

MONDAY
27 SEPTEMBER
 Zechariah 8:1-8
 Psalm 102:12-22
 Luke 9:46-50

TUESDAY
28 SEPTEMBER
 Zechariah 8:20-end
 Psalm 87
 Luke 9:51-56

WEDNESDAY
29 SEPTEMBER
Michael and All Angels
 Genesis 28:10-17 or
 Revelation 12:7-12
 Psalm 103:19-end
 Revelation 12:7-12
 or Hebrews 1:5-end
 John 1:47-end

THURSDAY
30 SEPTEMBER
 Nehemiah 8:1-12
 Psalm 19:7-11
 Luke 10:1-12

FRIDAY
1 OCTOBER
 Baruch 1:15-end
 or Deuteronomy
 31:7-13
 Psalm 79:1-9
 Luke 10:13-16

SATURDAY
2 OCTOBER
 Baruch 4:5-12. 27-
 29 or Joshua 22:1-6
 Psalm 69:33-37
 Luke 10:17-24

REFLECTION

This week centres on the festival of St Michael and All Angels on Wednesday. The Gospel set for the day is the story of Nathanael, who is astonished that Jesus can make an assessment of his character without ever having met him. Jesus explains that he will see greater things – “the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man”. These words refer back to the Old Testament reading for the day, which has the evocative description of Jacob’s Ladder, with angels ascending and descending between heaven and earth. The two realms are not as far apart as it sometimes feels, and the angels move between the two to act as God’s messengers.



Jacob's Ladder, Gothic mural in Tirsted Church, Denmark. Stig Alenas / Shutterstock.com

In the Gospel readings for the remainder of the week we hear about reactions to Jesus’ ministry, as he and his followers bring the message to different communities. Some refuse to accept it, but the seventy who were sent come back rejoicing that the demons have submitted to them.

Heaven and earth are close and, if we have eyes to see, we will know how to interpret the signs of the kingdom of God.

PRAYER

God of heaven and earth,
 we rejoice that your kingdom is close to us, with all it means.
 Help us to notice the signs of your work in the world
 and to hear what you are saying to us.

PRAYER

PART I – CONFESSION

Richard Greatrex considers the prayers that form part of the Holy Communion service.

Often our first major active involvement in prayer during contemporary services of Holy Communion, such as *Common Worship*, is at the confession. It sometimes feels jarring after we have been warmly welcomed to be immediately reminded of our wickedness but, while desiring to worship God joyfully, a key component of praise is the penitent recognition that we have been forgiven and restored in our divine relationship. The Book of Common Prayer places the confession after the sermon and directly before the Eucharistic Prayer. Like the intercessions, which it follows, confession is both a response to God’s message in scripture and sermon, and a reminder of our unworthiness to receive communion, Christ’s gracious sacrifice of himself to obliterate our sins. *Common Worship* retains this position as an option, but most churches begin with confession, so that with the slate wiped clean we can have fresh ears to hear God’s message.

There are four parts to what is known as the Penitential Rite: introduction, silence, confessional prayer and absolution. The introduction directs us to recall our sins, which is done in silence. We then confess them together to God, using either one of several authorised general prayers or through the recitation of a “*Kyrie Confession*”: Using the English text of the Kyrie Eleison – “*Lord, have mercy/Christ, have mercy*” – interwoven with brief penitential sentences, often focused on the liturgical season or a theme such as our treatment of the environment, these bring before God more specific wrongdoing and negligence. The absolution that follows assures us of God’s ongoing forgiveness for all who repent.

While in our private prayers we may say sorry to God for our individual transgressions, the act of confession in the liturgy is corporate, reminding us that all our deeds are interlinked, having consequences for others. Our sinfulness is part of the fallen creation, impairing our relationship with God. This requires contrite acknowledgement if our worship is truly to connect us with each other, creation, and God.

Richard Greatrex is a parish priest, freelance writer and author of Stations of the Resurrection (RP Books product code: 1841, ISBN: 9780852315453, £12.95)

LIVE
 the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU
 THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by
 Caroline Hodgson
 and
 Heather Smith



Seventeenth week
 after Trinity

Monday 27 September
 to Saturday
 2 October 2021

WEEK