

**MONDAY**  
**28 JUNE**  
**Genesis 18:16-end**  
**Psalm 103:6-17**  
**Matthew 8:18-22**

**TUESDAY**  
**29 JUNE**  
**Peter and Paul,**  
**Apostles**  
**Zechariah 4:1-6a.**  
**10b-end**  
**or Acts 12:1-11**  
**Psalm 125**  
**Acts 12:1-11 or 2**  
**Timothy 4:6-8. 17-18**  
**Matthew 16:13-19**

**WEDNESDAY**  
**30 JUNE**  
**Genesis 21:5. 8-20**  
**Psalm 34:1-12**  
**Matthew 8:28-end**

**THURSDAY**  
**1 JULY**  
**Genesis 22:1-19**  
**Psalm 116:1-7**  
**Matthew 9:1-8**

**FRIDAY**  
**2 JULY**  
**Genesis 23:1-4. 19.**  
**24:1-8. 62-end**  
**Psalm 106:1-5**  
**Matthew 9:9-13**

**SATURDAY**  
**3 JULY**  
**Thomas the Apostle**  
**Habakkuk 2:1-4**  
**Psalm 31:1-6**  
**Ephesians 2:19-end**  
**John 20:24-29**

## REFLECTION

The Gospels often show Christ surrounded by crowds jostling to hear his teaching and witness his miracles. This gives the impression he was idolised like some modern-day pop star, but this week's Gospel readings reveal he was far from universally popular. Religious leaders oppose him, accusing him of blasphemy and criticising him for associating with tax collectors and sinners, and those who witness him heal two demoniacs demand that he leave the neighbourhood.

Sadly, even some who claim to follow Jesus are shown to be half-hearted in their commitment, unprepared to put Christ before financial security and family.

Christ was so often misunderstood and rebuffed it is no wonder Christians believe that the words of the Old Testament prophet Isaiah, "he was despised and rejected by others" describe Jesus. That Christ was prepared to suffer so greatly, not only on the cross but throughout his ministry, really demonstrates how much he loves us.



Church of the Immaculate Conception, Connellsville, Pennsylvania: Thomas putting his hand in the side of Jesus. Nancy Bauer/Shutterstock.com

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank you that you love us so much that you were prepared to leave the comfort of heaven to dwell on earth and suffer so greatly among us. Help us to understand better the depth of your love.

## HOLY PLACES

### PART II – ST LAURENCE'S CHURCH

St Aldhelm, seventh-century Abbot of Malmesbury and first Bishop of Sherborne, also established a monastery in Bradford-on-Avon in Wiltshire. If you visit the town, travelling down one of the steep inclines that leads into the centre, you reach the River Avon. Having crossed over the road bridge, if you turn into the car park, you can re-cross over a footbridge into Church Street. The river here is shallow with attractive weeds and the bridge brings you in front of All Saints Church. Look up to the right and, on slightly higher ground, stands the tiny church of St Laurence. This perfectly preserved Saxon church building is thought to be a foundation of St Aldhelm, although there is some dispute.

If you had come to Bradford-on-Avon, a town of woollen mills, in the nineteenth century, you would have had no idea that this tiny place existed. Surrounded by sheds for storing woollen cloth, a coach house and stables and the house of a rich clothier, its presence went completely unnoticed by townsfolk and visitors alike. Although it was known that a monastery had existed, there seemed no trace until repairs to the chimney of a schoolroom uncovered two stone angels embedded in a wall. It turned out to be the east wall of the church.

It is thought St Laurence's was lost because the Normans abandoned the tiny place in favour of the newer All Saints. But there is no fear of missing it now. The church stands on risen ground and is carefully preserved, open for reflection and prayer. Its altar has been restored and above it are fragments of a stone cross.

This tiny place is known for its atmosphere, the lingering presence, perhaps of the Bradford monks, or even St Aldhelm himself. The prayers of those who frequented it long ago seem to still live in the stones, connecting us with those who are long gone, but part of the great Christian communion.



LIVE  
 the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU  
 THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by  
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 and  
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Fourth week after Trinity

Monday 28 June to  
 Saturday 3 July  
 2021

WEEK