

# The Second Sunday of Easter

## 16<sup>th</sup> April 2023



Grace, mercy and peace  
from God our Father  
and the Lord Jesus Christ  
be with you.

1 Jesus lives! thy terrors now  
Can, O Death, no more appal us;  
Jesus lives! by this we know  
Thou, O Grave, canst not enthrall us.  
Alleluya!

3 Jesus lives! for us He died;  
Then alone to Jesus living,  
Pure in heart may we abide,  
Glory to our Saviour giving.  
Alleluya!

2 Jesus lives! henceforth is death  
But the gate of Life immortal;  
This shall calm our trembling breath,  
When we pass its gloomy portal.  
Alleluya!

4 Jesus lives! our hearts know well  
Naught from us His love shall sever;  
Life, nor death, nor powers of hell  
Tear us from His keeping ever.  
Alleluya!

5 Jesus lives! to Him the Throne  
Over all the world is given;  
May we go where he has gone,  
Rest and reign with Him in heaven.  
Alleluya!

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.

Like Mary at the empty tomb,  
we fail to grasp the wonder of your presence.  
Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Like the disciples behind locked doors,  
we are afraid to be seen as your followers.  
Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Like Thomas in the upper room,  
we are slow to believe.  
Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

## Absolution

The Lord absolve you from your offences, ✠  
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. **Amen.**

## The Collect

Let us pray for a closer union with Christ in his suffering and in his glory.

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.

**All Amen.**

A reading from the New Testament  
Acts 4 32-35

## The Believers Share Their Possessions

<sup>32</sup> Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. <sup>33</sup> With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. <sup>34</sup> There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. <sup>35</sup> They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Psalm 16

- 1 Keep me safe, my God,  
for in you I take refuge.
- 2 I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord;  
apart from you I have no good thing."
- 3 I say of the holy people who are in the land,  
"They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight."
- 4 Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more.  
I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods  
or take up their names on my lips.
- 5 Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup;  
you make my lot secure.
- 6 The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;  
surely I have a delightful inheritance.
- 7 I will praise the Lord, who counsels me;  
even at night my heart instructs me.



you will fill me with joy in your presence,  
with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

- 8 I keep my eyes always on the Lord.  
With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.
- 9 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;  
my body also will rest secure,
- 10 because you will not abandon me to the realm of  
the dead,  
nor will you let your faithful one see decay.
- 11 You make known to me the path of life;

## New Testament Reading 1 Peter. 3-9

### Praise to God for a Living Hope

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### HYMN

Ye choirs of new Jerusalem,  
your sweetest notes employ,  
the Paschal victory to hymn  
in strains of holy joy.

Devouring depths of hell their  
prey  
at his command restore;  
his ransomed hosts pursue their  
way  
where Jesus goes before.

While we, his soldiers, praise  
our King,  
his mercy we implore,  
within his palace bright to bring  
and keep us evermore.

For Judah's Lion bursts his  
chains,  
crushing the serpent's head;  
and cries aloud through death's  
domains  
to wake the imprisoned dead.

Triumphant in his glory now  
to him all power is given;  
to him in one communion bow  
all saints in earth and heaven.

All glory to the Father be,  
all glory to the Son,  
all glory, Holy Ghost, to thee,  
while endless ages run.

## The Gospel John 20 19-end

Alleluia, alleluia.

Jesus said, 'All who see the Son and believe in him may  
have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.'

**Alleluia.**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

**All Glory be to thee O Lord**

<sup>19</sup> 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." <sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." <sup>22</sup> When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup> If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

<sup>24</sup> But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> 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."

<sup>26</sup> 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." <sup>27</sup> 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." <sup>28</sup> Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" <sup>29</sup> 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."

<sup>30</sup> Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. <sup>31</sup> 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.

This is the gospel of the Lord

**Praise to you O Christ**

**Reflection**

In today's reading that the disciples are in hiding, with all the doors *locked*, frightened that their link with Jesus would get them arrested, or even killed. It is not only doors that lock them in but also their fear, anger, and disappointment. They are unaware that the story has not ended.

**And Jesus comes and stands among them – uninvited – unexpected –unimagined.**

Jesus' disciples are at their lowest point, yet Jesus speaks only words of peace which address all their unspoken thoughts and feelings. Their fear, shock, shame about how they had behaved in deserting him. Perhaps they were frightened about what he might say. All this mixed, with joy and disbelief.

But Thomas was not with them. How he must have felt distressed every time he heard them going over it again and again – in ones and twos, maybe in whispers – and he is left out. It doesn't matter how many times they tell him, it's not the same.

Did he feel disappointed, sad, perhaps? Maybe he felt frustrated and angry. Did he resent the others, is he angry with himself, is he even angry with Jesus? Why did Jesus come when he was not there, what does this say about their relationship, why would Jesus leave him out? He is deeply hurt. Does this help us understand his words "I won't believe unless I see for myself, unless I touch him".

There is great tenderness in all Jesus' appearances to his friends after his resurrection. He does not do anything spectacular. He quietly calls Mary by her name for she is blinded by her tears, he cooks breakfast for his friends and asks Peter three times to confirm his love to help him overcome the three times when, through fear, he denies Jesus.

And now eight days later, again Jesus enters the locked room and gives Thomas just what he needs. "Thomas, look, look at my hands and side, touch me it is really me." We are not told that Thomas did that – it was not necessary now, instead his response is "My Lord, and my God!" He sees and believes.

Disciples locked in through fear; Thomas locked in through disappointment and disbelief, Mary locked in through grief, Peter, locked in through failure.

They are each transformed by this meeting, restored in their relationship to Jesus and yet this still is not the end of the story. Forty days will elapse until they understand in fuller measure, when the Holy Spirit will birth the church at Pentecost. For now, they experience in many ways, the risen Christ. It is strange and mysterious, unpredictable and yet ever so real. Jesus spent the forty days after the resurrection teaching about the Kingdom of God. He was a good authority on this subject because He was "King" of that kingdom.

The reading from Peter is written by the Peter who denied and is restored by Jesus. The impetuous Peter chaffing against having to wait after the ascension for the promised 'power from on high' before he goes as a witness to Jesus the Christ. Years later he writes as a genuine witness to those in the groups of people who have come to believe in Jesus as Messiah, for Peter was the apostle to the Jews.

He writes as 'someone who knows'. He is speaking first-hand, the words falling over themselves. "You have a new birth, a living hope because of the resurrection of Jesus – death could not hold him. I know this, I talked with him, touched him, listened to him. You who believe have an inheritance – something you will receive and it cannot perish, spoil or fade for it is kept and guarded for you in heaven. What is more, God will bring you into this!.

I am sure his hearers will have been inspired by his words and his presence with them. I am sure they will have asked again and again for Peter to tell them "What was it like – what was he like? You were there Peter tell us again".

And so Peter adds these tender words to his letter. "Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls".

Peter echoes Jesus' words to Thomas: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet come to believe". We are blessed by Jesus *because* we believe and, in our believing – in our *having* faith in him. We experience the same Jesus who calls us by name and knows us, all our hurts and failures, all our guilt and shame, all our hopes and longings and offers us the same transformation. In truth, no door can keep him out.

### Prayers of Intercession

In joy and hope let us pray to the Father.

That our risen Saviour may fill us with the joy of his  
glorious and life-giving resurrection  
That isolated and persecuted churches  
may find fresh strength in the good news of Easter ...  
That God may grant us humility  
to be subject to one another in Christian love ...

That he may provide for those who lack food, work or shelter ...  
That by his power war and famine may cease through all the world ...  
That he may reveal the light of his presence to the sick,  
the weak and the dying,  
to comfort and strengthen them ...  
That, according to his promises,  
all who have died in the faith of the resurrection  
may be raised on the last day ...

That he may send the fire of the Holy Spirit upon his people,  
so that we may bear faithful witness to his resurrection,  
we pray to the Father.

**Hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father,  
you have delivered us from the power of darkness  
and brought us into the kingdom of your Son:  
grant that, as his death has recalled us to life,  
so his continual presence in us may raise us to eternal joy;  
through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

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

### **In the compassion of God we pray**

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours now and for ever.  
**Amen.**

Lord God our Father,  
through our Saviour Jesus Christ  
you have assured your children of eternal life  
and in baptism have made us one with him:  
deliver us from the death of sin  
and raise us to new life in your love,  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit  
be with you now and always.  
**Amen**

## **HYMN**

Christ the Lord is risen again,  
Christ hath broken every chain.  
Hark, angelic voices cry,  
singing evermore on high,  
Alleluia.

He who gave for us his life,  
who for us endured the strife,  
is our paschal Lamb today;  
we too sing for joy, and say  
Alleluia.

He who bore all pain and loss  
comfortless upon the cross,  
lives in glory now on high,  
pleads for us, and hears our cry:  
Alleluia.

He whose path no records tell,  
who descended into hell,  
who the strong man armed hath bound,  
now in highest heaven is crowned.  
Alleluia.

He who slumbered in the grave  
is exalted now to save;  
now through Christendom it rings  
that the Lamb is King of kings.  
Alleluia.

Now he bids us tell abroad  
how the lost may be restored,  
how the penitent forgiven  
how we too may enter heaven.  
Alleluia.

Thou, our paschal Lamb indeed,  
Christ, thy ransomed people feed;  
take our sins and guilt away:  
let us sing by night and day  
Alleluia.