows, gifts and weaknesses... and all of these can and should be brought to God in prayer. Our supplications, intercessions and thanksgivings can include all God's children - we don't have to like or understand someone to pray for them; rather, by praying for them we may come to like and understand them better!

Hymn: For all the saints who from their labours rest (R&S 658)

Prayers: Compassionate God, this week, as we remember and prepare to celebrate the life of Queen Elizabeth, we recall the many charities which she supported. We pray for them, and those they seek to serve. Following her example, and that of others, may we live out our faith thoughtfully, with care. We ask your blessing on all who mourn, including King Charles and all his family: may they have time and space to grieve, and strength and wisdom as they move forwards... We hold before you our own communities, especially all those in need of any sort, and ask that you show us when and how we can help... We pray for all those we love; all those we worry about... In Jesus 'name we ask all our prayers, including the unspoken prayers of our hearts. Amen

Hymn: Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided (R&S 603)

Blessing: May we step into the future with Christ...

and may the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us and with all those we love,
this week, and always. Amen

Sunday at Six service on Zoom at 6pm this Sunday as usual - all welcome.

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