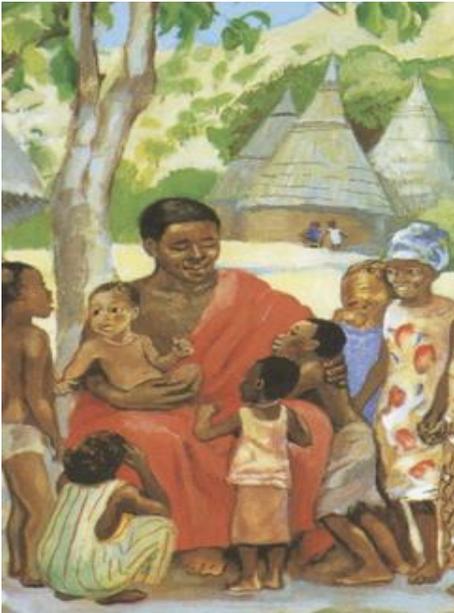


SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

19 September 2021



To welcome the child is to discern the signs of new creation beyond anything expected, and it is this vision that puts the disciples' competitive self-interest into damning perspective.

Frances Young

We come here today not because we are clever
but because God welcomes the slow learners.

**We come here not because we are wise,
but because God loves us in spite of our folly.**

We come knowing that the greatest persons will be found
among those who humbly serve like Jesus did,
and that the brightest ideas and the deepest truth will come
from those who see themselves as little children in Christ's school.

O Lord, open up our mind and our hearts

***Come to the circle –
my sisters my brothers
Come to the circle –
for we are all friends
We gather together –
for we are one body
We give thanks for the circle
And thanks for our friends***

**Welcome to the circle – it's so
good you are here
To break and share your journey
with us
You're welcome here
Come to the circle ...**

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OPENING PRAYER

Though you are God, with all the influence and status that the name implies, you refused to pull rank, and parade your power among us. Instead, you chose to step down into our experience, living among us, as one of us, with all the struggle and suffering that goes with being human. More than that, you adopted the role of slave, washing feet, serving people of no reputation or social standing, and giving of yourself completely. As incredible as it sounds, you are the God who serves, and we can respond in no other way than to give ourselves to you in praise.
Amen

ENCOUNTERING THE LIVING WORD TODAY

The Gospel of Mark 9:30-37

³⁰ They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; ³¹ for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again.” ³² But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

³³ Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” ³⁴ But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. ³⁵ He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.” ³⁶ Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, ³⁷ “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.”

May your word live in us
and bear much fruit to your glory.

*Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love,
show us how to serve the neighbours
we have from you.*

Kneels at the feet of his friends,
silently washes their feet,
Master who pours out himself for them.

Neighbours are rich and poor,
neighbours are black, and white,
neighbours are nearby and far away.

These are the ones we should serve,
these are the ones we should love;
all are neighbours to us and you.



REFLECTION: WELCOMING CHILDREN

Jesus, when you took a child
and told adults to become like her
if they wanted to enter your kingdom,
what did you mean?

Are we to be naïve or to ask questions?
To be innocent or to be trusting?
To be shy or to sing?
To be docile or to be open-eyed?

Show us how to become
Not the ideal child we imagine
But the real child you blessed.

Teach us,
If we have done too much growing up,
How to grow down. AMEN



RESPONDING WITH OUR LIVES

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God, today we pray for the vulnerable of the earth.

Too often, in too many places, people have no choice and are made vulnerable to pain, disease, violence, and death. Today we pray for the vulnerable of the earth.

For the victims of tyranny, famine, and war, we pray

(a time of silence).

For refugees and asylum seekers

(a time of silence).

For children who live in families and homes that are not safe places

(a time of silence).

For children without access to books and to learning

(a time of silence).

For children everywhere.

For all Creation, vulnerable through climate change and human abuse of Creation's resources. God, you know each of us by name and are with each of us in every moment of our lives. **AMEN**

(You will be invited to light a Candle and place it in the sand as a symbol of your prayer)

Take O take me as I am – summon out what I shall be
Set your seal upon my heart and live in me

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The Disciples' Prayer

*Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours,
now and forever.
Amen.*

TiS 650

Brother, sister, let me serve you;
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

We are pilgrims on a journey,
and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you
in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping;
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;
I will share your joy and sorrow,
till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven,
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, sister, let me serve you;
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

Richard Gillard (b1953)

Go with a tender and grateful heart, remembering that you may be the only gospel that your neighbour reads this week. So, in all you say and do, spread the grace of God, the love of Jesus and the friendship of the holy spirit. You are blessed by the grace, love, and friendship of our Creator, and now you are commissioned to share it by being a blessing in this world. **Amen**