

Last Sunday after Trinity
Sunday, 23rd October 2022



Dear Friends in Christ,

‘Those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.’ (Luke 18: 14)

I’m afraid there might not be much theology in this week’s newsletter, though what there is comes from my personal experience today of other people’s kindness in the face of adversity.

Sadly, on Monday, my handbag went missing whilst I was in Winchester trying to organise a replacement passport for one which had expired during Lockdown. The handbag had all my important documents in it, including my passport, driving licence, birth certificate, utility bills etc. Whether I absent-mindedly put it down somewhere or it was taken I simply can’t say. I don’t recall putting it down, but!

Anyhow, it’s been a week of going around in ever decreasing circles, fighting red tape in trying to replace all the ‘paperwork’ needed to function in our modern society without key documents like passport or birth certificate to validate the other. Believe me, in my attempts to cancel and replace key items, I have come across quite a lot of ‘jobsworth’ people similar to the Pharisees depicted in Luke’s gospel reading set for this weekend, whose holier than thou attitude has hindered my progress and made me feel even more anxious, stressed and cross with myself for being so stupid than I already did! It was an exercise in feeling like the tax collector - more dependant than ever on my loving God as I turned to Him for guidance, strength, mercy and patience!



Today, I had a wonderful experience and I feel as if my prayers have been answered a hundred-fold. Having discerned the obvious thing to do was to replace my passport so that I could then apply for a new driving licence etc., we had to get up at 4am and drive to Newport in Gwent to the Passport Office for an emergency appointment. We had a clear run all the way up and arrived just after 7am and sat in the Asda car park opposite the Passport Office building munching on a breakfast 'picnic' hastily prepared the night before. Alleluia! We were shown into the Passport Office at 9am by some reassuringly kind security staff, and barely had chance to gather our bearings before being invited to a booth where a wonderfully efficient young woman dealt with my case. She was gentle and kind, not at all judgemental or critical of me as others had been this past week.



'Be Thou My Vision' by Mike Moyers

Her humility made her shine, and showed me in practical terms what Jesus was saying when he told the disciples, that, though the tax collector was far from perfect, his faithful prayer to God seeking His mercy and forgiveness meant that he recognised his dependence on God and his need to rely on God's mercy rather than his own independence. The Pharisees, by contrast, paid lip-service to God, going through the motions of prayer but really affirming their own independent self-worth. The young Passport Office official showed me humility, and helped me to resolve my problem with dignity. My new passport will arrive within a week, and then maybe life as I knew it will be restored. The lesson I have learned from this young woman truly is that *'Those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.'*

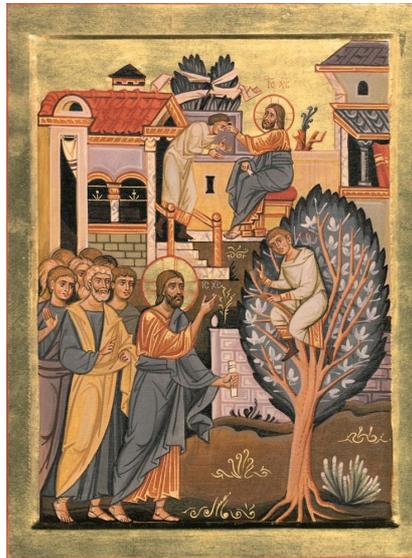
Yours, in the healing love of Christ,

Jax

Rector, The Downs Benefice

Collect Prayer for the Last Sunday after Trinity

Blessed Lord,
who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning:
help us so to hear them,
to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them
that, through patience, and the comfort of your holy word,
we may embrace and for ever hold fast
the hope of everlasting life,
which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.



Luke 18:9-14 - The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Schedule of Services

Date	Ch	Cr	Li	Sp	Wh
23 rd October			Morning Worship with Ben & Esther Brown (MAF)	Morning Worship	8am – Holy Communion (BCP)
26 th October			Mid-week Holy Communion		
30 th October	3pm – All Souls Service <i>(with Wherwell)</i>	Holy Communion		6pm - All Souls Service	6pm - Autumn Meditations
2 nd November			6pm - All Souls Service		
6 th November	Morning Prayer	Holy Communion with All Souls	4pm - Café Church – <i>in the Church Room</i>		
11 th November			10.55 am – Act of Remembrance – <i>at the War Memorial</i>		10.55 am – Act of Remembrance – <i>at the War Memorial</i>
13 th November	<i>(with Wherwell)</i>	10.55am – Remembrance Sunday Service – <i>at the War Memorial</i>	<i>Remembrance Service at the Barracks (time to be confirmed)</i>	10.55am – Remembrance Sunday Service	10.55am – Remembrance Sunday Service – <i>at the War Memorial (with Chilbolton)</i>
20 th November	Holy Communion	Morning Worship	6pm – Peace & Wholeness Service	8am – Holy Communion (BCP)	6pm - Autumn Meditations
23 rd November			Mid-week Holy Communion		
27 th November	5pm – Advent Meditation		11.15am - Patronal Festival with Commissioning of the Anna Chaplain	Morning Worship	8am – Holy Communion (BCP) PLUS 5.30pm – Advent Carol Service