

**Living the Word: Philippians 1. 20-24, 27**  
 What does it mean for us to proclaim the life, death and resurrection of Our Lord? Paul's letter to the Church in Philippi begins by telling us a little of his own idea, that whether he lives or dies, his bold speaking about the Gospel truth will cause God to be exalted. Today's Church of England faces problems that Paul might not have envisaged: paying the Parish Share; trying to raise money for the church roof; churches being less full on a Sunday than they used to be. It is hard for us to keep in mind that these difficulties that we face at the moment are as nothing in comparison to the difficulties faced by those whose lives were threatened in the earliest days of the faith, and those who today face persecution and the threat of death, simply for proclaiming Christ crucified. How often does our faith in Christ fail to define us? How many times have we really been telling people about this Good News? Surely, it is the most important thing we can do whilst we still have breath.

#### Saints & Heroes:

#### **Ss Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Archangels (29th September)**

Michaelmas is the start of the autumn term in educational establishments and the glorious sight of those purple daisies which herald autumn. The Archangel Michael first appears in the Prophecy of Daniel as 'one of the chief princes' of the heavenly host, and makes a second showing in Revelation as the principal fighter against the Devil. He is often depicted as a soldier. Michaelmas is the Feast of St Michael and All Angels, a truly angelic host. These include Gabriel, of the Annunciation story, and Raphael, who accompanied Tobias in the Book of Tobit, and Uriel, from 2 Esdras. They are joined by other, non-scriptural Archangels; Chamuel, Jophiel, and Zaskiel. All the armies of the heavenly host!

#### **Collect for Michaelmas**

*O everlasting God, who hast ordained and constituted the services of Angels and men in a wonderful order: mercifully grant that as thy holy Angels always do thee service in heaven; so by thy appointment they may succour and defend us on earth; through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen*

24<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time



In the Gospels Jesus rebukes the disciples for their attitudes to others and to the possibilities in life, he says; 'you think as men think not as God thinks'. The parable of the labourers in the vineyard takes us to the heart of this 'different way of thinking'. In using the subject of work and pay Jesus arouses in us our sense of 'fairness' in one of the most controversial areas of social thinking. There is a great deal of sympathy for the men who worked all day for the same reward as those who worked for one hour. That seems outrageous. But as St Paul reminds us 'the wisdom of God is foolishness to man'. Jesus is confronting us with the unreasonable, foolish, extravagant love of God. This gracious love forms the economy of God's kingdom where the first are last, and the least are greatest.

Today's Gospel: St. Matthew 20:1-16