

Welcome! Haere mai!

St John's Anglican Church, Ōtūmoetai



Sunday, 1 September 2024

OT 22

Liturgy: p.404

Dear Friends

“Cleanliness is next to godliness” or so went the old proverb. Most of us were probably brought up being taught to wash our hands before meals. In my childhood we didn’t have a dishwasher, and we children were all expected to take our turns washing and drying dishes from a certain age. If the Covid-19 pandemic taught us anything, it taught us about washing things - including our hands and the surfaces we touched. So, quite frankly, the idea of the disciples eating from unwashed dishes with unwashed hands sounds just plain grubby! But this wasn’t about hygiene in those days.

The Hebrew scriptures are full of laws for living and some of them include washing. In Exodus the priests were required to wash hands and feet before ministering at the altar and this included washing hands before eating the holy meat from sacrifices. The pharisees had concluded that since scripture also said “you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation” that this also meant all Jews should wash their hands before eating.

Liturgy is “the work of the people” and it is there to shape us, to shape who we are, how we understand ourselves and God and to shape our behaviour. As in many other religions washing our hands before coming to the altar reminds us of the purity and holiness of the God into whose presence we come. It reminds us of the pure and holy lives God requires of us - lives characterised by right

relationships, justice, mercy and love. We retain that custom here in our parish when the priests use the Lavabo and ritually wash their hands before coming to God at the altar and praying the Great Thanksgiving. There is a very ancient tradition of accompanying this action with the words of Psalm 26 “I will wash my hands in innocency, O Lord; and so will I go to thine altar...”

Jesus challenged the pharisees who were focussing on the details of the actions but not allowing the practices, the liturgy to shape them. We too run that risk here in the Anglican church. We can focus so much on doing things exactly right that we miss the symbolism and meaning behind our liturgical actions and words, and don't allow them to shape us into the people of God.

A couple of years ago I read a brilliant book called “Liturgy of the ordinary: sacred practices in everyday life” by Tish Harrison Warren. In it she looks at some of the very practical habits of everyday life (like brushing our teeth and making our beds), how they currently shape us, and how they can become sacred habits which shape us into the people of God. So whether it is on a Sunday in an Anglican worship service, or the habits and actions of our daily lives, let us act mindfully, as we allow ourselves to be transformed into the image of Jesus by the Spirit.

Arohanui, *Sue +*

WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY: 1 September 2024

Sentence:

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. *James 1:17*

Collect:

Gentle Father, show us our sins as they really are, so that we may truly renounce them and know the depth and richness of Your mercy. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

OT Reading *Deuteronomy 4: 1-2, 6-9*

NT Reading *James 1: 17-27*

Gospel *Mark 7: 1-8, 14-15, 21-23*

Prayers of the People

Today we pray for the people, staff and clergy of Fiji, and for retired Bishops of Waiapu: John Bluck, George Connor, Murray Mills, David Rice.

We pray also for those in need, especially those who have asked for our prayers: Craig, Reece, Viv, James F, Hazel, Lynda, Lawrence, Adam.

Parish Office

We welcome Jo Dey to the Parish Office. Jo will be staffing the office 9.30 am to 12.30pm, Tuesday to Friday.

This Week Beginning: 2 September

Tuesday 12.00 pm Fish n Chips and Games

Wednesday 10.00 am Mid-week Eucharist
 2.00 pm SAYGo

Thursday 1.00 pm Books and Friends

Friday 9.00 am Senior Chef

Op Shop 10.00 am - 4.00 pm Monday to Friday
10.00 am - 1.00 pm Saturday
Playgroup 9.30 - 11.30 am Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
Toy Library 9.30 - 11.30 am Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday

Service for Sunday 8 September –
9.30 am Holy Communion

Contact Us

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