

Sunday Worship at Home, 24th April 2022, Second Sunday of Easter



Introduction:

Alleluia. Christ is risen. **He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

Let us pray.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful people, and kindle in us the fire of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer of Confession:

Christ our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed for us. Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all malice and evil and confessing our sins with a sincere and true heart

We confess to you our selfishness and lack of love: fill us with your Spirit.

Lord, have mercy.

We confess to you our fear and failure in sharing our faith: fill us with your Spirit.

Christ, have mercy.

We confess to you our stubbornness and lack of trust: fill us with your Spirit.

Lord, have mercy.

May the Father of all mercies cleanse *us* from *our* sins, and restore us in his image to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Collect for The Second Sunday of Easter

Risen Christ, for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred:

open the doors of our hearts, that we may seek the good of others and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace, to the praise of God the Father. **Amen**

Bible Reading: John 20:19-20,24-29

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Reflection on the reading:

I have often felt that “Doubting Thomas” has an unfairly poor reputation. He was a sceptic, but in those days to be called a sceptic was considered a compliment not an insult. A sceptic was someone who did not simply believe everything he was told, but took the time to ask important questions and establish by proof what was the truth. It seems to me that in these days of unverified social media gossip and fake news, the practice of scepticism is something that maybe we should recover. Taking time to explore the bible for ourselves, and to discuss the difficult questions and big questions that affect us today with others in the light of our biblical truth and our own lived experience as disciples of Christ is what makes Christianity a true religion and not a cult. This was Thomas! Thomas, who when Jesus told his disciples “You know the way to the place where I am going”, replied “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?”; Thomas, who knew perfectly well that Jesus was dead and buried, and therefore could not accept that the disciples had seen Jesus alive again without some form of proof. There could be any number of alternative explanations. Maybe they had simply seen someone who looked very similar to Jesus from a distance. So he tells them he needs to see Jesus for himself in order to believe, and not simply from a distance, but close up, in a way that there could be no doubt. And this what Jesus does for Thomas, giving him precisely what he needed and asked for – offering Thomas the chance to see and touch the wounds of his crucifixion. Thomas makes up his mind based on the answers to his own searching and becomes the first of the Apostles to call Jesus “My God”, and the Apostle who carried the Gospel the furthest in his quest to tell others what he now knew to be true - that Christ is Risen. **Amen**

The Creed

We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named.

We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.

We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

Be still and pray:

God of peace and justice, God of love and healing; we pray for all those in our benefice who are ill at this time, and those who are caring for them whether at home or in hospital; we pray for those struggling with rising cost of fuel and food, and who are fearful of how they may pay for tomorrow; we pray for the people of Ukraine who fear what this day will bring; we pray that those in authority will seek peace and the laying down of weapons; we pray for all your precious children living at risk or in fear, that you would hold and protect them.

Finish with The Lord's Prayer:

Conclusion

God of our salvation, you have restored us to life, you have brought us back again into your love by the triumphant death and resurrection of Christ.

Alleluia. Christ is risen. **He is risen indeed. Alleluia. Amen.**

Reverend Eddie