MONDAY 27 SEPTEMBER

Zechariah 8:1-8 Psalm 102:12-22 Luke 9:46-50

TUESDAY 28 SEPTEMBER

Zechariah 8:20-end Psalm 87 Luke 9:51-56

WEDNESDAY 29 SEPTEMBER Michael and All **Angels**

Genesis 28:10-17 or Revelation 12:7-12 Psalm 103:19-end Revelation 12:7-12 or Hebrews 1:5-end John 1:47-end

THURSDAY 30 SEPTEMBER

Nehemiah 8:1-12 Psalm 19:7-11 Luke 10:1-12

FRIDAY 1 OCTOBER

Baruch 1:15-end or Deuteronomy 31:7-13 Psalm 79:1-9 Luke 10:13-16

SATURDAY 2 OCTOBER

Baruch 4:5-12. 27-29 or Joshua 22:1-6 Psalm 69:33-37 Luke 10:17-24

REFLECTION

his week centres on the festival of St Michael and All Angels on Wednesday. The Gospel set for the day is the story of Nathanael, who is astonished that Jesus can make an assessment of his character without ever having met



Jacob's Ladder, Gothic mural in Tirsted Church, Denmark, Stig Alenas / Shutterstock.com

him. Jesus explains that he will see greater things - "the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man". These words refer back to the Old Testament reading for the day, which has the evocative description of Jacob's Ladder, with angels ascending and descending between heaven and earth. The two realms are not as far apart as it sometimes feels, and the angels move between the two to act as God's messengers.

In the Gospel readings for the remainder of the week we hear about reactions to Jesus' ministry, as he and his followers bring the message to different communities. Some refuse to accept it, but the seventy who were sent come back rejoicing that the demons have submitted to them.

Heaven and earth are close and, if we have eyes to see, we will know how to interpret the signs of the kingdom of God.

God of heaven and earth, we rejoice that your kingdom is close to us, with all it means. Help us to notice the signs of your work in the world and to hear what you are saying to us.

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PART I - CONFESSION

ichard Greatrex considers the prayers that form part of the Holy Communion service.

Often our first major active involvement in prayer during contemporary services of Holy Communion, such as Common Worship, is at the confession. It sometimes feels jarring after we have been warmly welcomed to be immediately reminded of our wickedness but, while desiring to worship God joyfully, a key component of praise is the penitent recognition that we have been forgiven and restored in our divine relationship. The Book of Common Prayer places the confession after the sermon and directly before the Eucharistic Prayer. Like the intercessions, which it follows, confession is both a response to God's message in scripture and sermon, and a reminder of our unworthiness to receive communion, Christ's gracious sacrifice of himself to obliterate our sins. Common Worship retains this position as an option, but most churches begin with confession, so that with the slate wiped clean we can have fresh ears to hear God's message.

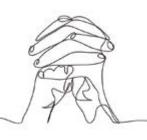
There are four parts to what is known as the Penitential Rite: introduction, silence, confessional prayer and absolution. The introduction directs us to recall our sins, which is done in silence. We then confess them together to God, using either one of several authorised general prayers or through the recitation of a "Kyrie Confession". Using the English text of the Kyrie Eleison – "Lord, have mercy/Christ, have mercy" - interwoven with brief penitential sentences, often focused on the liturgical season or a theme such as our treatment of the environment, these bring before God more specific wrongdoing and negligence. The absolution that follows assures us of God's ongoing forgiveness for all who repent.

While in our private prayers we may say sorry to God for our individual transgressions, the act of confession in the liturgy is corporate, reminding us that all our deeds are interlinked, having consequences for others. Our sinfulness is part of the fallen creation, impairing our relationship with God. This requires contrite acknowledgement if our worship is truly to connect us with each other, creation, and God.

Richard Greatrex is a parish priest, freelance writer and author of Stations of the Resurrection (RP Books product code: 1841, ISBN: 9780852315453, £12.95)

SUSTAINING YOU THROUGH THE WEEK

> Edited by Caroline Hodgson and Heather Smith



Seventeenth week after Trinity

Monday 27 September to Saturday 2 October 2021