

Sermon for 2017 Yr A Proper 6  
Preached Sunday June 18, 2017 at St. James', Mount Vernon  
By the Rev. Charles F. Brock

Who here knows what it feels like to be harassed and helpless?

I think we all do. Life does that to us. Life puts us square in the path of events that threaten us and overwhelm us.

Perhaps you've had problems at work. Perhaps you've been stressed and exhausted by the demands of the office, or challenged by difficult colleagues. Perhaps you've been unemployed, and have had to cope with financial hardships.

Maybe you've known the sorrow of failed relationships, the pain of a broken marriage, the heartache of children who struggle, or you are cut-off from someone important to you.

Health issues touch us all. Whether it is our health or the health of someone close, our lives can be taken over by the demands of treatment and care of a serious illness.

And much like illness, the issues of aging creep up on us and overwhelm us, first as our parents age and then as we age ourselves. Our own bodies begin to betray us, aching knees, throbbing hips. Vision and hearing begin to fail, and then our memories themselves are at risk.

In all these ways and many others, our lives are caught up by forces outside of our control.

Jesus sees that we are harassed and helpless.

Jesus knows that we feel overwhelmed by life because we think we are on our own, by ourselves, dealing with forces that are bigger and more powerful than we are.

And Jesus has compassion for us. Jesus comes to tell us that God is with us, and that we can trust God, and that God will see us through, because God loves us.

Jesus sent his disciples to go out to the people, to proclaim this good news to a people that needs to hear it.

This morning we are going to come out to you, to bring that message to you by anointing you with chrisem oil. We will come out to you, to where you are.

**ANOINTING WITH THESE WORDS:**

I anoint you in the strong name of Jesus.

The kingdom of heaven has come near to you.

AFTER ANOINTING:

What have we done to you? We have anointed you in the name of Jesus. We have proclaimed to you, "The kingdom of heaven has come near." We have assured you, You are not alone. God is with you.

The world is filled with people who are harassed and helpless. Lonely people, people living in fear, in poverty, people who have no one to turn to for a word of hope.

But God is with you. You are whole and holy. Share this gift that God has made known to you. Be a sign to others that the kingdom of heaven has come near to them, too.

Amen.