

## Sixth Sunday of Easter Sunday, May 21, 2017

**The Collect:** O God, you have prepared for those who love you such good things as surpass our understanding: Pour into our hearts such love towards 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 our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **First Lesson: Acts 17:22-31 read from the King James Bible**

Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, *To The Unknown God*. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

For as much then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; where of he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

### **The Word of the Lord**

## **Psalm 66:7-18 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer**

7 Bless our God, you peoples; \* make the voice of his praise to be heard;

8 Who holds our souls in life, \* and will not allow our feet to slip.

9 For you, O God, have proved us; \* you have tried us just as silver is tried.

10 You brought us into the snare; \* you laid heavy burdens upon our backs.

11 You let enemies ride over our heads; we went through fire and water; \* but you brought us out into a place of refreshment.

12 I will enter your house with burnt-offerings and will pay you my vows, \* which I promised with my lips and spoke with my mouth when I was in trouble.

13 I will offer you sacrifices of fat beasts with the smoke of rams; \* I will give you oxen and goats.

14 Come and listen, all you who fear God, \* and I will tell you what he has done for me.

15 I called out to him with my mouth, \* and his praise was on my tongue.

16 If I had found evil in my heart, \* the Lord would not have heard me;

17 But in truth God has heard me; \* he has attended to the voice of my prayer.

18 Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer, \* nor withheld his love from me.

## **Epistle: 1 Peter 3:13-22 read from the Lexham English Bible**

And who is the one who will harm you if you are a zealous adherent for what is good? But even if you might suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. And do not be afraid of their intimidation or be disturbed, but set Christ apart as Lord in your hearts, always ready to make a defense to anyone who asks you for an accounting concerning the hope that is in you. But do so with courtesy and respect, having a good conscience, so that in the things in which you are slandered, the ones who malign your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if God wills it, than for doing evil.

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, in order that he could bring you to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, who were formerly disobedient, when the patience of God waited in the days of Noah, while an ark was being constructed, in which a few—that is, eight souls—were rescued through water. And also, corresponding to this, baptism now saves you,

not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, with angels and authorities and powers having been subjected to him.

### **The Word of the Lord**

#### **Gospel: John 14:15-21 read from the Message Bible**

“If you love me, show it by doing what I’ve told you. I will talk to the Father, and he’ll provide you another Friend so that you will always have someone with you. This Friend is the Spirit of Truth. The godless world can’t take him in because it doesn’t have eyes to see him, doesn’t know what to look for. But you know him already because he has been staying with you, and will even be in you!

“I will not leave you orphaned. I’m coming back. In just a little while the world will no longer see me, but you’re going to see me because I am alive and you’re about to come alive. At that moment you will know absolutely that I’m in my Father, and you’re in me, and I’m in you.

“The person who knows my commandments and keeps them, that’s who loves me. And the person who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and make myself plain to him.”

### **The Gospel of the Lord**

#### **Closing Prayer: On May 27th we remember Bertha and Ethelbert, Queen and King of Kent**

Bertha was the Queen of Kent whose influence led to the introduction of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England. Bertha was the daughter of Charibert the 1st, Merovingian King of Paris. When she married the pagan King Ethelberht of Kent, she brought her chaplain, Liudhard, with her to England. She restored a Christian church in Canterbury, which dated from Roman times, dedicating it to Saint Martin of Tours. The present St Martin's at Canterbury occupies the same site. Augustine of Canterbury, whose mission was sent by Pope Gregory the 1st to preach the Gospel in England in 596, owed much of his favorable reception to the influence of

Bertha.

Ethelberht – was King of Kent from about 580 or 590 until his death on February 24th, 616. The monk St. Bede in his book, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, lists Ethelbert as the third king to hold imperium over other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. In the late ninth century Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, Ethelbert is referred to as a bretwalda, or "Britain-ruler". He was the first English king to convert to Christianity.

The native Britons had converted to Christianity under Roman rule. The Anglo-Saxon invasions separated the British church from European Christianity for centuries, so the church in Rome had no presence or authority in Britain, and in fact, Rome knew so little about the British church that it was unaware of any schism in customs. Ethelbert, however, would have known something about the Roman church from his French wife, Bertha, who had brought a bishop, Liudhard, across the Channel with her when they were married. Ethelbert had a chapel built for her.

In 596, Pope Gregory the Great sent Augustine, prior of the monastery of St. Andrew in Rome, to England as a missionary, and in 597, a group of nearly forty monks, led by Augustine, landed on the Isle of Thanet in Kent. According to St. Bede, Ethelbert was sufficiently distrustful of the newcomers to insist on meeting them under the open sky, to prevent them from performing sorcery. The monks impressed Ethelbert, but he was not converted immediately. He agreed to allow the mission to settle in Canterbury and permitted them to preach.

It is not known when Ethelbert became a Christian. At the latest, Ethelbert must have converted before 601, in that year Gregory wrote to him as a Christian king. An old tradition records that Ethelbert converted on June 1st (Pentecost in that year), in the summer of the year that Augustine arrived.

Bertha and Ethelbert later were canonized for their roles in establishing Christianity among the Anglo-Saxons.

**Let us pray:** God of Creation, who molded humanity from the fertile earth: Grant that we, following the good examples of Queen Bertha and King Ethelbert, may gladly receive and fruitfully nurture the seed of the Gospel to the bounty of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever.

**Amen.**