

## Readings for the Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost

6<sup>th</sup> November 2022

### First Reading: Haggai 1:15-2:9

In the second year of King Darius, in the seventh month, on the twenty-first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by the prophet Haggai, saying: Speak now to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, and say, Who is left among you that saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Is it not in your sight as nothing?

Yet now take courage, O Zerubbabel, says the LORD; take courage, O Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; take courage, all you people of the land, says the LORD; work, for I am with you, says the LORD of hosts, according to the promise that I made you when you came out of Egypt. My spirit abides among you; do not fear.

For thus says the LORD of hosts: Once again, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land; and I will shake all the nations, so that the treasure of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house with splendour, says the LORD of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, says the LORD of hosts. The latter splendour of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts; and in this place I will give prosperity, says the LORD of hosts.

### Second Reading: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-5,13-17

As to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we beg you, brothers and sisters, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as though from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord is already here. Let no one deceive you in any way; for that day will not come unless the rebellion comes first and the lawless one is revealed, the one destined for destruction. He opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, declaring himself to be God. Do you not remember that I told you these things when I was still with you?

But we must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth. For this purpose he called you through our proclamation of the good news, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by our letter. Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, comfort your hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word.

### Gospel: St Luke 20:27-38

Some Sadducees, those who say there is no resurrection, came to Jesus, and asked him a question, 'Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, leaving a wife but no children, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother. Now there were seven brothers; the first married, and died childless; then the second and the third married her, and so in the same way all seven died childless. Finally the woman also died. In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had married her.'

Jesus said to them, 'Those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage; but those who are considered worthy of a place in that age and in the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. Indeed they cannot die any more, because they are like angels and are children of God, being children of the resurrection. And the fact that the dead are raised Moses himself showed, in the story about the bush, where he speaks of the Lord as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now he is God not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all of them are alive.'

### **A Reflection for the Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost**

May I once again thank Reverend Clare for allowing me to share in the Eucharistic celebration on Sunday and to Fr David as well for his kindness.

The readings for this Sunday may at first hearing be a strange mixture about rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem, remaining confident in God's faithfulness and Jesus reminding his hearers that God's word needs to be used carefully and thoughtfully in our conversations. Nevertheless, if there is a theme which might be helpful, perhaps it could be the word treasure and our need to recognise just how much treasure our faith in Jesus contains?

In the Old Testament reading from Haggai much treasure of silver and gold would be needed for rebuilding the Temple to make it look like Solomon's original Temple. In Thessalonians Paul is suggesting to his readers that they are spiritual treasure in their relationship with God and will find their reward in heaven. In the Gospel Jesus is gently and graciously reminding the Sadducee that his question overlooks the depth of treasure to be found in God's word.

Treasure, can therefore be seen as something not only to possess but also to recognise in another person's life or personality or in the message our wonderful Saviour Jesus Christ offers to us in his work of salvation? In St Matthew's gospel chapter 13 Jesus told his disciples the parables about "something precious buried in a field" and the "pearl of great price". Following Jesus is to mean everything to us whatever the challenge.

Likewise, treasure can conjure up daring deeds of searching and exploration and the use of ancient parchments or maps to find where it might be buried? (I understand a Viking treasure hoard lies buried somewhere underneath St Mary's?!) Nevertheless, the most famous novel associated with this word is by Robert Louis Stevenson, "Treasure Island" and although the treasure is found it is not without cost or sacrifice, he writes these words;

"We are all travellers in the wilderness of this world, and the best we can find in our travels is an honest friend."

True treasure is perhaps not only to find the friendship of that "honest friend(s)", but also to find the wonderful loving friendship of Jesus. Treasure indeed and not least offered to each of us in the Eucharist. May the words of this well known hymn help us in our reflections this week?

“What a friend we have in Jesus,  
All our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry  
Everything to God in prayer!  
O what peace we often forfeit,  
O what needless pain we bear –  
All because we do not carry  
Everything to God in prayer!  
Have we trials and temptations?  
Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged:  
Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
Can we find a friend so faithful,  
Who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness –  
Take it to the Lord in prayer!

Are we weak and heavy-laden,  
Cumbered with a load of care?  
Jesus only is our refuge,  
Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee?  
Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
In his arm he'll take and shield thee,  
Thou wilt find a solace there.”

With thanks, prayers and best wishes,

Fr Malcolm Crook OGS