

The Parish of St David with St Michael and All Angels, Exeter

Morning Prayer in the Easter Season
Sunday, 19 April 2020 - The Second Sunday of Easter

Preparation

O Lord, open our lips
All and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

In your resurrection, O Christ,
All let heaven and earth rejoice. Alleluia.

The Easter Anthems are said

Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us:
so let us celebrate the feast,

not with the old leaven of corruption and wickedness:
but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Christ once raised from the dead dies no more:
death has no more dominion over him.

In dying he died to sin once for all:
in living he lives to God.

See yourselves therefore as dead to sin:
and alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Christ has been raised from the dead:
the first fruits of those who sleep.

For as by man came death:
by man has come also the resurrection of the dead;

for as in Adam all die:
even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

All Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

This opening prayer may be said

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;
let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept.

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day,
so may the light of your presence, O God,
set our hearts on fire with love for you;
now and for ever.

All Amen.

The Psalm - Psalm 81.1-10

Sing merrily to God our strength,
shout for joy to the God of Jacob.

Take up the song and sound the timbrel,
the tuneful lyre with the harp.

Blow the trumpet at the new moon,
as at the full moon, upon our solemn feast day.

For this is a statute for Israel,
a law of the God of Jacob,

The charge he laid on the people of Joseph,
when they came out of the land of Egypt. **R**

I heard a voice I did not know, that said:
‘I eased their shoulder from the burden;
their hands were set free from bearing the load.

‘You called upon me in trouble and I delivered you;
I answered you from the secret place of thunder
and proved you at the waters of Meribah.

‘Hear, O my people, and I will admonish you:
O Israel, if you would but listen to me!

‘There shall be no strange god among you;
you shall not worship a foreign god.

‘I am the Lord your God,
who brought you up from the land of Egypt;
open your mouth wide and I shall fill it.’

**All Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

The Bible Reading – John 20: 19-31

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

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 Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’

Jesus and Thomas

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.’

The Purpose of This Book

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Here ends the reading

The Address – Fr Nigel Guthrie

If you have a garden I'm sure that you will have taken advantage of the good weather over the past weeks to tidy it up and plant it. In our garden I look after the vegetable patch and this year I had more opportunity than usual to dig it over and add some compost. We know what makes for a good crop, well prepared and nourished soil, rain and warmth, good quality seeds and a willingness to keep the weeds at bay? And it's very rewarding when we do get a good crop and can enjoy fresh food with zero food miles. Yet I don't fully understand how the seed becomes a plant and I certainly can't see the process of the cells dividing and multiplying in the growth process. But that doesn't stop me planting the seeds or sets. I do so trusting what will happen.

One of the other activities of recent weeks has been getting to grips with new technology. I have been learning about live streaming and what happens when you inadvertently turn your phone around during a Good Friday liturgy. I'll leave you to check that one out if you haven't seen it! And like many others I've been learning to use the Zoom which allows virtual gatherings with everyone sitting in their own homes or offices. I don't fully understand how the technology works for either of these marvels, but it doesn't stop me using them. I just have to trust that this clever software will work.

Meanwhile, back in St John's gospel, we are hearing the wonderful accounts of Jesus' resurrection appearances. His disciples were not just convinced in their heads that Jesus was alive again. Their hearts were filled with joy, peace and a sense of forgiveness when they heard the words of Jesus.

But Thomas wasn't with the other disciples when Jesus showed them his hands and his side. He refused to believe that Jesus was alive again. He needed physical proof.

Then a week later, when the disciples were together again, this time including Thomas, Jesus entered into the closed room and greeted them with the words 'Peace be with you'. Without even being asked Jesus invited Thomas to touch his hands and side to assure himself that this was really the Jesus he had followed, the Jesus who had died on the cross and been pierced with a spear. As Thomas touches the wounds he utters words that are the climax of St John's Gospel 'My Lord and my God'.

Jesus saw his need and allowed him the physical evidence which he needed. Thomas in turn was filled with faith and love. He didn't need to ask any further questions but accepted Jesus as his Lord and ultimately, we believe, gave up his life as a witness to the resurrection.

But Jesus, and St John, knew that Thomas was one of the few for whom such physical proof would be available. Jesus said 'Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have come to believe'. And those people include all of us. For none of us have seen, or can see in this world, such evidence of the resurrection. But like the disciples we can know the joy, peace and forgiveness which Jesus brings.

There are many things that most of us can't fully explain or understand whether it's the growth of crops or the working of the internet. Still less can we explain why people love us or why we sometimes experience a vivid sense of divine presence. And none of us can fully explain what happened when Jesus rose from the dead. Yet we do have the transformation of the lives of the original disciples and of many millions of subsequent believers to guide and inspire us in our faith. We shouldn't apologise that belief in the resurrection requires an act of faith. But we should ask what difference the resurrection makes in our lives, in mine and in yours? How are our lives being transformed and how can we guide and inspire others in their faith.

One thing we do understand is that our faith becomes stronger when we express it and use it to serve others. The resurrection will transform each of us in a different way but we will always be able to tell if that transformation is from God if we are growing in faith, hope and love. And this present crisis give us many opportunities for this: our care for those around us, our faithfulness in prayer, our confidence that God is working through these dreadful circumstances to bring renewal and grace to the world, just as in the death and resurrection of Jesus. 'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe'. Jesus did not judge Thomas for his lack of faith and he will not judge us either. Faith is sometimes hard to cling onto. But if we are open to him he will provide the means to

strengthen our faith, however weak it may feel, and to know more deeply his risen life within us.

The Prayers

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Silence may be kept.

The Collect of the day is said

Almighty Father,
you have given your only Son to die for our sins
and to rise again for our justification:
grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness
that we may always serve you
in pureness of living and truth;
through the merits of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

***Al* Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer is said

Rejoicing in God's new creation,
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

***All* Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on 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.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

The Conclusion

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the eternal covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight;

and the Blessing of God almighty,

the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,

be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

Let us bless the Lord. Alleluia, alleluia.

All Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

Prebendary Nigel Guthrie

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A Notice - St David's Community Help!

Exeter Community Centre and volunteers in St David's ward are here to help support our neighbours at this difficult & confusing time.

If know someone who is or you are self-isolating or an overloaded key worker needing help - please get in touch!

Collecting shopping, prescriptions & urgent supplies □ Posting mail □ Dog walking

Basic IT help to help you get online

Or you might just want to have a friendly chat! We'll do our best to help, if we can't we'll put you in touch with others who can.

Volunteers will leave items on the doorstep, follow handwashing advice & keep their distance.

If you'd like to lend a hand in St David's please contact us too!

Tel: 01392 92 77 90 [Email: stdavidshelp@eccentre.org](mailto:stdavidshelp@eccentre.org)