

# St Mary's, Barton-upon-Humber: Readings, prayers and notices for the week May 17-24

## **Collect for the sixth Sunday of Easter**

God our redeemer,  
you have delivered us from the power of darkness  
and brought us into the kingdom of your Son:  
grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life,  
so by his continual presence in us he may raise us to eternal joy;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

or

Risen Christ, by the lakeside you renewed your call to your disciples:  
help your Church to obey your command and draw the nations to the fire of your love,  
to the glory of God the Father.

**Readings:** Acts 17.22-31; Psalm 66.7-18; 1 Peter 3.13-22; John 14.15-21

## **Meditation**

*If ye love me....*

I expect that many of us had something when we were babies that we wouldn't go anywhere without. That may have been a blanket, or piece of material, or a favourite toy. I always had to have a doll called Jane – I'm not quite sure what that said about me. But young children are often inconsolable without their particular piece of equipment. In all respects, it is a comforter.

The again rather tortuous passage in today's gospel - John 14.15-21 - revolves around, I believe, two Greek words – not that I know any Greek.

The first is *Parakletos*. Depending which translation of the bible you use, it is rendered as Comforter, Paraclete, Counsellor or as today, Advocate. We could also add to the list Helper, Intercessor, Friend, Strengtheners, Sponsor.

The word *Parakletos* is a word rich in meaning – it was used as a legal term for one who speaks in defence of another in court, one called alongside, rather like we would say "prisoner's friend". It was used for an expert called in to give advice in some difficult situation. It might be someone called in to put new courage into the hearts and minds of dispirited soldiers. The word Comforter seems a particularly apt translation. Nowadays comfort more usually has to do with sorrow - a comforter sympathises with us when we are sad. This is of course a function of the Holy Spirit to which John refers, but there is more than this – the Holy Spirit can take away our inadequacies and disappointments and enable us to cope with life. The Holy Spirit substitutes victory for defeat.

In the first chapter of Acts, the disciples are told to wait for the coming of the Spirit, who was to come to them at Pentecost. Christian tradition has followed this pattern from Easter to Whitsunday. However John suggests a different pattern. It may seem that here in Chapter 14, with the first mention of the Spirit as Paraclete etc., a new dimension is introduced. Earlier in the gospel (3.5;4.24;6.63) the Spirit is to be found at work in the community of the faithful, although at 7.39 we read "as yet there was no spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified". And even here, at a point in the gospel where Jesus already knows that his hour had come (13.1),

he is still pointing forward, beyond himself, to some future state or event, perhaps to the moment John shows us at 20.22 when Jesus breathes on his disciples.

Jesus refers in this passage to "another" Paraclete; this implies that Jesus himself was the first Comforter and that there will be others – importantly "of the same sort" not "different". Both "the first" and "another" have similarities – they both have a teaching role, are sent by the Father and are characterised by "truth". So this other, new Paraclete is modelled on Jesus himself, and will take over his role after his departure from this world.

The other Greek word is "*orphanos*". Literally this means "without a father", but it was also used of disciples and students bereft of the presence and teaching of a beloved master. Plato says that, when Socrates died, his disciples "thought that they would have to spend the rest of their lives forlorn as children bereft of a father, and they did not know what to do about it." But Jesus told his disciples that would not be the case with him. "I am coming back" he said. He is talking of his resurrection and his raised presence. They will see him because HE will be alive and because THEY will be alive. What he means is that they will be spiritually alive. At the moment they are bewildered and numbed with the sense of impending tragedy; but the day will come when their eyes will be opened, their minds will understand and their hearts will be kindled - and then they will really see him. So Jesus will not leave them as "*orphanos*" – and neither will he leave us. He will be with us, he is with us; he will be our Paraclete, our Comforter, our Intercessor. He will be like a father to us, even though he has physically departed from this world.

Alan.

## **For your prayers**

**Church:** Chaplains in the NHS. Christian Aid. The Church in Korea. That we may recognise signs of the Holy Spirit at work, in greater Lincolnshire and beyond. transforming lives in Greater Lincolnshire. On this day when we remember Christian ministry in sport we pray for all chaplains, especially for Alan.

**World:** Health workers, all those involved in keeping essential services running. Our own political leaders. Those charged with peace-keeping and peace-making. The governments & peoples of China, Syria and the Middle East, North Africa. All seeking to resolve the issues surrounding protection of the environment, of infection control and of migrancy. O National Sports Sunday we pray for all people engaged in sport, whether amateur or professional.

**Our Community:** Community organisations and those who enrich community life.

**Those in need:** Those whose lives or livelihoods are endangered by Coronavirus. Those who fear the prospect of isolation. All who live in areas of conflict or tension; the homeless, the poor, the sick, the enslaved, the hungry and the abused. Victims of terrorism.

**Those for whom our prayers are asked:** Melissa Milbourn, Julie Newton, Penny Archer, Vicky Page-Chestney, Kate Eaton, Mike Page-Chestney, Brenda Skinner, Henry Farrow, Stephen Wilkinson, Joyce Gibson, Janet Petch, David Witter, Sally, Abby, Jan, Nell.

**Departed:** David Redrobe, Betty Colwell, Kathleen Windle, Rosalind Ellerby, Pat Bratton, Margaret Hughes. Those who have died as a result of COVID-19 infection, especially those who work in the caring and medical communities.

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## **Next Sunday – the Seventh Sunday of Easter** (Sunday after the Ascension)

Acts 1.6-14; Psalm 68.1-10, 33-36; 1 Peter 4.12-14; 5.6-11; John 17.1-11

**Thursday** of this week is Ascension Day, and the Ascension Day readings are:

Acts 1.1-11 Psalm 93; Ephesians 1.15-23; Luke 24.44-53.

Did you know that the Gospels contain at least three accounts of the Ascension, not just the one in Acts? And that Matthew doesn't contain the story at all?

## **Updates**

**We were saddened to hear** that, although it was expected, Kathy Colwell's mum, Betty, died a few days ago. The burden of a double bereavement is hard at any time, but especially so during this time of isolation from the physical presence of friends. We understand the funerals are at the end of this week and we offer Kathy our love, sympathy and prayers.

## **Daily Hope phone line**

A Church of England initiative, Daily Hope offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line. The line – which is available 24 hours a day **on 0800 804 8044** – has been set up particularly with those unable to join online church services during the period of restrictions in mind. It's an 0800 number, so landline calls will usually not cost you anything.

**Christian Aid Week** ends today, and the usual fund-raising like the Humber Bridge Cross couldn't take place. Like many charities (including the Diocese of Lincoln) the suspension of normal life is financially challenging (ie, there's not enough coming in to sustain the work). If you'd like to make a donation it can be made online, or envelopes marked Christian Aid can be dropped off via David's letter-box.

**As talk of relaxing the lock-down of places of worship continues**, rest assured that as soon as we can open up, we shall. It's likely that the first development will be to permit us to open for private prayer and perhaps for number-limited funerals. Mercifully, a lot of discretion has now been handed over to diocesan bishops and I have a great deal of confidence in the pastoral sensitivity and straightforward common-sense of our bishops here in Lincoln!

**Foodbank** is still operating, but unable to take donations in the usual manner. We are accepting cash donations to help run things slightly differently during the present situation.

**Do keep in your prayers** Janet Petch, Joyce Gibson and David Witter, who have suffered health reverses in recent days. They all seem to be settled or on the way up, which is good news, but it's slow and steady....

**With support from Barton Town Council and others**, the Ropewalk is providing meals to the elderly of Barton. Meals will be provided on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday and delivered to the door/outhouse/shed - wherever they can put it to avoid contact. To book a meal ring the day before on 01652 660380. The service is free although donations will be accepted.

**Those in need.** Please help us keep our intercessions up to date and leave requests for prayer – either by email to david.rowett@lincoln.anglican.org, or the phone, or even a note through my door, and encourage others likewise.

## **This week...**

... let's hear it for the Anglo-Saxons....

Two enormously important figures from pre-Conquest England, Dunstan (Tuesday) a former Archbishop of Canterbury and Abbot of Glastonbury, the other Alcuin of York (Wednesday) Deacon and eventually Abbot of Tours (by which we mean the town, not package deals).

**Dunstan** was born near Glastonbury about 909, ten years after the death of Alfred the Great and was a promising candidate for a secular career in the Wessex royal household until a serious illness persuaded him to become a monk. Eventually his abilities were recognised in the Church sphere and he was one of a small band of church leaders who rebuilt monastic life in England which had collapsed after the Viking incursions. He founded (or refounded) abbeys, including Westminster, and initiated a series of reforms: under his guidance a new rule for religious communities was drawn up which encouraged monastics to engage with the communities among whom they lived. After a period in exile abroad he became Archbishop of Canterbury in 959 and the present Coronation rite and oath owe a great deal to his influence, perhaps even to his own pen. Tradition has it that he was a metalworker and bell-founder, a musician, scribe and draughtsman – a veritable Renaissance Man before the Renaissance.. He died on this day in 988.

**Alcuin** doesn't appear in the line-up of saints of the RC Church, but he does in our calendar. He appears as a scholar at the renowned Cathedral School in York (the origins of St Peter's School in the city), where in the 750's he appears as a teacher and then as its head. Intriguingly, there's a possibility he hails from just over the river, since there's a hint that a kinsman had founded a Church at the mouth of the Humber, to which Alcuin became heir.

With or without a Hull accent, Alcuin came to the attention of the wider community of learning, eventually being persuaded by the emperor Charlemagne to join his court at Aachen, where he became master of the palace school. Among his achievements was persuading Charlemagne to abolish the death penalty for being a pagan, and he's also credited (calligraphers take note) with perfecting the elegant script known as *carolingian*. He even wrote a book on mathematical problems, including the one about getting the goat, the wolf and the cabbage across the river. He was a letter-writer, poet and educator and was part of the flowering of Anglo-Saxon influence in continental Europe in the late eighth century. Eventually he went into semi-retirement from the court, becoming Abbot of Tours (still a deacon) and died on May 19<sup>th</sup> 804.

## **Coronavirus Provisions**

The provisions on the BBC and Barton FM as previously listed continue. If you know anyone who'd like a copy of the weekly bulletin, let David know.

Our websites and FB pages contains details of how to join others online for prayer, worship, study, and community life. The Diocesan Website in particular carries material of all sorts, and our own website carries a number of resources also.

See: [www.lincoln.anglican.org](http://www.lincoln.anglican.org)  
[www.stmarysbarton.org.uk](http://www.stmarysbarton.org.uk)  
[www.facebook.com/StMarysChurchBarton](https://www.facebook.com/StMarysChurchBarton)