



Sunday Worship at Home 22nd May Easter 6

Opening Prayers:

Alleluia. Christ is Risen
He is Risen Indeed Alleluia

Faithfull one whose word is life, come with saving power to free our praise, inspire our prayer and shape our lives. For the kingdom of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Invitation to confession:

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

Friend of sinners, you bring hope in our despair.

Lord have mercy.

Healer of the sick, you give strength in our weakness.

Christ have mercy.

Destroyer of evil, you bring life in our dying.

Lord have mercy.

May almighty God who sent his Son into the world to save sinners,
bring us his pardon and peace, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Collect (Special Prayer for the day)

Risen Christ, by the lakeside you renewed the call to your disciples: help your church to obey your command and draw the nations to the fire of your love, to the glory of God the Father. Amen

A reading from the gospel of John.

After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be made well?” The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.” Jesus said to him, “Stand up, take your mat and walk.” At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk. Now that day was a sabbath.

Reflection on the Reading:

Thirty-eight years is a long time to sit on your mat. Watching, waiting, hoping, almost in a state of inertia as life slips away. There was a belief that Beth-Zatha, this pool of water mentioned in our reading had healing properties; every so often an angel would stir the water, making it bubble, then the first person to get in would be healed. The man in the

gospel is waiting for the “bubble to rise”, or he’s waiting for someone to carry him, he’s waiting for someone to take control, anyone but him. He has become defined by his circumstances; you could say he was living in a sort of prison. Even when Jesus asks him if he wants to be made well, he doesn’t say “yes”, he just offers excuses. Or perhaps I’m being too harsh? The truth is that life happens through all the circumstances that confront us and it is up to each of us to take responsibility to live through them, and we do that through our faith and the help of Jesus. In the Gospel story, Jesus doesn’t physically help the man into the healing pool, he meets him where he is – on his mat. The same mat that the man is so eager to escape from. Jesus says, “Stand up, take your mat and walk.” A specific instruction that shows us that the man doesn’t leave his mat behind; he takes it with him; his circumstances, his problems are real! The difference after the intervention of Jesus is that the man now carries his own problems, acknowledging them for what they are. Jesus doesn’t change the man’s circumstances; he changes the man and calls him into a new way of acting and living and thinking. When we let Jesus change us, we discover that more than ourselves are changed, our outlook on life with all its distractions and problems is also changed. Being a Christian is not a magical panacea to all the ailments of life, Christians suffer just as much as anyone else, but living with Jesus as our guide and strength in the here and now, not some mythical time in the future, makes our circumstances or our problems more manageable. We look on them from a different place and perspective and when that happens, our own stagnant waters will bubble with new life, just like they did for the man waiting by the pool.

The Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. **Amen**

Be still and pray: Include prayers for the church, the needs of the world and your community. Those who are ill, those awaiting hospital procedures and those who have died including John Gautrey, Dorothea Clark, Peter King, Gloria Boyes. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

The Lord’s Prayer: Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses; as we forgive those who trespass against us; lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever **Amen**

May God, who through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ has given us victory over death, bless us and give us his peace. **Amen.**