Reflection Monday 22\textsuperscript{nd} June

Reading. Psalm 118. 1-18

1. We give thanks to you O Lord for ‘ you are ’ gracious:
   and your ‘ love endures for ’ ever.
2. Let the house of ‘ Israel ’ say:
   ‘ God’s ‘ love endures for ‘ ever.’
3. Let the house of ‘ Miriam and Aaron ‘ say:
   ‘ God’s ‘ love endures for ‘ ever.’
4. Let those who fear the ‘ Lord ‘ say:
   ‘ God’s ‘ love endures for ‘ ever.’.
5. I called to you O Lord in ‘ my distress:
   and your ‘ answer · was to · set me ‘ free.
6. The Lord is on my side, I ‘ will not ‘ fear:
   for what can human ‘ power ‘ do to ‘ me?
7. The Lord is on my ‘ side to ‘ help me:
   I will ‘ triumph ‘ over · my ‘ enemies.
8. It is better to take refuge ‘ in the ‘ Lord:
   than to ‘ put · any ‘ trust in ‘ people.
9. It is better to take refuge ‘ in the ‘ Lord:
   than to ‘ put · any ‘ trust in ‘ princes.
10. The nations ‘ all surrounded me:
    but in the name of the ‘ Lord I ‘ drove them ‘ back.
11. They hemmed me in,
    they hemmed me in on ‘ every ‘ side:
    but in the name of the ‘ Lord I ‘ drove them ‘ back.
12. They swarmed around me like bees,
    they blazed like fire a’mong the ‘ thorns:
    but in the name of the ‘ Lord I ‘ drove them ‘ back.
13. They pressed hard upon me, so that I ‘ almost ‘ fell:
    but the ‘ Lord ‘ came · to my ‘ help.
14. The Lord is my strength and ‘ my defence:
    and has become ‘ my deliverer.
15. There are shouts of joy and deliverance
    in the ‘ tents · of the ‘ righteous:
    the right hand of the ‘ Lord does ‘ mighty ‘ things.
16. The right hand of the Lord ‘ raises ‘ up:
    the right hand of the ‘ Lord does ‘ mighty ‘ things.
17. I shall not ‘ die but ‘ live:
    and proclaim · what the ‘ Lord has ‘ done.
18. The Lord indeed has ‘punished me:
   but did not ‘give me ‘over · to ‘death.

In its ancient Jewish context, Psalm 118 was most likely an entrance liturgy to the Temple, used at the festival of Passover. It proclaimed God's deliverance from Egypt and, later on, from the Exile. The Psalm was a liturgical script, consisting of parts for leaders and chorus/congregation. One can hear the jubilant call and response in 118:2-4: "Let Israel say, 'God’s steadfast love

endures forever.' It is a psalm for deliverance from danger and praise for God’s steadfast love. But we know, that while God’s love is everlasting, death comes to us all, sometimes peacefully and sometimes not. the saint’s feast days are important because they remind us of how many people have and continue to, die for their faith.

Today in the liturgical calander, we celebrate the life and faith of St Alban, first British martyr.

St Alban was believed to have lived during the 3rd century in the area of the Roman town of Verulamium, now St Albans, Hertfordshire. According to the historian Bede, he was a high-ranking soldier in the Roman army. The Roman emperor Septimus Severus hated Christianity. When he came to Britain in 208 and found Christians living there, he ordered them put to the sword. A Christian priest, who is often given the name Amphibalus, survived and fled to Verulamium.

Something about Amphibalus led Alban to offer him shelter. In spite of his status as a hunted refugee, Amphibalus never ceased to praise God. His joy was so real that Alban was moved and converted to Christianity.

The governor learned that Alban was harbouring a Christian fugitive. He sent soldiers to arrest the priest. They were met by a man in a priestly robe. It was none other than Alban. When the governor saw this, he was furious. Since Alban had helped Amphibalus to escape, he said, Alban must bear the punishment due the priest. At the moment, the governor was preparing to
pour out a libation (drink offering) to his gods. Now he ordered Alban to do so, saying he would spare him only on condition that he show his loyalty to the old gods by doing that.

Alban refused. "I worship and adore the true and living God, who created all things," he said.

After having Alban flogged, the governor again asked him to renounce Christianity. Once more Alban refused. And so, the governor ordered his beheading.

Because of his sacrificial love for God and humanity, Alban’s tomb was venerated, and a church was built on the site as early as 429. Later, the Abbey of St. Albans was founded there, and around it grew the town of St Albans. While he was not the first Briton to lose their life for their faith, his was the first recorded martyrdom and was significantly influential in stopping the persecution of Christians in Britain.


Verulamium: Roman theatre Remnants of the Roman theatre at Verulamium in Hertfordshire, England. Photo Rob Hinkley

https://youtu.be/zNWkKuj1Hq4  https://youtu.be/l8Tav-cFBUE


https://youtu.be/7uzcYBOipT8