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## Daily Meditations

### August 24-29, 2020

*The Biblical readings are taken from the Daily Office in the Book of Common Prayer for Year 2 and written by the St. Stephen's Meditation Writing Team: Dave Boyd, Becky Denton, Pat Gillory, Traci Maxwell, Jay Nickel, Bob Reed, T.Cay Rowe, and Carroll Wilson.*

*Click on the scripture reading for each day to go directly to link.*

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## COLLECT, PROPER 16

*Grant, O merciful God, that your Church, being gathered together in unity by your Holy Spirit, may show forth your power among all peoples, to the glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

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## Eating Well

*Monday, August 24, 2020*

### [John 6:52-59](#)

*The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" So Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." - John 6:52-53*

"You are what you eat" has been a popular slogan in the health food industry for decades, although the phrase seems to have originated with a French doctor almost 200 years ago. But I doubt that Jesus is providing a commentary on the eating habits of his audience. Instead, he is inviting us not to just read or hear his message, but to fully ingest it and make it an integral part of our lives. Bon appetit!

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## All In

*Tuesday, August 25, 2020*

### [John 6:60-71](#)

*When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?...Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So Jesus asked the twelve, "Do you also wish to go away?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom can we go? You have words of eternal life. We have come to believe and*

*know that you are the Holy One of God." - John 6:60, 66-69*

Jesus really makes it tough for his disciples. He has just told them that they must eat his flesh and drink his blood, a concept that is not only gross and offensive but also contradictory to Torah, which teaches that one must not eat any meat with blood in it, because blood is the very essence of life. It's not a great surprise that many of his followers turned away at this point and "no longer went about with him." Then Jesus really pushes his faithful 12 to the limit, forcing them to make a choice. As Simon Peter plaintively puts it, "Lord, to whom can we go?"

This is a choice we face each day as followers of Christ. But if we turn away, what else is there? Where else can we "find the words of eternal life?" To truly follow Jesus is to push all our chips into the center of the table...we are all in!

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## **Steadfast Love**

*Wednesday, August 26, 2020*

### **John 7:1-13**

*For not even his brothers believed him. - John 19:26-27*

In yesterday's reading, we saw that many of his disciples turned away from Jesus because of his teaching that they should eat his flesh and drink his blood. In today's reading we learn that even his own brothers did not believe in him. They sarcastically told him that if he really wanted to grow his ministry, he should go the festival in Jerusalem and perform his miracles before really big crowds in the big city! Earlier (Mark 3:20-21) Jesus' family was either so shocked or so embarrassed by him that they tried to restrain him, saying, "He has gone out of his mind." In Matthew 13:54-58 we learn of Jesus' inaugural visit to his hometown of Nazareth, where he is initially cheered but then rejected and driven out of town. And finally at the cross, (Mark 15:34, Matthew 27:45) Jesus plaintively calls out in anguish: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

What amazing courage to hold steadfast to his faith in the face of so much rejection and discouragement! Thank you, Jesus, for persevering to the end.

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## **Imperial Christianity**

*Thursday, August 27, 2020*

### **John 7:14-36**

*Does he intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? - Mark 10:50-52*

The gospel writer of John is a master of irony. When the Jews in Jerusalem misunderstand what Jesus meant by going away and are muttering among themselves, they ask sarcastically whether Jesus intends to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach them. (The Dispersion refers to the large numbers of Greek-speaking Jews who lived in the thriving Jewish communities outside Palestine in Alexandria, Babylon, and Asia Minor). The irony, of course, is that this is exactly what happens. After Roman persecution of the Christians in Jerusalem after the death of Jesus and particularly in the aftermath of the cataclysmic Jewish Revolt in Jerusalem in AD 70, most Christians were driven out of Palestine into the Greek-speaking lands of Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy, where Christianity thrives over the next 300 years, culminating in the Roman Emperor Constantine decreeing in 324 that the

## Living Water

Friday, August 28, 2020

### John 7:37-52

*On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water." - John 7:37-38*

Earlier in the Gospel of John, when Jesus confronted the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:14), he told her that "the water that I will give will become in them [believers] a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." Now, at the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, Jesus reiterates that same metaphor of living water. But this time that living water will flow from the hearts of the believers to pass it on to others. This living water of faith is so life-giving that it must be shared. Drink up!

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## Lord of the Feasts

Saturday, August 29, 2020

### John 8:12-20

*Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." - John 8:12*

Some context of the Feast of Tabernacles is helpful here to understand the dramatic scene being described in the gospel. On the second morning of the festival, the priests from the Temple would go down to the Shiloah Pool outside Jerusalem, where they would draw water into large pitchers and take them to the altar in the Temple, which they encircled seven times. It was at this point that Jesus cried out in the Temple that believers should come to him for the living water.

At the end of the Feast, four huge candelabras were lit in the Temple. Their light could be seen all over Jerusalem. Against this dramatic backdrop, Jesus proclaimed that he, not the great candlelit Temple, was the light of the world.\*

So in both instances, Jesus was replacing the Temple with himself as the central focus of the Feast, just as he did in John 2:19 when he told the Jewish authorities to destroy this Temple, "and in three days I will raise it up...but he was speaking of the temple of his body."

It's amazing what deep understanding is contained in the Gospels if you just dig a little?

\**With Jesus in Jerusalem*, by Bargil Pixner, p. 46

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