

## Proper 15

*Sunday between 14 and 20 August inclusive • OT20*

### Principal Service readings

Jeremiah 23.23-29	against false prophets
Psalms 82	The God of judgement
Hebrews 11.29 – 12.2	Exemplary faith
Luke 12.49-56	Reading the signs of the times

### Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,  
speak to our hearts in the stillness,  
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,  
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;  
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

### Gospel Reading

#### *Reading the signs of the times*

Jesus said to his disciples: <sup>49</sup>I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! <sup>50</sup>I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! <sup>51</sup>Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! <sup>52</sup>From now on, five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; <sup>53</sup>they will be divided:

father against son and son against father,  
mother against daughter and daughter against mother,  
mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law  
and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>54</sup>He also said to the crowds, 'When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, "It is going to rain"; and so it happens. <sup>55</sup>And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, "There will be scorching heat"; and it happens. <sup>56</sup>You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?

Luke 12.49-56 NRSV<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *New Revised Standard Version Bible* is copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

## Comments and Questions

Jesus came to bring peace and harmony. That idea is challenged by Jesus himself (12.49). Any Jew would be profoundly shocked at the examples of discord given (12.53), for the family was the basic unit of their life. Jesus excels in shocking statements (such as, 'if your hand causes you to fall, cut it off!', Matthew 5.30). If we can overcome our shock at the statement we can see that he is emphasising loyalty to himself. He doesn't just have an attractive or interesting message but a profoundly disruptive one, if it is taken seriously. Do we water down Jesus' challenges, to make them more palatable, and take them less seriously?

The section on 'signs of the times' could have been written for today's climate emergency. 'Global warming' seems quite mild, even pleasant for some, but 'global heating' less so. Can we still just talk about it, without doing anything to address it, which would be taking it seriously?

## Quotations

1

No man lives without jostling and being jostled; in all ways he has to elbow himself through the world, giving and receiving offence.

*Signs of the times* / Thomas Carlyle. 1829

2

Our loyalty to Jesus and his Kingdom must always exceed our loyalty to an earthly agenda, whether political or otherwise. We should feel "at home" with people who share our faith but not our politics even more than we do with people who share our politics but not our faith. If this is not our experience, then we very well may be rendering to Caesar what belongs to God.

*Jesus outside the lines: a way forward for those who are tired of taking sides* / Scott Sauls. 2015

## Related topics

*For further study:*

Pascal mystery; cross; fire; cost of discipleship; soteriology (salvation)

2

## Closing Prayer

God of salvation,  
in the power of the cross  
you reveal your judgement on the world  
and the kingship of Christ, the crucified.  
May we not refuse to accept  
the challenge which he offers,  
so that being baptized into his death  
we may run with perseverance  
in the costly way that he has set before us,  
looking always to him, the risen One,  
who lives for ever and ever.

*Celebrating the Christian Year* · Proper 15, Year C<sup>2</sup>

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2 *Celebrating the Christian year : prayers and resources for Sundays, holy days and festivals, years A, B and C* / compiled by Alan Griffiths. – 3 vols. – Norwich : Canterbury Press, 2004-5.

www.catechesis.org.uk

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