

Service for Week 5th -11th August 2024

by Chaplain Andy

Our Opening Prayer.

Loving God, we rejoice that you are not distant from us, but here by our side. Present in every moment of every day. Help us to be confident that whatever the future may hold you will give us the strength to meet it.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven,

Amen

Bible Reading John 6:35 , 41-51

Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?" "Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered. "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.

It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the

desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Second Reading Psalm 130

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD? O Lord, hear my voice.

Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.

If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared(respected)

I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word, I put my hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning.

O Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.

Holy words, Holy wisdom,

Thanks be to God

Reflection.

Recently in our services we have heard readings from John's gospel. We heard about the Samaritan woman who was sitting by a well when Jesus came along and asked for a drink. Jesus



went on to tell her that there was more to sustain your life than water from a well.

Jesus said to her "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Then we heard how Jesus provided food for 5000 people from just 5 loaves and two fish. Both these accounts involved physical food and drink. The feeding of the 5000 also brought to mind how another form of food -manna that God sent to the Israelites when they were stuck in the desert. Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.

What these accounts in John's gospel are leading up to is Jesus's teaching about faith which we heard in our reading today. It encourages us to have faith but more than that it invites us to live with Christ within us. It talks about feeding on Jesus. It doesn't mean this literally, although we do this symbolically when we partake of the elements bread and wine during Holy Communion, which re-enacts Jesus' last supper.

Jesus is teaching us about a form of 'living bread' that comes from God. It is a life-giving way of living and a way of being. We learn that way of being from the teachings of Jesus Christ. Other religions have their own ways of

getting close to God but as Christians our learning about the nature of God and faith in God comes through Jesus Christ who was of God. When we accept and believe and feel that the Spirit of God through Jesus Christ is within us -that truly is the 'food and drink' that sustains us. It keeps us strong in mind and body. It helps our spirit to be resilient against everything that is thrown at it, be it illness, mental anguish, or being in poor or dangerous circumstances. How is this achieved? As the Psalmist put it -Through God's unfailing love and his redemption.

Over the years as a Chaplain, I have had the privilege to witness this many times. To be with people of faith, some who faced extreme physical or mental difficulties who have lived with Christ within them. Lived with Christ giving them strength, giving them hope and giving them the promise that at the end of this life they will be at peace and their spirit reunited with God.

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. Those who come to me will never go hungry, and those who believe in me will never be thirsty. **Amen**

Closing prayer

Loving God, go with me and renew me each day by the extent of your love, and the strength of your power to change and shape my life. In grateful praise I ask it through Jesus Christ my Lord.**Amen**

Prayer inspired by Prayerfully Yours by Nick Fawcett