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ORDINARY 15B

14th July 2024

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening Prayers

Hymn:

20 STF – Be still, for the presence for the Lord – [YouTube](#)

Be still for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here.

If you can, place your feet firmly on the floor and close your eyes.

Concentrate on your breathing.

What can you hear?

What can you smell?

What can you feel?

What would you like to give thanks for today?

Now take a moment to say sorry.

Sorry for the missed opportunities,

The smiles you didn't share, the words you didn't say,

The times when you were paralysed by your own fear or doubt.

Thank you Lord, for the gifts of the Spirit.

The armour you have provided me with.

So that even on the days when I feel small, when life feels tough,

I know that you walk every step with me,

You are always there, to listen to my prayers.

Let my whole being praise you.

Amen.

You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar.

Readings: Mark 6:14-29 – [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the reading

How would you define a 'prophet'?

The image that often comes to mind is around predicting the future, but that is only a small part of the idea of prophecy in the Bible – it's much more about speaking out against the powers, systems and structures of the present.

John the Baptist is one of the later prophets referred to in the Bible – coming as he does at the beginning of the New Testament story. His prophecy helps to create the space for Jesus' ministry, but he comes to a gruesome end...

In today's reading from the Gospel of Mark, John the Baptist is killed because of his prophecy and his confrontation with Herod. This passage speaks prophetically about what

happens when you come up against resistance and opposition, not least from those who have a stake in the power and systems under attack.

It certainly make for uncomfortable reading, but reminds us that we are called to challenge those things which don't measure up to God's vision.

What do we think? A few questions to consider and perhaps discuss with someone you trust this week:

- Drawing on recent history, who do you consider modern day prophets?
- Which issues and causes do you care passionately about?
- Inspired by John the Baptist and your modern prophets, how are you called to respond?

Hymn:

As you reflection on how you will respond to today's reflection and gospel reading – you might like to sing this song or just read the words.

163 STF – When listening prophets dare to speak

Blessing

God of all grace,

May I go out into this world and embody the values of prophecy – may I find the courage to stand up for justice, to stand up against the powers of oppression and corruption in our world.

May I be a voice for peace, hope and love in my community, my family and the world, and may I see your Spirit at work in me as I seek to play this role in the way that works for me and my skills.

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers

Monday 15th July

- Draw a picture of your local church. Include on the picture all the ways you see God at work, and all the things you want to ask God to work in.
- Pray about it.

Tuesday 16th July

- Make a cup or tea or coffee, or something else to drink. As you drink it, imagine all the places and people that are responsible for making it, from source to your lips.
- Thank God for them, the source of all life.

Wednesday 17th July

- Sit silently for ten minutes and let your mind wander. Offer any thoughts and feelings to God.

Thursday 18th July

- Take a moment to notice the sky today.
- Whether it is sunny and clear where you are, or mostly cloudy, you could spend a few minutes – perhaps several times throughout the day – noticing what is happening above you.
- As you look to the sky, see the vastness of God's creation, stretched out above you. Notice your own smallness, and the smallness of some of the worries and concerns that have been consuming you.
- Give the smallnesses to God, and allow the divine bigness to wash over you.

Friday 19th July

- Today, when you are washing your hands, or in the shower, or brushing your teeth, or even when you are doing the washing up – you could notice the water, falling from the tap or the shower head. You might like to pray these simple words:
- Living God, thank you for the water of life that you give to us. Thank you for the privilege of clean water that I can rely on. Thank you that you wash away all that is sinful and broken in me. Thank you for the water. Amen.

Saturday 20th July

- Gracious God, I know you have plans for me- plans for me to be a part of your kingdom and an agent of love in the world.
- Today, show me how to respond to the invitations I might receive. Help me to be open to the opportunities to share your love.
- In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.