

MONDAY
2 AUGUST
Numbers 11:4-15
Psalm 81:11-end
Matthew 14:13-21
or 14:22-end

TUESDAY
3 AUGUST
Numbers 12:1-13
Psalm 51:1-8
Matthew 14:22-end
or 15:1-2. 10-14

WEDNESDAY
4 AUGUST
Numbers 13:1-2. 25
- 14:1. 26-35
Psalm 106:14-24
Matthew 15:21-28

THURSDAY
5 AUGUST
Numbers 20:1-13
Psalm 95:1. 8-end
Matthew 16:13-23

FRIDAY
6 AUGUST
Transfiguration
of Our Lord
Daniel 7:9-10.
13-14
Psalm 97
2 Peter 1:16-19
Luke 9:28-36

SATURDAY
7 AUGUST
Deuteronomy
6:4-13
Psalm 18:1-2. 48-
end
Matthew 17:14-20

REFLECTION

Faith, they say, can move mountains. This week's readings end with the Bible verse that gave rise to that expression, although anyone who's holidayed in Switzerland, for example, might wonder what Jesus could mean.



As well as mountains we read a lot about faith this week. Our Old Testament readings remind us how the people miraculously freed from slavery in Egypt still lacked faith in what God could do for them.

In the Gospel reading for Wednesday Jesus praised the Canaanite woman's faith for believing in what he could do, and persisting in that. This week we see Peter's faith, and lack of it. He even walked on water when Jesus called him, before momentarily losing faith when the wind got up. He recognised Jesus as the Messiah (Thursday) but then earned another rebuke for refusing to accept what that really meant.

Celebrating the Transfiguration on Friday, we recall how Jesus was revealed as God's beloved Son, on what Peter later called a "holy mountain". Peter eventually understood. Faith isn't always easy. Neither is climbing a mountain. But if we start with that tiny amount Jesus mentions, we don't need to climb – we can move the mountains of doubt from our path.

PRAYER

Creator God, you gave us the grandeur and beauty of the mountains. Strengthen our faith in your amazing love for each one of us, that, when life's problems look like mountains we could never climb, our trust in you will make them scaleable.

THE EUCHARIST

PART III – REFORMATION TO THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

The sixteenth-century Reformation theologians were unanimous in regarding the congregation's exclusion from almost every aspect of the Eucharist as untenable. Communion should take place only if people and clergy both received bread and wine. However, the nature of Christ's presence in the Eucharist provoked profound debate and disagreement. Martin Luther rejected the traditional doctrine that at consecration bread and wine became Christ's body and blood, yet he maintained that while the elements remained of bread and wine Christ was nevertheless present in them. Others, such as Ulrich Zwingli, went further: bread and wine were purely symbols of Christ's body and blood, Communion simply evoking remembrance of the Lord's sacrifice and thus was only a means to devotion, not an agency of grace. The paradox was that while the reformers reclaimed the Eucharist for everyone, translating its key texts into the vernacular, by downgrading its importance they dramatically reduced the frequency with which it was celebrated.

European Reformation theology influenced Thomas Cranmer's transformation of the Church of England. By 1549 English was used throughout a new Eucharistic liturgy and all references to the Mass as sacrifice were removed. More radical change was introduced in the 1552 Prayer Book that rejected Cranmer's emphasis on Christ being present when bread and wine were faithfully received by each congregant. The liturgy now explicitly declared that the elements were simply eaten in grateful remembrance of Christ's passion. Vestments were reduced to plain surplice over cassock, clergy instructed to preside from the north side of a wooden table adorned only with linen and positioned in the chancel on an east–west axis. Penitence rather than celebration became the overriding tone.

The 1559 revision softened some instructions regarding vestments and the position of the Communion table, while further minor changes were introduced when the Book of Common Prayer was approved in 1662. But, textually, Anglican liturgy from 1559 to the middle of the twentieth century was remarkably consistent with Cranmer's original reforms, providing a comforting spiritual rhythm across personal and national life.

LIVE
 the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU
 THROUGH THE WEEK

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 and
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Ninth week
 after Trinity

Monday 2 August
 to Saturday
 7 August 2021

WEEK

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