"How readest thou?

Christ crucified, Lancelot Andrewes tells us in a marvellous sermon is *"liber charitatis, the book of love, opened to us"* to read. How do we read?

It is a pressing contemporary question. How do we read? There has been a virtual explosion of books about the marvel and the miracle of reading and about what reading means in the digital age. There is, in fact, a considerable climate of anxiety about books and reading. Does it mean the end of books? Does it mean the end of reading, itself? In the technological changes of the digital world, do the changes to reading mean changes to our thinking?

There is, for example, Alberto Manguel's classic, *History of Reading* (1996), not to mention his *A Reader on Reading* (2010) and a collection of other writings. There is Maryanne Wolf's remarkable and prescient book, *Proust and the Squid* (2008), Nicholas Carr's *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains* (2010), Christopher Hedges *The Empire of Illusion: The End of Illiteracy and the Triumph of Spectacle* (2007), Mark Bauerlein's *The Dumbest Generation: How the Digital Age Stupefies Young Americans and Jeopardises Our Future* (2008) – no prizes for guessing where he is coming from! There is the digital cheerleader, Clay Shirky, with *Cognitive Surplus* (2010) and, soon to come, *Hello Avatar: Rise of the Networked Generation* (2011).

There are the scholarly reflections of such figures as Anthony Grafton with his *Worlds Made by Words: Scholarship and Community in the Modern West* (2009), and Ann Blair's *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information Before the Modern Age* (2010). And just as recently, there is Alan Jacobs' useful overview and balanced reflection in his *The Pleasures of Reading in An Age of Distraction* (2011), who opens us out to a larger world past and present about the how, the what, and the why of reading. As he notes about Harold Bloom's *How to Read and Why* (2000), it should really have been called *'What to Read and What to Think about It'*. There is always, it seems, a moral imperative that slips into the consideration of reading. And, finally, to end this eclectic romp about books about books and reading, Amazon alerted me just the other day about a book just released by Umberto Eco and Jean-Claude Carrière, entitled *This is Not the End of the Book* (2011)! I suspect that this is not *"the end of the matter"*, though I think the wisdom of *Ecclesiastes* will indeed be born out, namely that *"of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh."*

It might seem that along with the question, *"how do we read?"*, there is the equally important question, *"what do we read?"* To be sure. Yet, this may be one of those rare moments where the *how* sheds light on the *what*, the means upon the purpose. At the very least, it opens to view the necessary interrelation between *how* we read and *what* we read.

And what about worship and prayer? What about the reading of *The Book of Common Prayer*? *How readest thou?*

It is, in so many ways, our question and yet, *mirabile dictu*, it is not a new question. *Tam antiqua, tam novo*. Truth ever old and ever new, as Augustine notes.

Jesus asks the question. *"How readest thou?"* Put to the test by a clever lawyer about how to obtain eternal life, Jesus responds in good Socratic fashion by asking him about what is written in the Law of Moses. *"How readest thou?"* The lawyer answers with what Anglicans used to know, and, perhaps, still do, as *The Summary of the Law*. It is precisely a way of reading the entire Scriptures but it takes on a new significance in Christ as the gospel story illustrates.

The love of God and the love of neighbour are wonderfully linked together in the refinement that belongs to late Judaism and carries over into the kerygma of Christianity. That becomes the literary context, we might say, of the understanding of the mission of Jesus. In the Christian understanding of things he is, inescapably, the union of the love of God and Man, a union which we cannot achieve on the strength of our own powers from either the Jewish perspective or the Christian understanding, or, dare I say, from the Islamic viewpoint. *The Summary of the Law* catapults us into the presence of God through the intense awareness of the limitations of the finite, both of our minds and of our being.

The question belongs to the telling of a powerful parable, the familiar and wonderful parable of the Good Samaritan. The lawyer responds to the question about how he reads with the Summary of the Law. Jesus' reply was to acknowledge that he has *"answered right[ly]; this do, and thou shalt live"*. There can be no greater affirmation of the power and the truth of the Law. It is eternal life, if we can go and live it. But the story does not end there; to the contrary, it has only just begun. We cannot just go and do, it seems; we cannot simply do and live forever.

As Luke tells us, the Lawyer *"willing to justify himself"* asks the further question, the big question. *"And who is my neighbour?"* It is in response to that question that Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan. At least, that is what we have come to call it. Nowhere do we read the actual phrase *'the Good Samaritan'*; there is simply *"a certain Samaritan"*. And yet that is the true reading – meaning interpretation – of the parable. Christ is the Good Samaritan and we can only have eternal life in him. We can only *"go and do likewise"* as the Samaritan has done by the grace and power of Christ in us.

It is, perhaps, not at all surprising that Jesus should ask the question, *"How readest thou?"* In a way, the question is about our relation to words, to be sure, but even more to the Word behind all words, the Word behind all reality, the Word of God made flesh in Jesus Christ. *How readest thou?* is really a question about our life in Christ, our life in the understanding of God.

Reading. What kind of reading? Nicholas Carr, in his book *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*, and a host of other writers lament the loss of attention, what Carr calls, wonderfully, I think, *deep reading*. On the other hand, as others point

out, is all our reading deeply attentive reading? Is that really possible? Carr quotes N. Katherine Hayles about the value, too, of *hyper attention reading*. The point, as Alan Jacobs suggests, is that we need both. In a way, all of the contemporary concerns about reading reveal the necessity of negotiating between the digital and the print culture.

This brings me to *The Book of Common Prayer*. What kind of reading does it require? Well, remarkably complex, sophisticated and differentiated forms of reading, I am afraid, though ones which are surprisingly catholic; that is to say, for all in one way or another. It is Common Prayer. To recover its sensibility about reading may help to counter a number of our contemporary confusions and anxieties.

The liturgy of the Prayer Book is codex heavy, we might say, and, certainly, dense with words, a veritable forest of words. Codex is the term for what we ordinarily know as a book, pages of paper between two covers. Codex actually means a block of wood. The codex replaced the scroll, particularly for the newly emerging Christian communities of late antiquity. The Prayer Book, too, is part of the later technological innovation of the world of the printing press and belongs to the explosion of books that marks early modernity.

In contrast to what we once called the new and alternative liturgies, there are not many white spaces on the pages of the classical Book(s) of Common Prayer. An awful lot is packed into any given page of *The Book of Common Prayer*. But do we read it like we read a P.D. James' novel, carried along by the narrative flow from one delight to another? Well, no. Every service from the Prayer Book requires a kind of versatility, a capacity to move back and forth between different parts of the service as well as a sense of connection to other books, principally the Scriptures, of course, but Hymn Books as well. And then there is the ubiquitous bulletin full of all manner of largely distracting and often unnecessary material. Do we really need to know the page numbers of anything more than, say, the Collect, Epistle and Gospel and where to find the Psalm? Oh, I know, we have to make sure that the clergy are doing something, useless twits that they are. The result is a disease, a sickness which I term bulletinnitis.

I know, we have to provide some sort of so-called user-friendly guides to what is actually a pretty demanding enterprise, the activity of concentrated worship that involves the whole person within the context of a spiritual community that embraces the ages.

My point is that there is a whole lot of reading material before us in any given service of worship. The so-called newer liturgies, by the way, don't avoid this problem, either. If anything, they add to it. Common Prayer becomes complicated prayer if not confused prayer.

The Book of Common Prayer is not a novel; it is more like poetry, but more importantly it is a means to an end and not an end in itself. It is a means to our praying the Scriptures,

a way of reading deeply and thoughtfully, a way of reading, too, with hyper attention to where you are in the service and where it is going. You snooze, you lose, after all.

Learning how to use the Prayer Book in worship is an important art. It requires instruction and thoughtful attention and there is always more to learn. In a way, it captures another important feature of reading that is often overlooked, namely, re-reading, in which there is the discovery of new understandings in and through ever so familiar words that have been constantly repeated. It is never simply about information; it is always about a pattern of understanding, something which we are continually growing into more and more.

That pattern of understanding is doctrinal. It has to do with the kind of theological synthesis and clarity of essential teaching that belongs to the Book(s) of Common Prayer in our classical Anglican tradition. Through that pattern of essential teaching we are connected to the life of the wider Church, the catholic communion of the Saints, as it were. Central to the pattern is the creedal reading of the Scriptures. That is itself a way of reading, wonderfully embodied in the classical Eucharistic lectionary of the Prayer Book.

It requires a certain kind of attentiveness, as I have been suggesting. The pattern of understanding connects to a way of living; that much is clear from the parable of the Good Samaritan. But in our activity fixated age, in the culture of scattered souls, in *"An Age of Distraction"*, as Alan Jacobs has called it, we forget that the contemplative element of the Prayer Book liturgy is always primary. That is assumed in the richness of the liturgical services from the Prayer Book which can never be reduced to sound-bite messages. This is the disease of modern worship; at once, experiential in an emotive and unreflective way and narcissistic in the sense that it caters to our perceived wants and desires. Rather than the confession of *"the devices and desires of our own hearts"*, there is the attempt to provide for them. The experiential optic of the sovereign individual cannot be *"followed too much."* It is our idol.

In our Anglican world, as in many other churches, there is at least a glimmer of an awareness of this problem, the awareness that not every liturgy can be a rave, a happening, an orgiastic hyper-intense experience. There is, in other words, the possibility of a kind of openness to the meditative and yet super-intense and experiential reality of *The Book of Common Prayer*. There is even, dare I say, a way of using so-called modern liturgies in the spirit of the Prayer Book. There is the necessity of knowing and appreciating the spiritual qualities of *The Book of Common Prayer*. There has to be a sitting and a listening that is presupposed in our standing and singing, our kneeling and praying as well as in our lives of service and sacrifice that flow out of and return to the worship of the living God.

This brings me back to Luke's Gospel. Immediately following the parable of the Good Samaritan, which began with Jesus' question, *"How readest thou?"*, Luke tells an equally powerful and important story. It is the story of Jesus at the home of Martha and Mary.

Martha, in the story, is said to be *"distracted by much serving"*. The Greek word captures visually and imaginatively the nature of distraction. It is about being drawn around, wheeled about, spun in circles, we might say, unfocussed and overwhelmed by too many things.

The consequence is what Jesus diagnoses: *"Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about a multitude of things."* Anxiety is one of our modern problems and a relatively modern word. The earlier 17th century translation used by Tyndale and by the King James Bible referred to being too careful, literally, too full of cares. Information overload is at the expense of the *"one thing needful"*. The distractions of the practical are really our idolatry of the practical at the expense of the *"one thing needful"*. Our preoccupation with ourselves is really our idolatry of the experiential – ours is, perhaps, the culture of *'look at me, looking at you, looking at me!'* Narcissism and nihilism in one moment; all at the expense of the one thing needful, *"sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to his word."*

The active life and the contemplative life are interrelated, as I think Luke's conjunction of these stories shows. What is undeniably clear is that the contemplative activity of *sitting and listening* is absolutely primary. Far from being a denial of the importance of the practical and the experiential, it is what is presupposed in all our doings.

The Collects of the Prayer Book are especially clear about this interrelation of the active and the contemplative. It belongs to a classical and Christian understanding of theological anthropology. There is for example the Collect for the First Sunday after Epiphany which prays that *"[we] may both perceive and know what things [we] ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfill the same."* The Collect for the First Sunday after Trinity further explicates the human condition and the absolute priority of divine grace for the perfection of our humanity. *"Because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without thee"* we need *"the help of thy grace, that in keeping of thy commandments we may please thee both in will and deed."* It is about the Godward direction of our lives and about the divine presence in our lives which is the good part, I might add, of the intentionality of the liturgy itself.

This is heavy-duty theology and yet, experientially true. We constantly confront the limitations of ourselves and our intentions as well as the limitations of institutions and events. Sitting and listening is the *unum necessarium* without which all our doings are nothing worth; it is about an openness to the divine love which perfects all human loves. That is what our reading has to be about.

Sitting and listening are profoundly spiritual and intellectual activities that undergird the manifold busyness of our lives. The point of their interrelation is captured in a lovely passage from a twelfth century Cistercian writer, Aelred of Rivaulx.

> *In this wretched and laborious life, brethren, Martha must of necessity be in our house; that is to say, our soul has to be concerned with bodily actions. As long as we need to eat and drink, we shall need to tame our flesh with watching, fasting,*

> *and work. This is Martha's role. But in our souls there ought also to be Mary, that is, spiritual activity. For we should not always give ourselves to bodily efforts, but sometimes be still and see how lovely, how sweet the Lord is, sitting at the feet of Jesus and hearing his word. You should in no wise neglect Mary for Martha; or again Martha for Mary. For, if you neglect Martha, who will feed Jesus? If you neglect Mary, what use is it for Jesus to come to your house, when you taste nothing of his sweetness?*

Ultimately, the *busyness* of Martha has to be brought into the *restfullness* of Mary, sitting at the feet of Jesus and listening to his word. Such a resting is an attentiveness to Jesus – *"listening to his words"* and *"tasting his sweetness"*.

How readest thou? The question has catapulted us into a number of considerations. I want to add one more. It has to do with the public reading of *The Book of Common Prayer*. Mary sat and listened. Part of our worship has to do with the development of that capacity of soul to sit and listen. That kind of attentiveness means a waiting upon God in his Word; it also means the sacrifice of ourselves to that Word in the liturgy. Theology is nothing less than our participation in God's own thinking and knowing of himself through which he thinks and knows and loves all things. Our liturgy is about that; it is theological. It is all about God in us and us in God. But so often we are indifferent to this dynamic.

We mumble, if not in our beards, then in our books. There is something incredibly demanding about Prayer Book worship. You have to give of yourself with heart and soul, with mind and strength, with the whole of your being. It is about the service of God, not God serving *"the devices and desires"* of our wounded and broken hearts. The paradox is great. It is in giving ourselves over to the liturgy that the liturgy carries us into the presence of God. Therein lies the joy and the blessing. Therein lies the experiential delight of the liturgy too.

No liturgy, perhaps, demands so much of the worshippers. Standing, sitting, kneeling, getting up and coming to the altar rail, receiving the Sacrament; and all of it with intention and purpose. What are we doing? Entering into the deep reading of our life with Christ. There is a public and social nature to the liturgy that is part of the power and strength as well as the beauty and truth of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

In 1995, Alberto Manguel gave a lecture to the editorial board of the *Times Literary Supplement*, entitled *St. Augustine's Computer*. In it he surveys the different technologies of reading from the scroll to the codex to the world of Carpaccio's Renaissance painting of Augustine in his study in a series of paintings on the life of Jerome in order to situate the emerging digital world within a larger historical context. He notes importantly the different words that have been used in speaking about reading, contrasting the ancient and biblical imagery of eating and ingesting words, think of Ezekiel and the scroll, for instance, or pondering and meditating on words written and heard, with the activities of scanning or scrolling, skimming and surfing which are the contemporary terms for

reading. The contrast is between the deep and the shallow, between the surface and what lies beneath and within.

He comments on a celebrated passage in Augustine's *Confessions* where Augustine observes and comments on the phenomena, for so it seemed to him, of Ambrose reading silently in his Cathedral in Milan. Classicists, like Bernard Knox, have pointed out that silent reading was known in antiquity, of course, but Augustine takes note here of what was unusual and unexpected, especially in an age of rhetoric, where the power of the spoken word was everything. Augustine, himself, was an imperial professor of rhetoric in Milan at this time. He was drawn to Ambrose at first because of the power of his speaking, the *how* more than *what* of his speaking. Yet, in listening to Ambrose he would come to acquire an understanding of the truth of the Christian Faith, a way of thinking what he heard and read. There is an inescapable connection between the how and the what.

Why was Ambrose reading silently? Augustine observes the inward attentiveness of his reading the Scriptures silently. Ambrose was probably reading silently so that he would not be interrupted by those who would ask him what the passages of Scripture mean. But as Alberto Manguel observes the assumption in Augustine's observation is the question about how words live in us; in short, how the *scripta* become the *verba*, how dead letters become living words. In a way, this is a feature of *The Book of Common Prayer*. It is meant to be read out loud; it shapes a community through its aural resonance; it is memorable and therefore connects even to those who are actually illiterate.

There is the need to recover the art of liturgical reading in worship. It is about reading with understanding and with the intent to convey the meaning of what is being read. It is not so much about who is reading as what is being read publicly; the participatory element so prevalent in our churches and communities is often at the expense of the text itself, I fear, though I recognize only too well the so-called pastoral demands of charity.

The art of liturgical reading in worship demands that we be a community of readers. We read together in the liturgy. That is a huge part of Anglican worship, in all of its contemporary confusions and varieties, which arises entirely from the strong participatory element of the concept of Common Prayer itself. I think that it is an extraordinary thing, a kind of miracle and one that we ignore at our peril.

Ours is, I sometimes like to say, the culture of the 'connect to the disconnect'. What easily gets lost in the digital networking world are the real and vital connections to one another as living beings in our actual physical and spiritual selves. What does it mean when we are more comfortable communicating on facebook and by texting to one another than in engaging with one another face-to-face? And what about worship? Worship brings us face to face with God. *"We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of*

the Lord, " as Paul reminds us. That is what happens in liturgy, in public worship; at least, that is the intent. And it is about a community. We all are being changed.

It requires our commitment to coming together in purposeful worship and giving ourselves over to the liturgy. What is in our hearts and souls is meant to be expressed on our lips and in our lives. There is the paradox. For what is in our souls also comes about through what we see and hear, through what we say and do, through what we read together liturgically.

There are different kinds and qualities of reading. Cranmer captures wonderfully the Anglican approach to the public and private reading of Scripture. It is emphatically not about information. It is about a way of understanding which informs a way of living. The Collect which he composed for the Second Sunday in Advent is a traditional favourite and rightly so. Drawn from the Scriptures themselves it expresses a theology of revelation and, I might suggest, *a theology of reading*. It speaks about a kind of deep reading that relates to Mary *"sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to his word"*. The point is that the word which is heard is meant to shape us in its meaning and understanding. We become in-worded, if I can put it that way; or to switch things around, the word proclaimed is meant to become flesh in us.

> *Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

The Scriptures are written for a purpose, for our learning; the latin term is doctrine. The passage from *Romans* from which this phrase has been drawn was the favourite text for one of the greatest sixteenth century preachers, Hugh Latimer.

The Bible is not simply opened out so that we can make of it what we want. Just as preachers, in Bishop Latimer's pithy phrase, were not to *"mingle-mangle"* the Word of God in their preaching, neither must we in our reading. The Bibles which were ordered to be placed in the churches were chained to the lecterns so that no-one could run off with them. And so, too, we are not to run off with them in the imaginations of our hearts.

Cranmer established the principle of the doctrinal understanding of Scripture formally in the Ordinal and the Articles of Religion. *"Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation"* (Art.vi) - that is the primacy of Scripture. It is primary with respect to matters of salvation. *"Are you persuaded that the holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ?"* (Ordinal; deacons, priests and bishops) - that is the understanding to which the clergy are held accountable. *"It is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another"*(Art.xx) - that is the understanding upon which the Church stands.

In the first homily of *The First Book of Homilies*, Cranmer provided instruction and exhortation about the purpose and importance of reading the Scriptures.

> *For the Scripture of God is the heavenly meat of our souls; the hearing and keeping of it maketh us blessed, sanctifieth us, and maketh us holy; it turneth our souls; it is a light lantern unto our feet. It is a sure, steadfast and everlasting instrument of salvation.*

The reading of Scripture builds upon the sure and substantial foundation of Jesus Christ, God's Word and Son. For *"in reading of God's word, he most profiteth...that is most turned into it, that is most inspired with the Holy Ghost, most in his heart and life altered and changed into that thing which he readeth."*

This expresses, I think, something of the meaning of deep reading. The focus is on the purpose of the Scriptures proclaimed and read. Yet, the Scriptures themselves admit of a great variety of writings and not all things in the books of the Scriptures are to be read in the same way. They have to be read with respect to their meaning and purpose. Archbishop John Bramhall explains this for us.

> *All truths that are revealed, are not therefore presently fundamentals or essentials of Faith; no more than it is a fundamental point of Faith that St. Paul had a cloak. That which was once an essential part of the Christian Faith, is always an essential part of the Christian faith, that which was once no essential, is never an essential.*

Part of *"hear, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest"* requires our attention to what matters and in what way as distinct from things that are indifferent or, for that matter, uncertain. There are, for instance, some things in the Scriptures which we can never know. That, too, is part of the understanding.

There is one place and only one place where, we are told, Jesus wrote something. He wrote with his finger in the dust of the ground in the presence of those who, wanting to find cause against him, brought before him a woman allegedly taken in adultery. They were challenging Jesus about his reading of the law of Moses which called for the stoning of women charged with adultery. He bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. We have no idea and can never know what he wrote, only that he wrote. John tells us what he said. *"Let him who is without sin, cast the first stone."* They all melt away; the spoken word working on their consciences. *"Has no one condemned you?"* Jesus says. *"Neither do I; Go and sin no more."* In a way, it is another illustration of the question *"how readest thou?".*

For that can be quite a challenge. Just consider.

> The celebrated Sherlock Holmes and his loyal companion, Dr. Watson, were on a camping trip. In the middle of the night, Holmes wakes up and gives Watson a nudge. *"Watson,"* he says, *"look up in the sky and tell me what you see."*

"I see millions of stars, Holmes," says Watson.

"And what do you conclude from that, Watson?" Watson thinks for a moment and says, *"Well, astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets. Astrologically, I observe that Saturn is in Leo. Horologically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past three. Meteorologically, I suspect that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow. Theologically, I see that God is all-powerful, and we are small and insignificant. Uh, what does it tell you, Holmes?"*

"Watson, you idiot! Someone has stolen our tent!"

How you read is a matter of careful attention to what you are reading, to what is there and what isn't there!

In the face of an explosion of books belonging to early modernity, Cranmer's approach to reading influenced another influential writer, Sir Francis Bacon, whose celebrated essay, *"Of Studies,"* echoes Cranmer's Collect to make a potent argument about how there are necessarily different approaches to reading in accord with the different nature of what is being read and the different natures of readers, too.

> *Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention.*

It is really, as Ann Blair points out, practical advice about how to approach a world of too many books. We have to read with some sort of understanding about what we read that in turn governs how we read. The paradox is that how things are read also alerts us to the significance of what is being read. That, it seems to me, is part and parcel of the power of *The Book of Common Prayer* for the praying life of the Church in our contemporary world.

We are called to a kind of thoughtfulness in an age of distraction. *The Book of Common Prayer* is a means to prayer. It teaches us about prayer as well as how to pray. It is prayer as *"something understood."*

The phrase is George Herbert's from his poem entitled *Prayer (1)*. His poem expresses the theological sensibility of the Prayer Book. He offers a wonderful medley of images, ranging from things close and near at hand to things remote and exotic, a kind of thinking that is dialectical and which culminates in the phrase, *"something understood."*

Prayer, the Church's banquet, Angels' age,
God's breath in man returning to his birth,
The soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage,
The Christian plummet sounding heav'n and earth;
....
A kind of tune, which all things hear and fear;

Church bells beyond the stars heard, the soul's blood,
The land of spices, something understood.

Prayer, he is saying, is something understood in and through a myriad of images that relate to the various activities of our souls and lives. There is a kind of collective activity in gathering up all these images into *"something understood."* It is a kind of reading, meditative and doctrinal. *"Christ plays in ten thousand places"* including our souls in prayer.

Such is *The Book of Common Prayer*. In an age of distraction and in the culture of scattered minds, there is a need for this kind of reading. *How readest thou?* Ultimately, it is a question about our attentiveness to Christ, "*sitting at Jesus' feet and listening to his word,"* only so, it seems, can we shaped in his love and *"go and do likewise"* in the example of the Good Samaritan.

The liturgy of *The Book of Common Prayer* is about our reading the *liber charitatis*, the book of love opened out for us to read in the story of Jesus. It is about *"something understood"*, if we will read, sitting and listening, singing and dancing, the Word taking shape in us to his glory and the good of his Church and people. Perhaps we can hear what Augustine heard in a garden long ago: *Tolle lege*, take up and read.

"How readest thou?

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