

**Prayers:**

You might like to use this or another prayer of confession in your prayers today.

**Almighty God as we expose ourselves to your word we confess that we have sinned against you and against our neighbour. We are truly sorry and come to you through your Son our great High Priest giving thanks that through Him we find not judgement but grace and mercy. Amen**

Use this prayer to pray for those you know who are struggling with faith.

**Dear Lord, I pray for my friend. I pray that you will help them with the struggles they are going through. You know exactly what they need. Draw near to them that they might know your presence. Open their eyes, ears and hearts that they will once more turn to you. Amen**

**Collect for the nineteenth Sunday after Trinity:**

Faithful Lord,  
whose steadfast love never ceases  
and whose mercies never come to an end:  
grant us the grace to trust you  
and to receive the gifts of your love,  
new every morning,  
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

**The Lord's Prayer**

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**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.**

**Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.**

**Blessing:**

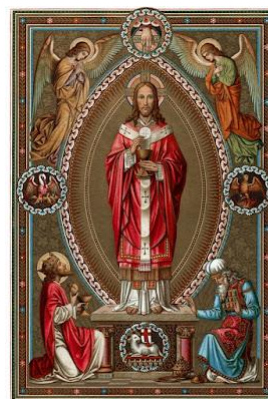
May the love of the Lord Jesus draw us to himself,  
The power of the Lord Jesus strengthen us in his service,  
And the joy of the Lord Jesus fill our hearts. **Amen**

# **BENEFICE SERVICE ON PAPER**

## **For**

## **19<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity**

## **10th October 2021**



**“It's all about Jesus”**

## 19<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity

### Opening Prayer

Lord, direct our thoughts, and teach us to pray. Lift up our hearts to worship you in spirit and in truth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Reading: Hebrews 4: 12-16

<sup>12</sup> For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. <sup>13</sup> Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

### Jesus the great high priest

<sup>14</sup> Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven,<sup>[1]</sup> Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to feel sympathy for our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet he did not sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

### Reflection:

How did you get on with my challenges last week? Have you managed to read through the Book of Hebrews and did you find many activities, parts of your living that were not 'all about Jesus'? I'm not expecting you to tell me the answer to those questions (although do contact me if doing so would be useful) but it may be helpful to spend time reflecting on the answers for yourself.

Our reading this week begins with a warning: just as a sword cuts through flesh and blood the word of God cuts through our thoughts, attitudes and behaviours exposing them for what they are. In a series called 'Its all about Jesus' we might immediately think of the image from John and other places where Jesus is described as The Word of God but in this context the word means something more. In this case we might think of scripture revealing the desire of God, his purposes and commands, we also think of the message from creation – as

environmentalists warn us of the dangers of climate change and we look at polluted waterways, flooded homes and peoples displaced by volcanoes we cannot help but be aware of our lack of care for God's creation. Our conscience too carries with it the word of God as we sense him correcting us. The image of the sword used here is that of an animal being held with its neck exposed, and a sword raised ready for slaughter. The word of God, the writer says exposes us to the judgement of God.

This is not very encouraging reading is it. The idea that we will all face the judgment of God and that He will look deep into the hidden parts of our lives is quite scary. The writer of Hebrews knew this. They were writing to a people depleted already with others wondering whether or not it was worth continuing to be counted as Christian. The letter was intended to stress the seriousness of giving up their faith, to say that doing so would expose them to judgment.

Fortunately, the letter does not leave it there. Judgement does not have to be the end. The answer to this judgement is Jesus. It's all about him. Yes, God will judge us but standing between us and that judgment is Jesus the High Priest. Jesus knows our weaknesses and having been tempted himself understands how we might be that way. As High Priest he mediates between human, and God and his sacrifice means that we find mercy and grace rather than condemnation. This the author says is surely a good reason to remain in the community of faith.

We will look at what it means to say Jesus is a High Priest in the next few weeks but for now, two more things to do. First if you haven't already read through the whole book try and do that this week. If you did read through you might like to do it again but this time, use a Bible Version with which you are not familiar. Secondly spend some time allowing the word of God to speak to you. Be honest with yourself and honest with God. Are there areas in your life which you would prefer remain hidden? Are there parts of your life that you know are not good? As you identify these things bring them to Jesus our High Priest for it is there that you will find not judgment but mercy, forgiveness and grace.

**NB**