

Beaminster Area Team

God our Father, renew our hope. By the Holy Spirit's power, strengthen us to pray readily serve joyfully and grow abundantly rejoicing in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Week: 11th July 2021, Sixth Sunday after Trinity

Old Testament: Amos 7. 7-15
Psalm: Psalm 85. 8-13
New Testament: Ephesians 1. 3-14
Gospel: Mark 6. 14-29

Reflection on the Gospel reading, written by Christopher Herbert, Copyright ©The Archbishops' Council 2017.

The haunting image of a young woman carrying a human head on a platter and giving it to her mother is only one of many contrasts in the story. These include the contrasts between worldly power (Herod Antipas) and religious poverty (John the Baptist); between the immoral life of the king and the righteous, ascetic life of the prophet; and between the luxury of the palace and the barrenness of the prison cell.

Within the story of John the Baptist's execution, there are some links with Jesus' own death: both Jesus and John were subject to despotic injustice; both were tried by men who found them deeply perplexing. Herod knew in his heart of Pontius Pilate said of Jesus at the trial: "I find no case against him" (John 18:38).

The contrasts inside the story and the links with Jesus' life "outside" the story give the episode its power and fascination. When the overarching hubris, vanity and amorality of Herod are confronted by the ascetic, self-forgetful and righteous prophet, the stage is set for a tragic confrontation. When the Herods of today murder the John the Baptists of today, is it not the duty of Christians to protest – and to work for a world where, instead of brutality, the watchwords become repentance and reconciliation?

Collect for the Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

Merciful God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as pass our understanding: pour into our hearts such love toward you that we, loving you in all things and above all things, may obtain your promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Worship to enjoy at home

BBC Radio 4, 8.10am, Sunday Worship; Songs of Praise BBC1 1.15pm

A Useful Telephone Link from The Church of England. This is a free number where you can listen to prayers, reflections and hymns and join in worship with others.

