

## *A reflection from Leisa for the first Sunday after Trinity*

Hoping to be back in our buildings...  
Building hope back into our communities...

Vision, Compassion, Gathering, Sending, that is the movement in the Gospel reading for this Sunday. As He went throughout the cities and villages, Jesus 'saw'. This is not a minor detail. Many people go through life wondering if anyone notices. The crowds Jesus saw were "helpless and harassed" He noted they were like sheep without a shepherd - they had neither protector nor provider. Simply look around today. Some are tossed about by injustice, grief, and abuse of authority. Others are flayed by disease, economic strain, and isolation and fear. What do you see in our global, national and local communities today?

The problem, in part, is many people do not see. Perhaps they cannot, having never put themselves in the position to see. Perhaps they will not, refusing to look outside their own lives and their own bubbles. Contrast them (us) with Jesus. Jesus sees. He sees the crowds. He sees their helplessness. He sees those who are harassing them, and He does not look away. This is not surprising, for He is the Son of the One who sees all things—good, bad, and ugly, in us all. What do we see in our nation, global and local communities today?

Truly seeing others and their plight is a necessary beginning in responding to the call of God. But, if being seen is not accompanied by being helped, it does not do much. Having seen the crowds, Jesus has compassion. We can be reminded, throughout the whole ministry of Jesus that He came among us to be with us, in the joy and challenges of our humanity - to suffer *with* us before He suffered on Golgotha *for* us.

Many in our communities have journeyed with those who have suffered and are suffering, through Covid 19. Many have seen and have responded to the call to help those who feel helpless and harassed by the simple needs of everyday life and suffering with the pain of death, disease and disappointment. Many of us have found that God has called us in a new way to respond to the plight of others and are looking forwards for a vision of church and community for the future. Is God calling you afresh today?

The compassion of Jesus, which arises from seeing the suffering of the crowds, leads Him to gather. He begins by gathering the twelve. Many of us are longing to gather, hoping to get back into our church buildings to worship together, to pray in sacred places, to experience the fullness of the body of Christ. When we speak of gathering in these current days, it is often that we speak of who can and who should and for what purpose?

Jesus gathers his disciples and sends them as apostles saying: “go to the lost sheep of Israel and as you go proclaim the good news, The Kingdom of God has come near”. He sends them out to cure every disease and every sickness. I wonder who are the lost sheep of Israel, for us today? Whilst we focus our attention on the disease of Covid 19, what might God also be calling us to notice and respond to, in our communities today?

Last week, the Gospel reading reminded us of the Great Commission or sending. In a sense, this week’s reading gives us the background. Before the sending is the gathering. Before the gathering is the compassion. Before the compassion is the seeing. And it all starts with a gracious God.

Amen.

*Leisa*

An appropriate and timely prayer shared by Anne Linington who says:

*“I received this prayer in an e-mail which I think sums up our need to move forward from the present to the future with God”*

*Ever present God, be with us in our isolation,  
Be close to us in our distancing, be healing in our sickness,  
Be light in our darkness, be wisdom in our confusion,  
Be all that is familiar when all is unfamiliar.  
That when the doors reopen, we may with the zeal of  
Pentecost  
Inhabit our communities and speak of your goodness  
To an emerging world.  
For Jesus’ sake.  
Amen.*

*(Andrew Nunn)*



11<sup>th</sup> June 2020