

Sunday Worship at Home 18th April 2021 Easter 3

Opening Prayers:

Alleluia, Christ is Risen!

He is Risen indeed, Alleluia.

Lord, direct our thoughts and teach us to pray.

Lift up our hearts to worship you in spirit and in truth;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Invitation to 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.

Lord Jesus, when you rose from the dead, you defeated evil:

Lord have mercy

Lord Jesus, when you rose from the dead, you washed away our sins:

Christ have mercy.

Lord, Jesus, when you rose from the dead you set us free:

Lord have mercy

May almighty God have mercy upon you,
forgive your sins and bring you to eternal life. Amen

The Collect (Special Prayer for the day)

Risen Christ, you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope:
strengthen us to proclaim your risen life and fill us with your peace,
to the glory of God the Father. **Amen**

Reading: Acts 3: 12-19

When Peter saw it, he addressed the people, 'You Israelites,* why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant* Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus* has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you. 'And now, friends,* I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah* would suffer. Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out,

Reflection on the Reading:

The action in today's reading from Acts, takes place post death and resurrection of Jesus. Peter and John, continuing the work of Jesus, have just miraculously healed a lame man who hadn't walked for years, yet with faith, he was able to get up, walk and even leap in the air. On the surface, this is just another story of healing, no bad thing we might think! But it is more than that. The healing is the bait to draw us in, the story itself is one of reality, eye-opening realism! As the onlookers rejoice in amazement at the man's new-found abilities, Peter asks why they are surprised, they've heard of God's many acts of healing which have come through Jesus, some people have even witnessed them for themselves, so why should they be surprised at yet another one?

But Peter, instead of taking all the plaudits and the credit, redirects attention away from himself as the instigator of the healing, he draws the focus away from the man who was healed and points directly at Jesus. Jesus, remember him? He was the man you got killed. You rejected him, you could have had him released but you chose a murderer over him. You killed the author of life, whom God has risen from the dead! Remember, it's not that long ago? I wonder if there was any squirming or embarrassment felt by the onlookers, did they feel any personal guilt at the death of Jesus? Do we ourselves feel any guilt at the death of Jesus? After all we weren't there when the crowds were shouting "Crucify Him" ., and if we were, we would have acted differently. But what about when we remain silent while the innocent are killed, when we resort to deceit or violence, when we refuse to love our neighbour and those who hate us. Aren't we then just taking part in other forms of crucifixion? The reality is that when we hurt someone, or ignore the hurt of others, we are all just as responsible for Christ's suffering as those first century Jews, Peter knows exactly how we feel because he denied Jesus three times in an act of fear? Being a Christian is not easy! However, the good news is that there is always hope of forgiveness from God who uttered the immortal words from the cross "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do". It's a fact of life that we all do wrong at some time. We can all be hurtful and we can all be selfish and turn a blind eye to bad things. But as Christians, followers of Christ, we are called to perfection, as Jesus was perfect, but as human beings, at times we fail. It is our responsibility to recognise those times and be aware of them, say sorry to the person we've hurt and sorry to God, and resolve to try harder in the future.

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:

Include the needs of the world, your family and community. Her Majesty the Queen and her family as they mourn the death of Prince Philip. All those who mourn the death of a loved one. Those who suffer discrimination and those who are lonely. Pray for comfort and peace for those who are ill or awaiting hospital appointments and in quiet reflection pray for those you know personally in need of God's healing touch at this time.

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**

Blessing:

Christ crucified draw you to himself,
to find in him a sure ground for faith, a firm support for hope, and the assurance of sins forgiven;
and the blessing of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you and all those you love,
this day and always. **Amen.**

Alleluia Christ is Risen. He is Risen indeed. Alleluia.

Reverend Irene