

Sunday

24th September 2023

Harvest Festival Ockley

COLLECT

Eternal God,
You crown the year with your goodness and you give us the fruits of the earth in their season: grant that we may use them to your glory, for the relief of those in need and for our own well being; 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.

FIRST READING

Deuteronomy 28. 1-14

If you will only obey the Lord your God, by diligently observing all his commandments that I am commanding you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth; all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you obey the Lord your God: blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your ground, and the fruit of your livestock, both the increase of your cattle and the issue of your flock. Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. The Lord will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before you and they shall come out against you one way, and flee before you seven ways. The Lord will command the blessing upon you in your barns, and in all that you undertake; he will bless you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. The Lord will establish you as his holy people, as he has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the Lord your God and walk in his ways. All the peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Lord, and they shall be afraid of you. The Lord will make you abound in prosperity, in the fruit of your womb, in the fruit of your livestock, and in the fruit of your ground in the land that the Lord swore to your ancestors to give you. The Lord will open for you his rich storehouse, the heavens, to give the rain of your land in its season and to bless all your undertakings. You will lend to many nations but you will not borrow. The Lord will make you the

head, and not the tail; you shall be only at the top, and not at the bottom - if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I am commanding you today, by diligently observing them, and if you do not run aside from any of the words that I am commanding you today, either to the right or to the left, following other gods to serve them.

PSALM

Psalm 65

R Be joyful in God, all the earth

Praise is due to you, O God in Zion; to you that answer prayer shall vows be paid. To you shall all flesh come to confess their sins; when our misdeeds prevail against us, you will purge them away.

Happy are they whom you choose and draw to your courts to dwell there. We shall be satisfied with the blessings of your house, even of your holy temple.

R.

With wonders you will answer us in your righteousness, O God of our salvation, O hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas.

In your strength you set fast the mountains are are girded about with might. You still the raging of the seas, the roaring of their waves and the clamour of the peoples. Those who dwell at the ends of the earth tremble at your marvels; the gates of the morning and evening sing your praise.

R.

You visit the earth and water it; you make it very plenteous. The river of God is full of water; you prepare grain for your people, for so you provide for the earth. You drench the furrows and smooth out the ridges; you soften the ground with showers and bless its increase. You crown the year with your goodness, and your paths overflow with plenty. May the pastries of the wilderness flow with goodness and the hills be girded with joy. May the meadows be clothed with flocks of sheep and the valleys stand so thick with corn that they shall laugh and sing.

R.

SECOND READING

2 Corinthians 9.6-15

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As it is written, 'He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever.' He who supplies seed to the sower and

bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us; for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God. Through the testing of this ministry you glorify God by your obedience to the confession of the gospel of Christ and by the generosity of your sharing with them and with all others, while they long for you and pray for you because of the surpassing grace of God that he has given you. Thanks be to God of his indescribable gift.

GOSPEL

Luke 12.16-30

Then he told them a parable: 'The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, "What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?" Then he said, "I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry." But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?" So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God.' He said to his disciples, 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. O how much more value are you than the birds! And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you - you of little faith! And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them.