

# POCKLINGTON GROUP OF CHURCHES

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Londesborough, All Saints; Millington, St Margaret; Nunburnholme, St James;  
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## THE BULLETIN - READINGS

**Sunday 8 October, Trinity 17**

### **Collect**

Almighty God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you: pour your love into our hearts and draw us to yourself, and so bring us at last to your heavenly city where we shall see you face to face; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

*(or)*

Gracious God, you call us to fullness of life:  
deliver us from unbelief and banish our anxieties  
with the liberating love of Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **Isaiah 5:1-7: The Song of the Unfruitful Vineyard**

Let me sing for my beloved

my love-song concerning his vineyard:

My beloved had a vineyard on a very fertile hill.

He dug it and cleared it of stones,

and planted it with choice vines;

he built a watch-tower in the midst of it,

and hewed out a wine vat in it;

he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.

And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah,  
judge between me and my vineyard.

What more was there to do for my vineyard  
that I have not done in it?

When I expected it to yield grapes,  
why did it yield wild grapes?

And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard.  
I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured;  
I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.  
I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed,  
and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns;  
I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel,  
and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting;  
he expected justice, but saw bloodshed;  
righteousness, but heard a cry!

### **Philippians 3:4b-14**

even though I, too, have reason for confidence in the flesh.  
If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more:  
circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel,  
of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law,  
a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to  
righteousness under the law, blameless.  
Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss  
because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss  
because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.  
For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard  
them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in  
him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the  
law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness  
from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of  
his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming  
like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection  
from the dead.

### **Pressing towards the Goal**

Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the  
goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has  
made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it

my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

### **Matthew 21:33-end: The Parable of the Wicked Tenants**

‘Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watch-tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. Finally he sent his son to them, saying, “They will respect my son.” But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, “This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.” So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?’ They said to him, ‘He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.’ Jesus said to them, ‘Have you never read in the scriptures:

“The stone that the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone;  
this was the Lord’s doing,  
and it is amazing in our eyes”?

Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom. The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.’

When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

<p><b>The Readings for 15 October, Trinity 18, are Isaiah 25:1-9; Philippians 4:1-9; Matthew 22:1-14</b></p>
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**“He gives to his beloved sleep”** *by Rodney Nicholson*

Friday evening prayers in my first term at theological college in 1969 included the reading of a published sermon from the past. I cannot remember any of them, except one by a Scottish preacher, John Baillie, on the subject of Sleep. Bits of that sermon stay with me to this day. We spend roughly a third of our lives in sleep but, he asked, how often does anyone preach about this restorative gift of God?

Insomnia must be dreadful. I have rarely experienced it myself, but poor sleeping does us no good at all, for our well-being requires proper slumber. Psalm 127 speaks of God giving his beloved sleep. This does not mean that insomniacs should chastise themselves as failures but it might make us ask whether there are any factors preventing our good sleep. We could be working too hard or doing too much. There could be a medical reason which defies an easy solution.

Some have seen our seven or eight hours in bed as necessary but really rather a waste. We would not therefore pray about our sleeping hours in the same way that we might pray about our work. And yet the twenty-five years which, in total, we spend in sleep are as important as the fifty which we devote to work, recreation, church activities and so on. Sleep nourishes our very selves, as do food and drink. We can have too much of either, but maybe for many people the greater danger is sleep-starvation. I sometimes pray with a young woman in a Home which I visit, that she may be given sleep.

When we are given an anaesthetic before an operation, we may have the fleeting thought, “I hope I wake up”. There on the trolley we surrender ourselves to the hospital staff. The same applies to our falling asleep. We let ourselves slip into unconsciousness and loss of control. The prayer which Jesus prayed before he died is appropriate on both occasions: Father, into your hands I commend my spirit. Like many clergy, I advise wedding couples never to go to bed with anger or lack of forgiveness because, like cancer, those attitudes can be nurtured deep within us. Instead we want the hours of darkness to bring peace, faith and love. Sleep is not negative. It is God’s way of healing, restoring and strengthening us. May we treasure this vital part of our life.