

Psalm and Readings Thursday 9th May 2024 - Ascension Day

Psalm 110

The Lord says to my lord,
‘Sit at my right hand
until I make your enemies your footstool.’

The Lord sends out from Zion
your mighty sceptre.
Rule in the midst of your foes.
Your people will offer themselves willingly
on the day you lead your forces
on the holy mountains.

From the womb of the morning,
like dew, your youth will come to you.
The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind,
‘You are a priest for ever according to the order
of Melchizedek.’

The Lord is at your right hand;
he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath.
He will execute judgement among the nations,
filling them with corpses;
he will shatter heads
over the wide earth.
He will drink from the stream by the path;
therefore he will lift up his head.

Isaiah 52:7-end

How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of the messenger who announces
peace,
who brings good news,
who announces salvation,
who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns.’
Listen! Your sentinels lift up their voices,
together they sing for joy;
for in plain sight they see
the return of the Lord to Zion.
Break forth together into singing,
you ruins of Jerusalem;
for the Lord has comforted his people,
he has redeemed Jerusalem.
The Lord has bared his holy arm
before the eyes of all the nations;
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

Depart, depart, go out from there!
Touch no unclean thing;
go out from the midst of it, purify yourselves,
you who carry the vessels of the Lord.
For you shall not go out in haste,
and you shall not go in flight;
for the Lord will go before you,
and the God of Israel will be your rearguard.

See, my servant shall prosper;
he shall be exalted and lifted up,
and shall be very high.
Just as there were many who were astonished at
him
—so marred was his appearance, beyond
human semblance,
and his form beyond that of mortals—
so he shall startle many nations;
kings shall shut their mouths because of him;
for that which had not been told them they shall
see,
and that which they had not heard they shall
contemplate.

Hebrews 7:11-28

Now if perfection had been attainable through
the levitical priesthood—for the people received
the law under this priesthood—what further need
would there have been to speak of another priest
arising according to the order of Melchizedek,
rather than one according to the order of Aaron?
For when there is a change in the priesthood,
there is necessarily a change in the law as well.
Now the one of whom these things are spoken
belonged to another tribe, from which no one has
ever served at the altar. For it is evident that our
Lord was descended from Judah, and in
connection with that tribe Moses said nothing
about priests.

It is even more obvious when another priest
arises, resembling Melchizedek, one who has
become a priest, not through a legal requirement
concerning physical descent, but through the
power of an indestructible life. For it is attested of
him,

‘You are a priest for ever,
according to the order of Melchizedek.’

There is, on the one hand, the abrogation of an earlier commandment because it was weak and ineffectual (for the law made nothing perfect); there is, on the other hand, the introduction of a better hope, through which we approach God.

This was confirmed with an oath; for others who became priests took their office without an oath, but this one became a priest with an oath, because of the one who said to him,

‘The Lord has sworn
and will not change his mind,
“You are a priest for ever”’ —

accordingly Jesus has also become the guarantee of a better covenant.

Furthermore, the former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office; but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues for ever. Consequently he is able for all time to save those who approach God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. Unlike the other high priests, he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for those of the people; this he did once for all when he offered himself. For the law appoints as high priests those who are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect for ever.

A prayer for this time of transition

Faithful and loving God
we hold our Benefice before you in this time of transition.
Be with us in our waiting, in our expectation and in our preparation.
Be with our new incumbent as he or she also waits, expects and prepares.
Bring us together in love for you and for this Benefice,
and be our light for the way ahead.
In Jesus’ name,
Amen

The Collect of the Day

Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that as we believe your only–begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ
to have ascended into the heavens,
so we in heart and mind may also ascend
and with him continually dwell;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen