



St Peter, c1616. Peter Paul Rubens 1577-1640. National Gallery of Art Washington DC

Saint Peter, portrayed here in half-length as a slightly balding, full-bearded patriarch, stands grasping the keys of heaven. With his deep-set eyes gazing upward to the spiritual realm, he projects the commanding authority of the apostle whom Jesus identified as the rock upon which he would build his Church and the man to whom he would entrust with the kingdom of heaven. Draped in an ochre-colored robe, his body feels strong and powerful, a reminder of his life as fisherman before joining Jesus's disciples.

Images of the twelve apostles were popular during the Catholic Counter Reformation, particularly in the wake of the Council of Trent (1565), which emphasized the great importance of saints as intercessors for the faithful. Series depicting the twelve apostles proliferated at that time, the most impressive of which was the one Peter Paul Rubens produced in the early 1610s for the Duke of Lerma, the powerful minister to King Philip III of Spain (now in the Prado).

The Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

27 August 2023

Welcome to St Philip's

We acknowledge the Ngambri and Ngunnawal people, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we worship, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present and emerging. We extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who worship with us.

St Philip's COVIDSafe Plan We are asking folk not attend church if they feel unwell, to be aware of their hand hygiene and to be mindful of social distance. Thank you. Masks are available for those who wish to wear one

Pew sheet & Order of Service: the full Pew sheet with more news and reflections is available on our **website**. The QR code in the pews will direct you to the current edition, please use your phone/tablet and follow along. Service cards, Pew Bibles and Prayer Books are also available.

Offertory: at the 'offertory' our gifts are brought forward, an opportunity for you to make your contribution. A self-serve EFTPOS machine is available in the foyer. St Philip's EFT details are also available if you would like to make a direct transfer or support us through a regular transfer: 702-389 05202512. Giving cards are in the foyer if you wish to place something in the offertory bag after giving electronically.

Communion: if you are baptised you are welcome to receive communion. If you would like to receive a blessing, please cross your hands on your chest as you come forward.

To volunteer as a reader, sidesperson, welcomer or another role on the Roster then please email rosters@stphilipsoconnor.org.au

St Philips O'Connor, ACT

www.stphilipsoconnor.org.au

email: comeandsee@stphilipsoconnor.org.au

Rector: The Rev'd Martin Johnson



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Eucharist for the Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Introit Hymn 432(TiS) (10am)

Christ is made the sure foundation,
Christ the head and cornerstone,
chosen by the Lord, and precious,
binding all the church in one,
holy Zion's help for ever,
and her confidence alone.

All that dedicated city,
dearly loved of God on high,
in exultant jubilation
pours perpetual melody;
God the Three in One adoring,
praising him eternally.

Here among us, where we call you
come, O Lord our God, today;
with your gentle lovingkindness
hear your people as we pray,
and your fullest benediction
pour upon us here today.

Here bestow on all your people
what we ask of you to gain,

what we gain from you for ever
with the blessed to retain,
and hereafter in your glory
evermore with you to reign.

Praise and honour to the Father,
praise and honour to the Son,
praise and honour to the Spirit,
ever Three and ever One,
one in might and one in glory
while eternal ages run.

*From Urbus beata Hierusalem, Latin c.7th cent.
Tr John Mason Neale 1818-66*

Entrance Antiphon

Martha said, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

John 11:17

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ ✠ and the Love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with you all.

And also with you.

Let us pray:

**Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy,
welcoming sinners and inviting them to the Lord's table.
Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, confident in God's forgiveness.

**Merciful God,
our maker and our judge,
we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,
and in what we have failed to do:
we have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves;
we repent, and are sorry for all our sins.
Father, forgive us.
Strengthen us to love and obey you
in newness of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Almighty God, who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith:
pardon you ✠ and set you free from all your sins,
strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

**Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy.**

Gloria

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to God's people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and father,
 we worship you, we give you thanks,
 we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only son of the father,
 Lord God, Lamb of God,
 you take away the sin of the world:
 have mercy on us;
 you are seated at the righthand of the Father:
 receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High
 Jesus Christ,
 with the Holy Spirit,
 in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray:
O God, fount of all wisdom,
in the humble witness of the apostle Peter
you have shown the foundation of our faith:
give us the light of your Spirit,
that, recognizing in Jesus of Nazareth
 the Son of the living God,
we may be living stones
 for the building up of your holy Church;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Today's Readings

A reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah (51:1-6)

Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness,
you that seek the Lord.

Look to the rock from which you were hewn,
and to the quarry from which you were dug.

² Look to Abraham your father
and to Sarah who bore you;
for he was but one when I called him,
but I blessed him and made him many.

³ For the Lord will comfort Zion;
he will comfort all her waste places,
and will make her wilderness like Eden,
her desert like the garden of the Lord;
joy and gladness will be found in her,
thanksgiving and the voice of song.

⁴ Listen to me, my people,
and give heed to me, my nation;
for a teaching will go out from me,
and my justice for a light to the peoples.

⁵ I will bring near my deliverance swiftly,
my salvation has gone out
and my arms will rule the peoples;
the coastlands wait for me,
and for my arm they hope.

⁶ Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
and look at the earth beneath;
for the heavens will vanish like smoke,
the earth will wear out like a garment,
and those who live on it will die like gnats;
but my salvation will be for ever,
and my deliverance will never be ended. For the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 138

I will give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart:
even before the gods will I sing your praises.

**I will bow down toward your holy temple
and give thanks to your name:
because of your faithfulness and your loving-kindness,
for you have made your name and your word
supreme over all things.**

At a time when I called to you, you gave me answer:
and put new strength within my soul.

**All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord:
for they have heard the words of your mouth;**

And they shall sing of the ways of the Lord:
that the glory of the Lord is great.

**For though the Lord is exalted, he looks upon the lowly:
but he humbles the proud from afar.**

Though I walk in the midst of danger,
yet will you preserve my life:
you will stretch out your hand against the fury of my enemies,
and your right hand shall save me.

**The Lord will complete his purpose for me:
your loving-kindness, O Lord, endures for ever;
do not forsake the work of your own hands.**

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans (12:1-8)

I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

³ For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, ⁵so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. ⁶We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ⁷ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; ⁸the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Thanks be to God.

Gradual hymn 140(TiS) (10am)

Firmly I believe and truly
God is Three and God is One;
and I next acknowledge duly
manhood taken by the Son.

And I trust and hope most fully
in that manhood crucified;
and each thought and deed unruly
do to death, as he has died.

Simply to his grace and wholly
light and life and strength belong,

and I love supremely, solely,
him the holy, him the strong.

And I hold in veneration,
for the love of him alone,
holy church as his creation,
and her teachings as his own.

Adoration ay be given,
with and through the angelic host,
to the God of earth and heaven,
Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

John Henry Newman 1801-90

Gradual (8am)

Alleluia,

Alleluia!

Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness,
you that seek the Lord.

Isaiah 51:1

Alleluia!

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew (15:21-28)

Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' ¹⁴And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' ¹⁵He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' ¹⁶Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' ¹⁷And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.' ²⁰Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

For the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

The Sermon

The Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge
the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism
for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead ✕
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Prayers of the People

In our prayers we remember all in need, particularly: Ben, Hugh, Sarah, David, Otto, Bob, Noel, Deborah, Sue, Molly, Katherine, Matt, Wendy, David & Margot, those unable to gather with us, those in hospital or care.

We commend to God the recently departed, those whose year's mind falls at this time: John Williams (2/9/2004), the victims of war, disease and tragedy, those whose memories are dear to us and those remembered only by God.

The Greeting of Peace

Christ has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross.

We meet in his name and share his peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of Peace

Offertory Hymn 456(TiS) (10am)

Your hand, O God, has guided
your flock from age to age;
the wondrous tale is written
full clear, on every page.
your people owed your goodness,
and we their deeds accord;
and both of this bear witness:
one church, one faith, one Lord.

Your heralds brought glad tidings
to greatest, as to least;
they bade them rise, and hasten
to share the great king's feast;
and this was all their teaching,
in every deed and word,
to all alike proclaiming
one church, one faith, one Lord.

Through many a day of darkness,
through many a scene of strife,
the faithful few fought bravely
to guard the nation's life.
Their gospel of redemption,

sin pardoned, earth restored,
was all in this enfolded:
one church, one faith, one Lord.

Your mercy will not fail us,
nor leave your work undone;
with your right hand to help us
the victory shall be won;
and then by all creation
your name shall be adored,
and this shall be our anthem:
one church, one faith, one Lord.

Edward Hayes Plumptre 1821-91-

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation;
you bring forth bread from the earth.

Blessed be God for ever.

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation;
you create the fruit of the vine.

Blessed be God for ever.

God our sustainer,
receive the gifts we bring before you,
and feed us continually with that bread
which satisfies all hunger,
your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you

And also with you

Lift up your hearts

We lift them to the Lord

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere,
mighty Creator, everliving God.

We give you thanks and praise for our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who by the power of your Spirit was born of Mary
and lived as one of us.

By his death on the cross
and rising to new life,
he offered the one true sacrifice for sin
and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.

Therefore with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name,
for ever praising you and saying:
**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes ✕ in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Merciful God, we thank you
for these gifts of your creation,

this bread and wine,
and we pray that by your Word and Holy Spirit,
we who eat and drink them
may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.

On the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread;
and when he had given you thanks
he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying,
'Take, eat. This is my body given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper, he took the cup,
and again giving you thanks
he gave it to his disciples, saying,
'Drink from this, all of you.
This is my blood of the new covenant
shed for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.**

Therefore we do as our Saviour has commanded:
proclaiming his offering of himself
made once for all upon the cross,
his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,
and looking for his coming again,
we celebrate, with this bread and this cup,
his one perfect and sufficient sacrifice
for the sins of the whole world.

Renew us by your Holy Spirit,
unite us in the body of your Son,
and bring us with all your people
into the joy of your eternal kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
with whom, and in whom,
in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
we worship you, Father,
in songs of never-ending praise:
**Blessing and honour and glory and power
are yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are confident to pray,

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

The breaking of bread and communion

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ. We who are many are one body.

For we all share in the one bread.

Jesus Lamb of God, have mercy on us.

Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.

Jesus redeemer of the world, grant us your peace.

The gifts of God for the people of God.

Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

Communion Antiphon

**I will give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart:
even before the gods will I sing your praises.**

Psalm 138:1

The sending out of God's people

Let us pray:

Gracious God, we thank you that in this sacrament you assure us of your goodness and love.

Accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and help us to grow in love and obedience

that we may serve you in the world and finally be brought to that table where all your saints feast with you for ever. Most loving God,

you send us into the world you love

Give us grace to go thankfully and with courage in the power of your Spirit.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing of God Almighty ✕ the Father ✕ the Son
and the Holy Spirit, be among you,
and remain with you always.

Amen.

Go in the peace of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

Recessional hymn 611 (t.142) (TiS) (10am)

God of grace and God of glory,
on your people pour your power;
now fulfil your Church's story,
bring the bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom,
grant us courage,
for the facing of this hour.

See the hosts of evil round us
scorn your Christ, assail his ways.
Fears and douts too long have bound us;
free our hearts to work and praise.
Grant us wisdom,
grant us courage,
for the living of these days.

Cure your children's warring madness;
bend our pride to your control;
shame our wanton selfish gladness,
rich in things and poor in soul.

Grant us wisdom,
grant us courage,
lest we miss your kingdom's goal.

Save us from weak resignation
to the evils we deplore;
let the gift of your salvation
be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom,
grant us courage,
serving you whom we adore.

Harry Emerson Fosdick 1878-1969

Reflection

Dusty Road, Golden City

1 Peter 2.1–10; Psalm 122; Matthew 16.13–28

Sermon at the 125th anniversary of St Peter's Church, Stockton-on-Tees 10 a.m., 15 October 2006
by the Lord Bishop of Durham, Dr N. T. Wright

It's a long and dusty road, but you'd want to do it in a day because it might be dangerous to stop overnight along the way. It's somewhere between fifteen and twenty miles as the crow flies, though you mightn't want to think about crows because the only ones you'd see would be looking for people who were dying in the heat; in any case, since you'd be climbing up, and up, something like the height of Ben Nevis, the fifteen or twenty miles would often seem like thirty or forty. But you would do it; and you would do it with a song in your heart and a spring in your step, because you were glad when they said to you, 'Let us go up to the house of the Lord'. It is the road from Jericho, the lowest city on earth, up to golden Jerusalem, high upon a rock in the Judaeian hills: the pilgrim way, the way to God's city, dusty and dangerous but, at the end, a destination to die for.

And that, of course, was the point, as Jesus spoke eagerly but darkly to his followers way up north in Caesarea Philippi. 'Who do *you* say I am?' 'You are the Messiah, son of the living God!' 'Right: *this* is the rock we build on; this is where God's people will find their city; so it's time to go on pilgrimage, up the dusty road to the beautiful city that sits upon *its* rock. And of course as we go we shall be carrying the cross.' Why? Because there cannot be two cities of God, two unique temples where the living God truly dwells. And if the earthly city is to be redeemed, it can only be redeemed when the weight of its woes is placed firmly on the head of its rightful king, when a strange new shrine is set up outside its gates, a sight of horror and hissing in front of all that beauty and glory. That is the strange and scary message Jesus announced to Peter and the others; we are not surprised that they shrank from it, unable to imagine the glory beyond the dust and the danger.

And we who rightly celebrate the glory today, and who rightly see that glory anticipated in a building set aside for God's praise and made glad at this time with music and flowers – we who celebrate this glory must never forget that we are glimpsing in advance the glory that is yet to come, Jerusalem the golden, with milk and honey blest, and that we pause and relish these advance glimpses not in order to fool ourselves that we've already arrived but in order to steel our nerves and set our hearts firmly for the steep climb that still lies ahead. And we who celebrate in this place the patronage of St Peter must learn again and again the lessons that Peter himself had to learn between that moment of sudden understanding – You're God's Messiah! – and the time when he stood up in front of a surprised Jerusalem crowd on the first Pentecost morning and announced fearlessly that God had shown Jesus of Nazareth to be Messiah and Lord through his resurrection. (I should say, just for the record, that the idea that Peter himself, rather than his faith in Jesus as Messiah and Lord, was the rock on which the church would be built, and that this was to be passed on to his successors as Bishops of Rome, was an exegetical innovation in the counter-Reformation period of the late sixteenth century, when you get those remarkable settings of the Latin text of Matthew 16, 'Tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam', 'You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church'. It is always frustrating when splendid music makes the wrong theological point, and I'm afraid those motets are examples of that problem.)

No; the point is this: when you confess Jesus, crucified and risen, as God's Messiah, and Lord of the world, you are taking your stand upon the rock to which Jesus himself, and Peter himself in his first letter, refer, the rock where the true city of God is being built, even though the gates of hell roar

their anger against it and do their best to distract us from the hot and tiring pilgrim journey by which we must come to it at last. 'Come to him,' writes Peter, 'to that living stone; and like living stones yourself be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ.' And the letter goes on to reflect, from the Old Testament, on the image of the stone, the rock, cornerstone of the Temple, capstone for the corner, and underneath it all the rock which is the true Zion, the foundation of the whole place. All earthly houses of prayer, if they know what they are about, are designed not as ends in themselves but as signposts along the steep and stony road to that true Zion: as, at best, foretastes of what is still to come: 'I know not, O I know not, what joys await us there; what radiancy of glory, what light beyond compare'.

But at this point we must pause and reflect on the meaning of this Zion imagery; because the church in the west has for many years allowed Plato to beguile it away from the true pilgrim path and send it off up a different mountain, which is less threatening to the gates of hell and hence less challenging to climb. When I speak of the true Zion, Jerusalem the golden, with milk and honey blest, I wonder what image comes to your mind? I wonder what sense of the church's task in the present time goes with that image? My guess is that most of us naturally imagine a heavenly city in the sense of a place far removed from our present universe of space, time and matter. Our thoughts are heavily conditioned at this point by a thousand years of imagery whether from Dante, from the Sistine Chapel, from Bunyan's picture of the city across the deep river, or from all those less than satisfactory nineteenth-century hymns. We think of leaving this wicked world behind and of going to heaven for ever, safely away from the present mess.

But if we are to take seriously the biblical roots of the idea of the heavenly Jerusalem, and follow them through to their glorious climax in the book of Revelation, we will discover something very different. At the end, it isn't we who will go up to the heavenly city, leaving this wicked world far behind: rather, the new Jerusalem comes *down*, from heaven to earth. Heaven and earth are not designed, at the last, to be separated for ever, but to be married for ever. That is why the promise of the heavenly Jerusalem is a dangerous promise to claim in the present time; because it speaks of the sovereign and saving rule of the one true God, through Jesus his appointed King and Lord, *on earth as in heaven*, as indeed we say day by day in the Lord's Prayer. There is a direct line in Matthew's gospel from the moment in today's reading when Peter confesses Jesus as Messiah to the moment, after Jesus' resurrection, when he declares that now all authority in heaven *and on earth* has been given to him. And, to put it mildly, the earth has been somewhat resistant to the rule upon it of its rightful Lord, the Prince of Peace, and to the building of the city which has him for its foundation; and that is why, to this day, the pilgrim path of following him is dusty and dangerous, since it challenges all those other paths, all those other building programmes, which are conceived and operated not to the glory of the one true God but to the glory and power and wealth of this or that human system or tribe.

That is why our celebrations at this time must have about them that same note, from which we often shrink as Peter and the others shrank from it when Jesus first said it, the note of facing the challenge of the world's powers and being prepared to go on singing the Lord's song and building the Lord's city whether the world likes it or not. If our churches are embodiments of the Platonic vision of leaving earth behind and going somewhere else altogether we are merely following the example of Peter and the others when they tried to distract Jesus from the way of the cross. We live in a day when a new and shrill secularism is on the increase, using the scare stories that the media drum up about Muslim extremists as an excuse for copying our French neighbours and trying to ban the wearing of all religious symbols; I never thought I'd live to see the day when a major company would sack an employee for wearing a cross – and yet of course the cross stands for something that extreme secularists hate and fear, so we shouldn't be surprised. We live in a day when the church has to learn, and learn fast, that it isn't here simply to be the chaplain who blesses whatever our late-modern society happens to dream up next, but that it will have to say, on several issues – euthanasia, marriage, immigration and plenty of others – that the heavenly city which comes down to earth challenges the earthly cities which set themselves against it. So to celebrate Peter and his confession of the faith on which we are founded, and to celebrate this church building, must simultaneously be to commit ourselves, in this parish and this town, to work for God's kingdom even when – especially when! – it cuts clean across the programmes and agendas of the world around. Churches are not here to be centres of escapism, but bridgeheads for mission.

And in this task, as you know, we are all partners together. I have a special concern for this historic

town at this time, as your neighbour, St Thomas, looks for a new incumbent; and I long to see all the churches here in Stockton-on-Tees bringing their varied and different gifts, histories, traditions and energies into the whole work of God's kingdom in this place. 'Come to him,' writes Peter, 'that living stone; and like living stones yourselves, be built into a spiritual house' – a house in which all those living stones, of very different shapes and sorts and sizes, cheerfully discover that they are all part of the same building, doing different jobs no doubt but each contributing uniquely to the whole. I love churches like this, and I love services like this, because I can sense, stored up in places and events such as this, an enormous reservoir of energy that can be drawn on to enable the whole church today and tomorrow to set its feet once more on the pilgrim way, the dusty road that leads to the golden city, or as we might now put it to set our hands to the task of building the golden city right here in the dusty desert. That is why celebrations like this matter: they are not the climax of the whole thing, the great events after which we all go home and forget about being living stones until another twenty-five years have passed; they are the launching-pad, the starting-point, the powerhouse from which new work can begin.

That is my challenge to you this morning, in this splendid place and on this splendid occasion: that you allow this day, these flowers, this music and this building to pose the question to you as a community: where are we on the pilgrim road? Where are we, like Peter and the others, in danger of being distracted, of being sent off on a different pathway? What would it look like if we were to treat this celebration as what it truly is, a sign and a foretaste of the day when God's holy city, golden Jerusalem, will come down from heaven to earth? How can we say, with Peter, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God', and claim the lordship of the crucified and risen Jesus over this parish, this town, this region? My prayer for you and with you today is that God will guide you and lead you to go forward from this celebration, forward along the pilgrim way without fear or distraction, and that he will enable you to work, together with all your companions on the way, for the signs of Jesus' kingdom on earth as in heaven. The road may be dusty, but the city is golden. It's time to be on the way.

This week @ St Philip's

Today	Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost
8am	Eucharist
9am	Parish Breakfast
10am	Eucharist with hymns (followed by morning tea)
<i>Thursday 31 August</i>	<i>John Bunyan, spiritual writer (d.1688)</i>
	<i>Aidan of Lindisfarne, bishop & missionary (d.651)</i>
10am	Eucharist (followed by morning tea)
<i>Saturday 2 Sept</i>	<i>Martyrs of New Guinea (d.1942)</i>
10am-1pm	Pandora's Open
11am	Eucharist - Canberra Aged Care
Sunday 3 Sept	Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
8am	Eucharist
9am	Parish Breakfast
10am	Eucharist with hymns (followed by morning tea)

Dates for your Diary

Wednesday 13 Sept	7pm	Parish Council
Fri 8 - Sun 10 Sept		Diocesan Synod Canberra, Girls Grammar School
Sunday 1 October		ANU Choral Society concert @ St Philip's

Rosters

		27-Aug-23	3-Sep-23	10-Sep-23	
Sunday of Month		4th	1st	2nd	
Liturgical Season		13th Sunday after Pentecost	14th Sunday after Pentecost	15th Sunday after Pentecost	
Flowers		Flower team	Flower team	Flower team	
Celebrant		Rev'd Colin	Rev'd Scott	Rev'd Martin	
Preacher (if different to Celebrant)					
Sidespeople		Shane & Tim	Margaret & Russell	Alison & Alistair	
Liturgical Assistant	8am	Brian M (Lit assistant)	Susan J (server)	Ellie P (Liturgical assistant)	8am
Audio Visual Operator					
1st Bible reader - OT		Shane W	Russell M	Alison D	
2nd Bible reader - NT		Shane W	Margaret M	Alistair D	
Celebrant		Rev'd Colin	Rev'd Martin	Rev'd Martin	
Preacher (if different to Celebrant)			Rev'd Scott		
Sidespeople & Welcomer		Sally A & Richard G	Fred A & Janene B	Helen & Hardy	
Liturgical Assistant	10am	Philippa W (Lit assistant)	Leighton (crucifer)	Rebecca K (Lit assistant)	10am
Audio Visual Operator					
Musician(s) & Singers/Soloist		Colin F	Colin F	Colin F	
1st Bible reader - OT		Liz D	Colin D	Fred A	
2nd Bible reader - NT		Ashton R	Kerry-Anne C	Laura W	
Morning Tea		Helen P	Barbara G	Janene B	
<i>Additional details/notes</i>					