

# Readings and Prayers for 29 August 2021: TRINITY 13 FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT (5): LOVE

## Song of Songs 2:3-6,8-14

*The Christian church has often been suspicious of the sensuousness of these poems which, whatever else they do, celebrate human love.*

She says, <sup>3</sup> Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest is my beloved among the young men. I delight to sit in his shade, and his fruit is sweet to my taste. <sup>4</sup> Let him lead me to the banquet hall, and let his banner over me be love.

<sup>5</sup> Strengthen me with raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am faint with love.

<sup>6</sup> His left arm is under my head, and his right arm embraces me.

<sup>8</sup> Listen! My beloved! Look! Here he comes, leaping across the mountains, bounding over the hills.

<sup>9</sup> My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag.

Look! There he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, peering through the lattice.

<sup>10</sup> My beloved spoke and said to me, 'Arise, my darling, my beautiful one, come with me. <sup>11</sup> See! The winter is past; the rains are over and gone.

<sup>12</sup> Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, the cooing of doves is heard in our land. <sup>13</sup> The fig-tree forms its early fruit; the blossoming vines spread their fragrance. Arise, come, my darling; my beautiful one, come with me.'

He replies, <sup>14</sup> My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding-places on the mountainside, show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.

## 1 Corinthians 13

*Whatever gifts of the Spirit are active in the church in Corinth, Paul is clear about the pre-eminence of love.*

<sup>1</sup> If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

<sup>3</sup> If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

<sup>4</sup> Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. <sup>5</sup> It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

<sup>6</sup> Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup> It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

<sup>8</sup> Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. <sup>9</sup> For we know in part and we prophesy in part, <sup>10</sup> but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. <sup>11</sup> When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. <sup>12</sup> For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

<sup>13</sup> And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

## John 15:9-17

*In this part of his farewell discourse, Jesus puts the disciples' love for one another in the context of the mutual love between Father and Son.*

Jesus said to the disciples, <sup>9</sup> 'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. <sup>10</sup> If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. <sup>11</sup> I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. <sup>12</sup> My command is this: love each other as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command. <sup>15</sup> I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup> You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last – and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. <sup>17</sup> This is my command: love each other.'

## Collect

Almighty God,  
you search us and know us:  
may we rely on you in strength  
and rest on you in weakness,  
now and in all our days;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## Post Communion

God our creator,  
you feed your children with the true manna,  
the living bread from heaven:  
let this holy food sustain us through our earthly pilgrimage  
until we come to that place  
where hunger and thirst are no more;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.