

Service for Week 1st – 7th April 2024

Easter Sunday By Chaplain Andy

Our Opening Prayer.

Loving God, we do not know all there is to know, or understand all there is to understand, but one thing that we can be sure of is that in Jesus Christ we have met with you.

Lord Jesus, we thank you for the daily reality of your presence.

Amen

Say to yourself- The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven.....

Amen

Bible Reading John 20:19-31

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors 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 side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Jesus Appears to Thomas

Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came.

So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in

his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Holy words, Holy wisdom,

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

On Good Friday we reflected upon the crucifixion and death of Jesus. Then three days later we heard how Mary encountered the risen Jesus in the tomb, mistaking him at first for a gardener.

Jesus then appeared to his disciples as they were meeting together. The disciples, after witnessing the false trial

and subsequently the sickening and cruel death of Jesus must have been terrifying that the Roman and religious authorities would soon come for them. As it says in our reading they had gathered together and locked themselves in a room out of fear. But one of them Thomas was missing that day.

We don't fully comprehend how things that go against science and the usual nature of things can happen, but we know that Jesus was suddenly there with them in that room. He was not like a ghost without a physical body because he showed them his hands where the nails had pierced and his side which had been cut with a sword.

The disciples were overjoyed that Jesus their leader their guide and their dear friend was again with them. He had, however impossible it may have seemed to them, come back to life after a most terrible death. Jesus then says the words that we often say today in our church services "Peace be with you!"

Then a week later Jesus comes again among them again in a locked room, but this time Thomas is there. Thomas had serious doubts about what the others were telling him about Jesus returning from the dead. So Jesus invites Thomas to look at and feel his hands and his side to satisfy himself

that it really was Jesus that was there with them and not an illusion.

Today the accounts of Jesus returning to the disciples and followers reminds us of the wonderful events of that first Easter. Jesus through his life, death and resurrection revealed the true nature of God and God's relationship to us. It revealed how much each one of us is dearly loved by God. It assured us that however bad our wrongdoings maybe we are not beyond redemption, our sins are forgiven by God. It gave us a promise and real hope, what ever our circumstances, that at the end of our lives on this earth we will be united with God in eternal life just as Jesus Christ was.

This Easter I pray that if you have not experienced it before in your life you open yourself to encounter God through the person of Jesus. Yes, it is hard to accept anything that goes against the usual laws of nature, but if you open your mind and your heart, God's love will come in and fill your soul and your life in the most wonderful way. As Jesus told Thomas "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

"Peace be with you!"

Amen

Closing Prayer.

Gracious God teach me to put my faith in you, knowing that whatever I face you will provide the help I need to face it. **Amen.**