



Sunday Worship at Home 8th May 2022 Easter 4

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, faithful shepherd of your Father's sheep: teach us to hear your voice and to follow your command, that all your people may be gathered into one flock, to the glory of God the Father. **Amen**

Reading: John 10: 22-30

Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade. The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Reflection on the Reading: In today's Gospel, Jesus says, "My sheep hear my voice, I know them and they follow me." Sounds good, doesn't it? But how do we hear his voice? How many of us truly follow him, or only follow if we're on the rota for a particular Sunday, or if we're not doing anything "more important"? These are questions we can all only answer for ourselves. However, there is no doubt that some people do hear God's voice very clearly, so clearly in fact that it has a dramatic effect, causing them to change their lives. Think Paul on the road to Damascus for example! Others may hear God during times of stress, illness or any other version of human crisis. But for others, the voice may not be so overt, it may come through the words of a friend or a preacher, or the feeling that you are being pushed in a particular direction or prodded by an invisible stick. I call these incidents "God moments" – that time when your thoughts are not your own, out of the blue you are urged to make contact with someone, and you get no peace until you respond. Being a Christian, one of God's flock, is special and it's exciting. I love it when I meet someone who shows their love of God by the way they live their life in a close relationship with him; they have

something special about them, an energy that's hard to define. Light shines from them and you feel better for having been in their company. I think this is what the saint Irenaeus meant when he said, "The glory of God is a human being "fully alive". But in a world full of busyness, is it any wonder that we struggle to hear our Shepherd's voice? We need to make time to listen, if only for only a few moments. The best start to the day for me is an early walk with my dog in the woods, just her and the birds for company, but I can feel and sense God all around me in the wildlife, the trees and the warmth of the early sun. I also love the monotony of cutting the grass, pushing the lawnmower without any great effort is my prayer time, my time to talk with God, but as with any conversation I have to stop talking and remind myself to listen! It always amazes me that I return after these events with a clearer picture of what I am called to do or where I should go. Perhaps today's Gospel is for all of us, an invitation to do something similar, to find a way to make space in our busy lives for prayer and contemplation to raise God, our shepherd, higher up in our list of priorities. Amen

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. Those who suffer discrimination & those who are lonely. Those who are searching and trying to discern God's call. We continue to hold the people of Ukraine, and other war-torn parts of the world in our hearts as we pray for the softening of evil hearts. Pray for comfort and peace for those who are ill or distressed, and in quiet reflection pray for those you know personally in need of God's healing touch at this time. Pray for the souls of Brenda McMahon and John Gautrey from Brafield, whose funerals will take place over the next two weeks. Pray also for those who mourn their loss.

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