

Their observation begs the question: are any beyond God's mercy? . The Roman authorities contracted out collection of taxes; how a tax collector got the money was up to him. Usury, fraud and excessive profits were common. Tax collectors worked for tax farmers, who were often foreigners, making them ritually unclean. Now Jesus defends associating with these people, using parables. Our reading includes two: vv. 4-6 and 8-9. "Sheep" (v. 4) left in the "wilderness" were defenceless from wolf and lion attacks. Jesus asks if you had many and lost one, wouldn't you search until you found it? expecting the answer of course I would! He explains the parables in v. 7 and v. 10: God is shepherd/housewife; the lost sheep/coin are people who repent, who turn to God. God willingly accepts them; in fact, he rejoices, as does the community ("friends and neighbours", vv. 6, 9)! Neither the sheep nor the coin can find their owner; God cares about those unable to find him; he seeks them. But, as so often in parables, there are twists to them which helps people remember them: what shepherd would leave his flock "in the wilderness" (v. 4)? The Pharisees would find God symbolized by a woman as outrageous, and first-century shepherds were considered lawless and dishonest. (The coin, v. 8 was a drachma, a day's wage.) Would a shepherd really care about one sheep out of "a hundred" (v. 4)? God is like that.

© 1996-2022 Chris Haslam

### ~ Notices ~

**Ukraine** The Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal has launched a special appeal encouraging all parishes in Ireland to support the appeal. To donate please use the link on our website: <https://clareanglicans.ie> or go direct to: [www.christianaid.ie](http://www.christianaid.ie)

**Burren Walk** Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> Sept starting at 10.30am from the parking area just past the Carron Research station (on what3words app – install.fulfilling.cluttered). We shall first meet outside Cassidy's Pub in Carron at 10.15am, with lunch perhaps at the Burren Perfumery or Caherconnell fort around 1.15pm. I shall put the sign-up sheet back in church – please put a tick by your name if you can make this date. Total cost €150 for the group.

**Living the Questions Course** Start date to be confirmed, but please put your name down on the sign-up sheet if you are interested so I can gauge numbers.

**Book Club** There is a sign-up sheet if you might be interested in joining a church book club.

### Choir

This is an appeal to anyone who might like to reform a choir for St Columba's Church, sadly put in abeyance by the Covid pandemic. Please let the Rector know if you would like to be part of a church choir.

### Concerts booked

Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept 7.30pm – *Music Generation Clare* with trad trio Pádraig Rynne, Tara Breen and Jim Murray

Friday 14<sup>th</sup> October 7.30pm – *Jaskane*, chamber/folk trio

**Website:** [clareanglicans.ie](http://clareanglicans.ie)

**YouTube:** [www.youtube.com/c/clareanglicans](http://www.youtube.com/c/clareanglicans)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/clare.anglicans](http://www.facebook.com/clare.anglicans)

**Rector:** Email: [frkevinobrien@me.com](mailto:frkevinobrien@me.com)

**Tel:** 065 672 4721

*New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicized Edition, copyright © 1989, 1995 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.*

<http://nrsvbibles.org> The *Common Worship psalter* is © The Archbishops' Council of the Church of England, 2000.



# 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity 2022 (Year C)

## Collect

Almighty God, you search us and know us: may we rely on you in strength and rest on you in weakness, now and in all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

**Suggested Hymns** - For the online service you might like to view these hymns with lyrics on YouTube.

- 1) All people that on earth do dwell  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmGwHdNtpEw>
- 2) Come down O love divine  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=edK3Vv7Qwo4>
- 3) Jesu, lover of my soul  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFaiiPv-Q6I>
- 4) **King of Glory, King of peace (358)**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYqgBMrmeZA>

## Exodus 32.7-14

The Lord said to Moses, 'Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf, and have worshipped it and sacrificed to it, and said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!"' The Lord said to Moses, 'I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. Now let me alone, so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them; and of you I will make a great nation.'

But Moses implored the Lord his God, and said, 'O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, "It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth"? Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, "I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it for ever."' And the Lord changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.

## Psalms 51.1-11

Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy  
blot out my transgressions.  
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
and cleanse me from my sin.  
For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is ever before me.  
Against you, you alone, have I sinned,  
and done what is evil in your sight,  
so that you are justified in your sentence  
and blameless when you pass judgement.  
Indeed, I was born guilty,  
a sinner when my mother conceived me.  
You desire truth in the inward being;  
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.  
Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.  
Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my iniquities.  
Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and put a new and right spirit within me.  
Do not cast me away from your presence,  
and do not take your holy spirit from me.

### 1 Timothy 1.12-17

I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he judged me faithful and appointed me to his service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and a man of violence. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the foremost. But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life. To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen

### Luke 15.1-10

Now all the tax-collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to Jesus. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, 'This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.'

So he told them this parable: 'Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost." Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.

'Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbours, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost." Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.'

### Post Communion Prayer

God our creator, you feed your children with the true manna, the living bread from heaven: let this holy food sustain us through our earthly pilgrimage until we come to that place where hunger and thirst are no more; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Commentary

#### Exodus 32:1-14

The people of Israel have received the Ten Commandments verbally, but Moses is still up on Mount Sinai receiving them in writing. To the people, he is "delayed" (or shamefully late, per another translation). They ask Aaron to "make gods", thus breaking the first (and second) Commandments. Why is "gods" plural? Either Aaron compromises by only making one calf, or (more likely) the story as handed down orally mentioned only one. Then, when it was written down, the plural was used. But why? After Solomon's death (in 930 BC), Israel split into two kingdoms. To avoid people visiting Jerusalem (which was in the south), the king of the northern kingdom, Jeroboam, had two golden calves made, and had

one set up at each of two alternative places of worship (see 1 Kings 12:28-30). The writer had two objectives (which to us conflict here): to record history, and to teach that Jerusalem was the only proper centre of worship.

In our reading, the people wilfully rebel against God. (Modern Jewish translations consider Elohim, god or "gods", to be singular, thus implying that Judaism has always been monotheistic.) In v. 7, by telling Moses that Israel is "your" people, God threatens Israel. He says that they have "acted perversely" or succumbed to moral decay. (The word translated "revel" in v. 6 has connotations of immorality.) God threatens his "wrath" (v. 10); he even offers to make Moses the founder of a new "great nation". But Moses does not give in to this temptation; rather he stands by Israel. He pleads with God: you have looked after us so far, so why quit now? Won't the Egyptians be able to claim that you are evil: that you led the people of Israel out into the desert in order to kill them? (v. 12) Please God, don't go back on your promises to the patriarchs! In v. 14, God does change "his mind" or lets himself be sorry, but in vv. 15-35 Moses gets angry with the people, smashes the law tablets, burns and grinds up the calf, and makes the people drink water polluted with the resulting gold powder. Aaron offers a weak excuse for his actions (the people made me do it; the fire formed the gold into a calf) and the Levites, as ordered by God through Moses, put some of the people to death, as punishment. Moses wins pardon for the people, but God punishes all with a plague.

### Psalm 51:1-12

This psalm speaks of rebuilding Jerusalem (v. 18), so we know that it was written during, or shortly after, the Exile. The emphasis is on an individual's sin, and prayers for personal pardon and restoration. The psalmist seeks cleansing from "iniquity" (vv. 2, 9) and "sin(s)". The notion of lifelong sinfulness (v. 5) is also in Genesis 8:21: "... for the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth" (although the psalmist may simply be confessing that he has been thoroughly sinful.) In v. 6, he knows that God will seek truth in his very being; this is where he will receive understanding ("wisdom"). Perhaps v. 8b says he is ill – because of his sin. He even asks God to hide his face from his sins (v. 9), to be so gracious and compassionate as to turn a blind eye. May God restore him, bring him back to godliness, give him a clear conscience, a "clean heart" (v. 10), "new" "right" (God-oriented) "spirit". Only God can purify. May God give him joy and sustenance, through his "holy spirit" (v. 11).

### 1 Timothy 1:12-17

The author has warned against false teachers ("teachers of the law", v. 7) who indulge in elaborations on, and deviations from, the faith (in the sense of the facts of Christianity) rather than living the kind of life these truths demand. "Love" (v. 5) should be the basis for Christian conduct – through personal integrity, "a good conscience" and "sincere faith". Mosaic "law is good" (v. 8) but those who have "understanding" (v. 9), who lead Christ-like lives, have no need of it.

Now, in vv. 12-17, the author speaks as Paul. God has given his free gift of love to Paul, even though he previously distorted God's message ("blasphemer", v. 13) and persecuted Christians. God showed him mercy because he did not know Christ, "had acted ignorantly in unbelief". The doctrine that "Christ ... came into the world to save sinners" (v. 15) is found in the gospels; it is worthy of belief ("sure"). Paul is the greatest of sinners ("foremost") for his pre-conversion activities, but God pardoned even him. (God did seek out Paul.) As such, he is a prime "example" (v. 16) for all who come to believe, who are converted. As "King of the [earthly] ages" (v. 17) and yet "immortal, invisible", God is transcendent.

### Luke 15:1-10

Jesus is keeping company with "tax collectors and sinners", people avoided and despised by apparently godly people like "the Pharisees and the scribes" (v. 2).