

Lectionary readings: Acts 7: 55-60; Psalm 31: 1-5, 15-16; 1 Peter 2: 2-10; John 14: 1-14

For reflection and prayer

- **Acts 7:** Stephen had eyes only for God and, even as he was stoned to death, he had a vision of Jesus standing at God's side. What a contrast between the yelling, hissing, angry mob and Stephen's calmness in the face of death, Stephen, like Jesus, praying that God would forgive his enemies. This is a man who lived out his faith. May he inspire each one of us this week to keep our eyes on Jesus, to live like Jesus and forgive those who have hurt us.
- **Psalm 31:** Can we, like the Psalmist, like Jesus, like Stephen, say, 'I entrust myself completely to You, Lord, no matter what difficulties I have to go through, no matter what suffering comes to me. I am in Your hands, Lord, and You are a faithful God. I am safe in Your hands'? In whatever way we are tested this week, may we commit ourselves wholly to God and feel His loving presence with us, letting Him transform us and fill us with peace.
- **1 Peter 2:** Peter helps us to see who we are - God's chosen ones, holy, God's own people, accepted and loved by Him. Peter's words are very challenging: no malice, no hypocrisy, no jealousy, no hurtful words. *'Drink deep of God's pure kindness'* - and become all you can be. Peter describes us as 'stones' in God's sanctuary, vibrant with life, because we have offered ourselves to Christ - a church founded on Christ and we, filled with His life, as we feed on Him each day.

Transformed as a result of drinking deep of the Lord's love and kindness and grace, so that we respond with that same grace to others. Such a church will have a transforming effect on the community, society and world.

- **John 14:** Underlying Thomas' words to Jesus are perhaps basic questions which we must all have asked: Who is this Jesus? What is this God like? How do we come to know God? What is this journey of faith all about? And Jesus replies, not with rules, dogma or doctrine, but by saying that God is like Him. Jesus lived His life in close communion with God, giving Himself to God totally, living in an intimate, loving relationship with God. This is what He is calling each one of us to: we are to imitate Him. In that sense He is the way to know God; He is the truth of who God is; He is God made manifest in His life. All who see and touch Jesus see and touch God. May we this week show in our lives and in our daily living the God of love and forgiveness and grace that He is. May all who see and touch us this week see and touch God. All Jesus asks of us is that we come to Him with humble and trusting hearts; and He will lead us gradually to an experience of close communion with the Father, who is full of love, compassion, forgiveness and grace. This is the journey of faith we are called to.

'I do not need to seek God.

*God is already here waiting to be found,
soaked in my reality.*

*My journey is to be one of recognising God,
always, already present,
and surfacing that presence in my daily life.'*

(Edwina Gateley)