

Sunday 3 August 2025
Evensong on the Seventh Sunday After Trinity

Liverpool Parish Church

OT: Gen 50:4-end

Ps: 107:1-9

NT: 1 Cor 14:1-9

It is the first Sunday of August and the summer holidays are in full swing. The word summer being used loosely as the sunshine seems to have disappeared! Children and families are taking a break from school and colleges to have a well-earned rest. However, whilst this is a time of rest and refreshment, it can be a time of increased hardship and worry about how to keep children fed, safe and occupied. Schools and colleges can be havens for children and young people. A place not only to develop academic attainment, but to develop social skills and to receive a meal at lunchtime. During holiday times, there can be an increased risk of children suffering immense hardship and potential harm. It is something to ponder on and consider are there any ways in which we could help those suffering hardship in our communities.

In our reading this evening, we have heard how Joseph forgives his brothers and despite all that they had subjected him to, he was able to say to them: *"So have no fear, I myself will provide for you and your little ones"*. Providing for our families is an important task and can be very difficult at times. Forgiveness is a difficult concept at times to understand. God's grace enables us to try and forgive others, as God has forgiven us, time after time after time. To forgive someone is to let go of the hurt and to try and move on, before it eats you up completely. It is easier said than done however, and we should think about how we can work on any unresolved issues we may have. Any people we've been unable to forgive, hurts that are still hurting and ask for God's grace in these situations.

Those who know me well, know that many years ago, in a previous employment (not Liverpool City Council I hasten to add), I was subjected to some horrific bullying. The bullying I suffered was at the hands of a senior manager. I found this to be a very hard and upsetting time. I had union support and ultimately the support from God, which led to me being removed from that situation and placed elsewhere. I look back on this time and feel whilst it was unpleasant, it has made me more alert to this behaviour and able to protect myself from any other forms of bullying. It has taken a long time, but I have forgiven the perpetrator of the bullying, they won't know that, but I know, and God knows. In being able to forgive, I've freed up and let go of the hurt and pain I suffered and well and truly moved on. Forgiveness is hard, but I'm glad I've been able to do it in this situation.

In the first letter to the Corinthians from Paul, he is emphasising the need to build the church up, through prophesy rather than speaking in tongues. Building the church up, I feel that is what is needed in the Anglican communion as a whole. There is currently further division because the Church in Wales has appointed a female gay Archbishop. Whilst this

appointment is welcomed by me personally and lots of other people who are inclusive, Gafcon have issued a statement which is extremely divisive and certainly does nothing to build up the church. The statement includes phrases such as: *“We must stand again against the relentless pressure of Anglican revisionists who blatantly impose their immorality upon Christ’s precious church”*.

I personally don’t feel there is any immorality in a female gay Archbishop, and she certainly hasn’t been imposed but appointed in good faith. If only our brothers and sisters in Gafcon could stop and reflect upon God’s love and how his love is abundant and all encompassing and knows no bounds.

During our interregnum here at Liverpool Parish Church, we are indeed working hard to build up the church. The congregation, lay people and clergy have all pulled together, in a cohesive effort to ensure the Gospel is proclaimed and lived out in this place. Last Saturday our church hosted the Liverpool Pride Vigil in partnership with Liverpool Pride and Sahir House. This was a moving and important service and an example of our building the church up in this place. We are blessed in the work that goes on here with the children in our Sunday School and thanks to those who lead and plan the sessions for them week by week. Those children who attend the Sunday School will grow up to be adults continuing the good work of building up the church.

To recap on the thoughts I’ve shared, I am saying to us this evening that God’s love is abundant and knows no bounds. We must build up the church, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, forgive others, and be a good neighbour. The work of the Micah foodbank is invaluable and if we are able, a good place to start would be to make a donation to them. God’s love is all encompassing and is beyond the structures of the church, including the views of Gafcon, divisive as they are. The psalmist tells us about God’s steadfast love; let us demonstrate that steadfast love of God to everyone we meet in the coming weeks.

Mthr Jennifer Brady