Devotional, Monday, August 31, 2026
Proper 17, the week of the fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
The Rev. David W. Perkins, Th.D.

Flinging a New World

Key phrases for reflection from today's Gospel reading:
28So Jesus said, `When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me. 29And the one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him.' 30As he was saying these things, many believed in him.

31 Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, `If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; 32and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.'

You will find the full text of today's Gospel reading at the end of this reflection.

Daily Office Lectionary Readings, (*BCP*, 983)
AM Psalm 25; PM Psalm 9, 15
Job 12:1-6,13-25; Acts 11:19-30; John 8:21-32

Today we celebrate the Feast of Aidan. (See below.)

David's Reflections

In notebooks found in his university office after his death, the poet Theodore Roethke left us this fragment.
The world is where we fling it.
Lift me, long dream.
I'm leaving where I am for other loves
Than what I see. *

The closing words of today's reading offer us the opportunity to fling a new world, a world of freedom. In Roethke's words, we can leave where we are for other loves than what we see. Jesus promises us that if we trust in him we will know the truth and the truth will set us free.

Those words of this reading can be found on building friezes and cornerstones, "You will know the truth and the truth will make you free." Yet, true to John's storytelling techniques, the meaning of this phrase does not surface at first glance. It is easy to assume that the truth here is propositional, some idea or concept that frees us; but, this truth of which Jesus speaks actually is Jesus himself. He is the ultimate reality that points us toward the unseen world of the fourth dimension in which God abides. Jesus abides in that world simultaneously with his abiding in the visible world. All who come to faith in Christ live in both worlds at once as well and share in Jesus' relationship with the Father.

Each Sunday we pray the Collect for Purity, which contains the words, "Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known.. . . . " In today's reading, Jesus speaks of one of our heart cravings, the desire for freedom. What space of freedom does your heart desire today? Being a disciple means living into the freedom Christ came to give us, tasting of that unseen world of the Spirit. God knows that craving, that desire. He knows your "long dream," to use Roethke's words.

God's grace will undergird and enable our faith when we falter. Settle for nothing less than the space of freedom our hearts crave. Know that our departure from where we are for other loves than what we see already has begun, begun in the love of our long dream and the lifting up of that desire to God. The new world is where we, in faith, fling it.

* *Straw for the Fire: from the Notebooks of Theodore Roethke*: *1943-1963*. Selected and arranged by David Wagoner (Doubleday, 1974), p. 48.

Collect of the Day, Proper 17, the fourteenth Sunday After Pentecost
Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: Graft in our hearts the love of your Name; increase in us true religion; nourish us with all goodness; and bring forth in us the fruit of good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen*. (BCP, 233)

Today we celebrate the Feast of missionary, abbot, bishop of Lindisfarne (died 31 Aug 651 CE).
http://www.satucket.com/lectionary/Aidan.htm

https://www.livebreathescotland.com/biographies/saint-aidan-of-lindisfarne/

Collect of the Feast of Aidan
O loving God, you called your servant Aidan from the cloister to re-establish the Christian mission in northern England: Grant that we, following his example, may use what you have given us for the relief of human need, and may persevere in commending the saving Gospel of our Redeemer Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

A Collect for the Renewal of Life
O God, the King eternal, whose light divides the day from the night and turns the shadow of death into the morning: Drive far from us all wrong desires, incline our hearts to keep your law, and guide our feet into the way of peace; that, having done your will with cheerfulness while it was day, we may, when night comes, rejoice to give you thanks; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP, 99)

From Night Prayer in The New Zealand Prayer Book
God our Creator, our centre, our friend, we thank you for our good life, for those who are dear to us, for our dead, and for all who have helped and influenced us. We thank you for the measure of freedom we have, and the extent to which we control our lives; and most of all we thank you for the faith that is in us, for our awareness of you and our hope in you. Keep us, we pray you, thankful and hopeful and useful until our lives shall end. *Amen.*

Of the Holy Spirit
Almighty and most merciful God, grant that by the indwelling of your Holy Spirit we may be enlightened and strengthened for your service; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (BCP, 251)

In the Evening
O Lord, support us all the day long, until the shadows lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in thy mercy, grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last. ***Amen***. (BCP, 833)

A Collect for Mission
O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold; pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP, 100, 257)

Daily Office Gospel, John 8:21-32
21 Again he said to them, `I am going away, and you will search for me, but you will
die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come.' 22Then the Jews said, `Is he
going to kill himself? Is that what he means by saying, "Where I am going, you
cannot come"?' 23He said to them, `You are from below, I am from above; you are of
this world, I am not of this world. 24I told you that you would die in your sins,
for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he.' 25They said to him,
`Who are you?' Jesus said to them, `Why do I speak to you at all? 26I have much to
say about you and much to condemn; but the one who sent me is true, and I declare
to the world what I have heard from him.' 27They did not understand that he was
speaking to them about the Father. 28So Jesus said, `When you have lifted up the
Son of Man, then you will realize that I am he, and that I do nothing on my
own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me. 29And the one who sent
me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him.' 30As
he was saying these things, many believed in him.

31 Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, `If you continue in my word,
you are truly my disciples; 32and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you
free.'

Daily Offices in the Book of Common Prayer
Morning Prayer, Rite 2, page 75, *The Book of Common Prayer*
Noonday Prayer, page 103, *Book of Common Prayer*
Order of Worship for Evening (Vespers), p 109, *Book of Common Prayer*
Evening Prayer, Rite 2, page 115, *Book of Common Prayer*
Compline (Night Prayer), page 127, *Book of Common Prayer*
Daily Devotionals, page 136, *Book of Common Prayer*