

Reflection for 12th Sunday after Trinity

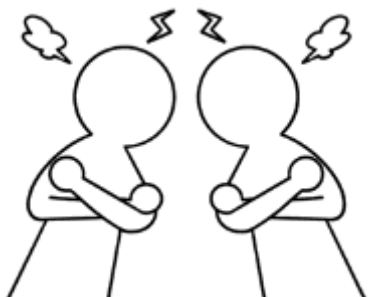
Today's Gospel reading contains some of the most shocking and challenging words of Jesus.

'Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple.'

It's not the kind of statement that we would put on a poster as an advert for Christianity! So what is your response, how do you feel? It's easy to pass off these words as the kind of exaggerated speech which was a custom of the time or to say, 'Perhaps he didn't really mean it.' But what if he did?!

After all, this is a thread that has been building over the past few weeks. We have heard Jesus, instead of rushing to greet his mother and brothers, say that those who follow him are his family. He said that he would bring family division where, in a family of five people, three people would be set against two. He claims that God's kingdom, not Rome, will prevail. We often claim that Christian faith brings comfort - how do we feel when it seems to bring revolution?

Revd Sarah Cumming



NEXT SUNDAY 14.09.25 Holy Cross
10.30am in the Church

READINGS: OT Numbers 21: 4-9
NT Philippians 2: 6-11
GOSPEL John 3: 13-17



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St Thomas, Exeter

7th September 2025

Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

10.30am in the Church

Today

Sung Eucharist

Hymn Numbers

465 *Take up thy cross, the Saviour said*

428 *Purify my heart*

73 *Brother, sister, let me serve you*

372 *O Jesus, I have promised*

12noon Extraordinary APCM

Wednesday 10th September

10am Holy Communion (BCP)

Thursday 11th September

9.30-11am St Thomas Tots

10.30-12noon Knit & Natter. See Notices

6pm Meeting in church about choosing our
new Incumbent. See Notices

Friday 12th September

9.30am Morning Prayer

10am Staff Meeting

Saturday 13th September

9am Men's Breakfast in the Sawyers



Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray and to give more than either we desire or deserve: pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask but through the merits and mediation of 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. **Amen**

Deuteronomy 30: 15-20

See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments, decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess. But if your heart turns away and you do not hear, but are led astray to bow down to other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days, so that you may live in the land that the Lord swore to give to your ancestors, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

Philemon 1-21

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and co-worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in your house: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith towards the Lord Jesus. pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ. I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts

of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother. For this reason, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do your duty, yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—and I, Paul, do this as an old man, and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful both to you and to me. I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. I wanted to keep him with me, so that he might be of service to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel; but I preferred to do nothing without your consent, in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back for ever, no longer as a slave but as more than a slave, a beloved brother—especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

Luke 14: 25-33

Large crowds were travelling with Jesus; and he turned and said to them, 'Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, "This fellow began to build and was not able to finish." Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against

him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.'

Post Communion

God of all mercy, in this eucharist you have set aside our sins and given us your healing: grant that we who are made whole in Christ may bring that healing to this broken world, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Notices

Sunday 7th September. Extraordinary Annual Parochial Church Meeting to accept the audited Annual Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2024. This meeting will be held in the hall after the service starting at 12 noon.

Sunday 7th, 6:30pm at Southernhay URC: Monthly **Open Table Ecumenical Gathering** (for LGBTQIA+ and allies)

Knit & Natter From the 24th July we shall be meeting in St Thomas Pleasure Ground every Thursday morning from 10.30 till 12 noon, weather permitting. If it's wet, we shall be in Jess and Jimmy's café (118 Cowick Street). Do join us, or just come to say hello, especially if you aren't a regular at Maple Road.

On **Thursday 11th September** starting at 6pm there will be a meeting for the congregation to discuss what qualities we should be looking for in our new Incumbent. The meeting will be led by the Archdeacon of Exeter, the Revd Andrew Beane. This is a very important meeting and we hope that as many of us as possible will attend and share our views.

Our church will be open on **Saturday 20th September** between **11am and 3pm** for the **Heritage Open Days**. Ian will be giving tours hourly; please speak to him if you are able to come along and welcome visitors.

