

**ANGLICAN CHAPLAINCY OF ALL SAINTS' MARSEILLE
WITH AIX-EN-PROVENCE AND THE LUBERON**

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Sermons – September 2026

1/ Sermon – Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity - 6th September 2026

All Saints' Marseille

The Revd Roxana Tenea Teleman, Assistant Chaplain

2/ Sermon – Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity - 13th September 2026

All Saints' Marseille

The Revd Roxana Tenea Teleman, Assistant Chaplain

3/ Sermon – Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity - 20th September 2026

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The Revd Roxana Tenea Teleman, Assistant Chaplain

4/ Sermon – Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity

27th September 2026 - All Saints' Marseille

The Revd Roxana Tenea Teleman, Assistant Chaplain

1/ Sermon – Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity - 6th September 2026

All Saints' Marseille

The Revd Roxana Tenea Teleman, Assistant Chaplain

For twenty-five years now, we have been returning to the same mountain place for our family holiday. I am happy to be there, communing with a landscape shaped by water — living water. Glaciers, mountain torrents, waterfalls, lakes, clouds, rain, dew, vapour. Water everywhere. And with it comes that beauty and exuberance of creation of which Isaiah speaks today.

Something often happens to me when I walk there. I find that I have music in my head. It simply appears — a little musical phrase that becomes a kind of *leitmotif* for days of walking.

This year something was different. We crossed mountain streams, refreshed our faces and our feet in the ice-cold water, watched mountains and skies reflected perfectly in a lake, noticed how rapidly the glaciers are retreating - instead of music, a few words from Psalm 137 came, again and again, to me: “There we sat down and wept.”

It was as though the music had stopped. Perhaps the music was still there, but I had become unable to hear it in quite the same way.

The tears came. They were, in part, tears of gratefulness — knowing that I am blessed to be able to sit surrounded by such beauty, by so much life. But also tears of sadness: at the changes taking place in a landscape I love; at the animals and birds that seem to be becoming less common; at the sense that something is being lost and will not return. Sadness, too, at the way we sometimes encounter creation without really seeing it. On some paths, people were rushing along taking photograph after photograph for social-media accounts — sometimes seeing the landscape only through the screen of a device.

I found myself wondering: if I come back next year, what will I find? Underneath it all was a feeling of helplessness. “There we sat down and wept.”

It is the feeling of people who cannot repair what has been broken. Many people around the world have known something of that in these past months, while watching the world they knew change before their eyes.

“Lord, save us! We are perishing!” —That is the cry of the disciples in today's Gospel. They are in a boat, and suddenly the sea is violently disturbed, caught in an upheaval greater than anything the disciples can control.

There are moments when that is all prayer can be: “Lord, save us.”

Perhaps today we need to hear this Gospel not simply as a story about frightened disciples, but as a picture of the Creation caught in upheaval: Paul writes in the Letter to the Romans that the whole creation groans, longing for liberation — for the freedom and restoration that God intends for all that God has made.

The cry of the disciples is not only our cry. It is also the cry of creation itself: “Lord, save us. We are perishing.”

Into that cry comes the presence of Christ. “Why are you afraid?”

Extraordinary question! The storm is real. The boat is being tossed about. Faith does not mean pretending that everything is all right when it is not.

But fear can become a way of seeing the whole world, even determining what we believe about the future.

This is where our faith has something distinctive to say. Christianity is a religion of hope. Not optimistic thinking, not the conviction that everything will turn out exactly as we would like. Christian hope is the trust that the future ultimately belongs to God.

We find that hope, above all, in Christ.

The Christ whom the disciples call upon in the storm is not concerned only with human souls, not only with the Church. The horizon of Christ's work is nothing less than the whole creation. The Letter to the Colossians says: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; [...] all things have been created through him and for him." And then: "Through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven."

"All things." That little phrase should give us a very different theological framework for thinking about the ecological crisis of our own time. We do not care for creation simply because we are terrified that everything is going to collapse, nor because we have a moral checklist of environmental duties. We care because creation is God's gift, because it belongs to Christ, and because all things are caught up in God's purposes of reconciliation and renewal.

And that means resisting three temptations: denial — pretending that nothing is wrong; despair — believing that nothing can be done; anxiety — feeling that we ourselves must carry the whole burden of the future.

Christian hope allows us to look honestly at the storm without believing that the storm has the final word. It means doing what is ours to do, even when we may never see the fruits of our work, because we trust the One who holds the future.

So where shall we start?

Perhaps with an action plan. Our faith gives us agency. Again and again, Jesus enables and encourages people who are poor, marginalised and apparently powerless to discover that their lives matter and that they have a part to play in God's purposes. So yes: there are things we can and should do.

But perhaps there is something to consider before we draw up our action plan: we need to learn how to look.

In his 2015 encyclical *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis offered a surprising response to the misuse and destruction of our common home: contemplation.

If we never stop to look at the world with wonder and gratitude, it becomes easy to see everything simply as an object - to consume, possess, exploit, photograph and move on from. Pope Francis puts it rather starkly: if we have not learned to stop and admire something beautiful, we should not be surprised if we begin to treat everything as something to be used and abused.

Contemplation is an antidote to the illusion that we are at the centre of everything, that the world exists primarily for us, and that we can take the place of God. Look. Pay attention. Notice. Become attentive to the life around us, and through that attentiveness discover something about God.

Perhaps this is how we begin to recover the music of creation: becoming quiet enough to hear it, attentive enough to notice it. Creation is not silent matter, waiting for us to give it meaning. It is already singing of its Creator, alive with divine presence. The more deeply we listen, the more clearly we may hear the voice of the One through whom all things were made, the One in whom all things hold together, the One through whom all things are being reconciled.

The prophet Isaiah spoke of God's promise: "Though the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, my steadfast love shall not depart from you." The world we know may not remain exactly as it is.

But God's steadfast love does not depart. And that is where our hope rests.

And so perhaps our response to the ecological crisis should begin with trust in Christ. With relearning to see creation as God's gift, belonging to Christ and held together in him; and seeing it as our neighbour for whom we are called to care.

Sometimes all we can say is: “There we sat down and wept”. But the music of Creation has not stopped. There is a song that began before humanity and will continue beyond us. A song that is continuously renewed.

The song is God's. Christ is its centre. And we are invited, by grace, to sing along.

2/ Sermon – Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity - 13th September 2026 All Saints' Marseille

The Revd Roxana Tenea Teleman, Assistant Chaplain

How does it feel to live with a debt one knows one cannot pay?

I grew up with the example of my parents that it is best not to have debts; but if you do, you make every possible effort to honour them. Perhaps that is why, when I read Dickens as a child, his characters living permanently in debtors' prison, with no hope of getting out, made such a lasting impression on me. Dickens knew something about this himself: when his father was imprisoned for debt, the family was forced to move into the Marshalsea debtors' prison with him.

How does it feel to live with a debt one knows one cannot pay? And how does it feel to be unexpectedly forgiven that debt? These are not simply questions about money and economics. They are also questions about something deeper: what we owe one another, and what it means to forgive.

Peter has just heard Jesus speak about what to do when a member of the community causes harm: confronting wrongdoing, seeking truth, and holding one another accountable. Justice matters. But Peter wants to know how far mercy should extend: "As many as seven times?"

Seven is already an extravagant number, the number of completeness. Peter probably thinks he is being generous. How often are we given a second chance? Never mind a seventh one?

But Jesus explodes Peter's calculation: not seven times, but seventy-seven times. Jesus is echoing the book of Genesis, where Lamech, a descendant of Cain, boasts of taking vengeance seventy-sevenfold.

The language of unlimited vengeance is turned upside down. Where Lamech says, *I will repay injury with greater injury*, Jesus says: *forgive without keeping count*. It is as though Jesus is inviting his disciples to break a cycle that has run through the human story from generation to generation: envy, resentment, violence, retaliation, and then more retaliation.

We see that cycle in the story of Joseph, which began with a family torn apart by jealousy and resentment. His brothers' hatred made Joseph disappear into a long season of suffering. Years later, his brothers stand before him again. They have a debt to him that they could never repay, and they fear revenge.

But Joseph refuses to let what happened determine what happens next. He chooses another future. His forgiveness does not change the past; it changes what the past is allowed to do to the future.

The parable of the unforgiving servant takes us into the same territory. Its language is familiar to us: debts, what is owed, and what can be repaid and how. We are living in a country with a very large national debt, expressed in figures almost beyond comprehension, and it is difficult to imagine it being paid off in the course of our own lives. It can seem like a Sword of Damocles: heavy and sharp, hanging over our heads by a single horsehair.

In Jesus' parable, however, the debt is deliberately beyond comprehension. The servant has no realistic possibility of settling it, yet the king does not simply extend the deadline or negotiate a repayment plan. He cancels the debt. He forgives it.

This takes us back to the words we pray in the Lord's Prayer: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

There is a beautiful resonance here with the Jewish tradition in which Jesus himself was formed. It says that when we do wrong, something is owed; something has been damaged, and an account has to be settled. The book of Ecclesiasticus says: “Forgive your neighbour the wrong he has done, and then your sins will be pardoned when you pray.” (28.2)

And this week, as Rosh Hashanah began the Jewish New Year and the Days of Awe lead towards Yom Kippur, Jewish people will be thinking especially about repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation. To seek forgiveness means facing what has happened, acknowledging wrong, turning back, and, where possible, making amends. The person who has been wronged, in turn, is invited to be generous in granting forgiveness.

But forgiveness is difficult. How much is required of us? How often? Where is the limit?

Jesus gives no formula, no calculation, because the Kingdom of Heaven is not a balance sheet. It is grace, which cannot be calculated: it cannot be earned or repaid. We receive it before we can deserve it, and Jesus asks us to let that grace shape the way we live with the debts we believe others owe us.

That does not mean turning a blind eye to evil or injustice. Jesus’ teaching about forgiveness stands alongside his teaching about confronting wrongdoing. We have a responsibility to protect the vulnerable, to speak the truth, and to challenge injustice.

One of the most powerful attempts to hold mercy and justice together came in South Africa after apartheid, through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, associated especially with Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The truth had to be told. Crimes had to be named. Victims were given the opportunity to speak, and those responsible were

called to acknowledge what they had done. Within that difficult process there was also the possibility of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Forgiveness is neither forgetting nor the absence of justice, and forgiveness is not the same thing as reconciliation. Sometimes reconciliation is possible; sometimes it is not. Sometimes trust can be rebuilt; sometimes it cannot.

But forgiveness refuses to allow the wound to become the author of the future. It is a refusal to let evil reproduce itself, to pass the wound on.

And yet, if forgiveness is so difficult, why does Jesus ask it of us? Perhaps the answer is this: we should forgive because we ourselves have been forgiven.

The servant in the parable has received an extraordinary gift. His enormous debt has been cancelled, but he does not allow that grace to change him. He receives mercy but does not let mercy flow through him.

For Christ's disciples, forgiveness is not something we manufacture out of our own moral strength; it begins with something we have received.

Every time we come to the Lord's table, we hear the words: "Christ's blood was shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins." We come not because we have settled all our accounts, but because God has not waited for us to settle them. Forgiveness is first of all God's gift, and perhaps, when we sink deeply enough into that mercy, we become more able to extend it to others.

Joseph understood something of this. When his brothers stand before him, he has not forgotten what they did. He knows that they intended evil, but asks: "Am I in the place of God?" The final judgement does not

belong to Joseph. It belongs to God. Joseph leaves open the possibility that his brothers' story does not have to end with the evil they have done.

God is present in our story, and with God lies the hope that our hurts will not end in brokenness. This is part of what forgiveness asks of us: to leave open the possibility of redemption — in others, and in ourselves.

We are all debtors who live by the mercy of God: mercy freely given, mercy we could never earn, mercy we could never repay. And perhaps the prayer we need is not simply, "Lord, help me to forgive," but: "Lord, let me receive your forgiveness so deeply that, in time, your mercy may flow through me to others."

Thus we can take up the hard work of forgiveness, until justice reigns and the final word is grace.

3/ Sermon – Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity -20th September 2026

All Saints' Marseille

The Revd Roxana Tenea Teleman, Assistant Chaplain

“It’s not fair!” What parent has not heard those words?

Children seem to learn very early to notice unequal treatment. Before they can fully explain what fairness means, they compare: “Why does she get more?” “Why can he stay up later?” “Why did you give him that?” Perceived unfairness can provoke a stronger reaction than fairness brings satisfaction.

Last week we heard the end of a story of sibling rivalry: Jacob’s preferential love for Joseph did not simply hurt his brothers’ feelings. It fuelled resentment, with consequences that nearly tore the family apart.

Today’s readings give us two stories of people who are angry because God refuses to play by their rules of fairness.

First comes Jonah, whose story is, from beginning to end, a satire on the prophetic tradition. Jonah is almost the anti-prophet. When God tells him to go east, to the Assyrian city of Nineveh, and proclaim God’s word there, Jonah goes west and boards a ship bound for Tarshish. Then comes a storm. And the pagan sailors show more reverence for the God of Israel than God’s own prophet does. Jonah is thrown into the sea, swallowed by a great fish, and given a second chance.

Finally, Jonah goes to Nineveh. And what happens? His preaching is spectacularly successful. The people hear his message, “Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”, and they believe God. They repent, fast and pray. Even the animals wear sackcloth. The reluctant

prophet has become, almost by accident, one of the most successful preachers in the Bible.

You might expect Jonah to be delighted. But no. “This was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry.” Why? Because God has done precisely what Jonah feared God would do: God has forgiven them.

Jonah knows perfectly well what kind of God he serves: “I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing.” These words could be a confession of faith. Jonah knows firsthand God’s mercy and steadfast love. What he cannot accept is where that mercy is going.

Nineveh is not Jonah’s favourite neighbour. It represents the enemies of Israel. Jonah seems to believe that there are people who have forfeited their right to God’s mercy. He would like grace to have boundaries, mercy to be distributed according to some recognisable scale of deserving. He can receive God’s mercy for himself; but when God extends that same mercy to his enemies, he finds it intolerable.

Jonah is not complaining that God has been unfaithful. He is complaining that God has been too merciful. Perhaps that is one of the uncomfortable things about grace: we are usually very happy that God is generous, until God’s generosity reaches someone we think deserves less than we do.

That same tension lies at the heart of Jesus’ parable. It is easy to understand the feelings of the labourers who have worked all day in the vineyard under the hot sun. They agreed to work for the usual daily wage. They knew what they would receive. But then they see those who arrived later being paid the same amount. “These last have worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us.”

Their complaint is understandable. We know how the world is supposed to work. Time is money. More work deserves more pay. Fair is fair.

And yet the landowner has not cheated these workers. He has paid them exactly what he promised. No contract has been broken. What troubles them is not injustice towards themselves, but generosity towards the others.

The landowner asks: “Are you envious because I am generous?” The question takes us to the heart of the parable.

The first workers seem to have assumed that their long hours would give them a greater claim on the landowner’s generosity. But the landowner has a different vision. He goes out again and again: at the third hour, the sixth, the ninth, even the eleventh. He keeps looking for people who have not yet found work. He keeps inviting them into the vineyard.

There is something here that goes beyond the question of wages. The landowner does not simply seem to need more workers. He wants people to have a place. No one is left outside merely because they arrived late. And when the day ends, everyone receives enough.

That is where the parable begins to reveal something about the grace of God.

God’s love does not begin with what we have done. Our worth is not something we establish through our achievements, our usefulness, our years of service, or our moral record. Our worth rests first in God’s life-giving love for us.

We often imagine that we must earn our place: by being good enough, faithful enough, useful enough. We instinctively understand relationships in terms of exchange: *do ut des* — I give so that you may give.

But grace interrupts that logic. Grace is not a payment for services rendered. It is gift. And perhaps that is why grace can be difficult to receive — and even more difficult to see given to someone else. The scandal of the Gospel is not simply that God is generous. It is that God's generosity is not limited by our calculations of who deserves it.

Jonah looks at Nineveh and asks, in effect, *Why should they receive the mercy that God has shown to me?* The workers in the vineyard look at those who arrived late and ask, *Why should they have what we have?*

The questions are different, but the instinct is the same: *Surely grace should have limits. Surely there must be a difference between those who have done more and those who have done less, between those who belong and those who arrive late, between those who deserve mercy and those who do not.*

Jesus does not tell us that justice does not matter. Nor is this parable a new theory of economics. It takes us into the economy of God's kingdom, where love cannot be reduced to our calculations of merit and reward.

In the kingdom of God, grace is not a scarce resource. Another person's forgiveness does not diminish ours. Another person's welcome does not leave less room for us.

There is enough mercy. There is enough love. There is enough room in the vineyard. And there is no shortage of work for us.

The landowner keeps going out, hour after hour, calling people into the vineyard. We are invited to take our place in the work of God's kingdom. But the work is not a way of earning God's love. It is our response to a love that was there before we began.

God loves, and God gives. We are created in the image of this God, so we are created to love and to give: to give without keeping score, to forgive without calculating what the other person deserves, to leave room for another person's second chance.

The comfort of today's Gospel is that God's grace reaches us wherever we are: at the first hour, the third, the ninth, even the eleventh. The challenge is that the same grace is offered to others: to people who arrived later, to people whose lives have taken a different path, even to people who have hurt us.

As Augustine confessed: "Late have I loved you." Perhaps we could say the same in more ways than one. We may have come late to God. We may have understood grace only slowly. We may still be learning how to receive it. But God keeps going out to call us. And God keeps going out to call others.

There is enough room in the vineyard. There is enough mercy. And there is work enough for all of us.

4/ Sermon – Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity

27th September 2026 - All Saints' Marseille

The Revd Roxana Tenea Teleman, Assistant Chaplain

How much weight do we give to what people say?

I take my membership in the European Union seriously, and I try to follow its life closely — including its political life and its rhetoric. Last Sunday, I watched the results of the regional elections in Germany. What struck me most was a poll discussed the following morning: a large proportion of those who had voted for the party that came first did not actually expect it to carry out the programme on which it had campaigned. The party had called urgently for something new — leave the past behind, change direction, trust us.

What do we make of promises that go unkept, or invitations whose trustworthiness we cannot quite gauge? And what happens when what we say and what we do begin to pull in different directions? Whose promises can we trust? Whose invitations are worth answering?

It is almost as though Jesus had anticipated these very questions in the parable he tells the religious leaders who come to confront him.

By the time we reach today's Gospel, Jesus has been teaching and healing, welcoming those on the margins, proclaiming the kingdom of God. Now he has entered Jerusalem, welcomed by the crowds as the Son of David. He has gone into the Temple and overturned the tables of the money changers. He comes bearing an invitation to step into something new, to change direction.

The disruption he causes brings the religious leaders to confront him: "By what authority are you doing these things?" They want him to

account for himself, to justify both his words and his actions. Whose authority is he claiming? Show us your credentials, they seem to be saying.

Jesus answers with a question of his own, and then with a parable — as if to suggest that the credentials they are looking for will not be found in a title or a position, but in what a person actually does.

The parable is simple: two sons, one father. The first says he will go and work in the vineyard, and does not. The second says he will not, but later changes his mind and goes. "Which of the two did the will of his father?"

It is not a comfortable question, because it turns our attention back on ourselves. For everyone who hears the parable, the comparison prompts another, quieter question: which am I?

How often is there a gap between what we say and what we do — between what we believe and how we live, between our intentions and our choices? And yet the parable is not simply an invitation to examine our own consistency. It leaves room for something more hopeful than that.

That hope begins with a single word: today. "Go and work in the vineyard today."

There is something wonderfully immediate in that word. The invitation is not deferred to some more convenient moment, nor is the past allowed the final say. There is work to be done, and the invitation is for now.

At this pivotal moment in Matthew's Gospel, Jesus is offering his listeners an open future: go and work — today. Come and take your place in the work of God's kingdom. Say yes.

As the poet Edwina Gately puts it:

*We are called to say yes
That the kingdom might break through
To renew and to transform
Our dark and groping world.*

Jesus extends this invitation even to those who oppose him — into a future not determined by the arguments and failures of the past, but open to the movement of God's Spirit to heal, restore, and make all things new.

The religious leaders do not accept it. They assume they already know what God wants, and where the boundaries of a faithful life must lie. But those whom they had placed outside those boundaries hear the invitation differently. Those regarded as beyond the limits of respectable life had heard John the Baptist's call to repentance and recognised in it a summons to change direction. They discovered that the identity handed to them by their past did not have to determine their future — that the door was still open. They trusted Jesus' invitation. They recognised his authority.

Why?

Perhaps because in Jesus there is no gap between what he says and what he does. He does not merely speak about the kingdom of God; he lives it. He does not merely call others to a new way of life; he walks that way himself.

This is exactly what Paul brings into focus in his letter to the Philippians. Christ, he says, humbled himself and became obedient. His authority is not the authority of one grasping for power, but of one who serves

— an authority revealed in what his presence brings about: healing and restoration, cleansing and reconciliation, the gathering in of those who had been kept at the margins.

Go and work — today. It is an invitation to labour alongside the one who embodies God's will. And as we walk with him, his way of humility, obedience, and self-giving begins, slowly, to shape our own.

This means we need not wait until everything is settled before we respond. We do not need every credential, every answer, every resource. We do not need to resolve the past, organise every detail, or wait for circumstances to be perfect.

There are, of course, plenty of reasons to hesitate when God calls. We may feel overwhelmed by what is already before us. We may fear what change will require. We may simply prefer things as they are. And sometimes we persuade ourselves that our intentions are enough — that wanting to do the right thing is nearly the same as doing it.

Carl Jung spoke of exploring daily the will of God. I take that to mean staying open to the living, unfolding promptings of God — willing to notice where grace may be leading us today, rather than assuming we already know the limits of what God can ask of us. The kingdom of God is always opening beyond the boundaries we draw around it. The God who calls us is, always, a God of new beginnings.

And Paul reminds us that this new life is not ours to accomplish by sheer effort: "It is God who is at work in you," he says, "enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure." This new life is not about proving ourselves, or claiming authority over others. It begins with receiving grace, allowing God to work within us, and becoming willing to serve.

Go and work — today. Remain open. Trust that God is already at work in the future set before us. Trust that today, and every day, we are called into something new: into a deeper faith, a greater freedom, a renewed understanding of ourselves and of one another, a new way of living in the world.

Whatever our past may hold, whatever we may have done or failed to do, whatever has been done to us — the future is still open.

God is here. God is calling, today and every day. And every moment remains open to grace.