

Parish of St. Thomas, Apostle & Martyr, Ipswich

26th April 2020 - Third Sunday of Easter



Collect:

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.**

Psalm 116. 1-3, 10-12, 15

I love the Lord, because he has heard the voice
of my supplication,
Because he has inclined his ear to me
Whenever I called upon him.

The cords of death entangled me; the grip of
the grave took hold of me;
I came to grief and sorrow.

Then I called on the name of the Lord:
'O Lord, I pray you, save my life.'

How shall I repay the Lord for all the good
things he has done for me?

I will lift up the cup of salvation
And call upon the name of the Lord.

I will fulfil my vows to the Lord
In the presence of all his people.

I will offer you a sacrifice of thanksgiving
And call upon the name of the Lord.

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

[On the day of Pentecost] Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd:

'Let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.'

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, 'Brothers, what should we do?' Peter said to them, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.' And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.' So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. (*Acts of the Apostles 2.14, 36-41*)

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke (24.13-35)

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.' Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

This is the gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, o Christ.

Reflection:

Our gospel reading today takes us back to the Sunday of the Resurrection. The two disciples, full of the pain and disappointment of Good Friday, are walking to a village outside Jerusalem, called Emmaus. Jesus joins them on their walk, and the way the story unfolds provides us with the pattern for when we meet as a church. In the first part of the story Jesus opens up the scriptures for the disciples – and their hearts are burning. In the second part they break bread together – and at that point they recognise Jesus -he has been with them all along. Today I wonder, how does this gospel story speak to us when we cannot meet as a church? Thankfully, technology like ZOOM, video, whatsapp means that some of us can still explore the scriptures together. But, what about the Eucharist? Here are some thoughts about the meaning of the Eucharist, when we cannot physically share in it

together and what we mean by ‘spiritual communion’.

When Jesus is in Emmaus, at table with the disciples, the words he uses are the same words we hear in the celebration of the Eucharist “ he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them”. Jesus has spoken these words before: in the story of the feeding of the 5000 (Luke 9.16) and, of course, at the last supper (Luke 22.19) when he adds “This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

In today's gospel, the disciples recognize Jesus just at this point – their eyes are opened.

Today's gospel reading shows us that ‘meeting to break bread’ had a central place in the life of the early church. And, of course, at St Thomas, the Eucharist is at the heart of our worship, because our experience is that, here, we meet Jesus; he is right here, with us. So how do we make sense of the Eucharist in these times of social distancing?

We may have been able to follow a Eucharist on the TV or online, in a livestream or video, but, we cannot receive communion. In a time like this the Church encourages its members to make what is called *a spiritual communion*. It is a way of uniting yourself with Jesus and entering into communion with him and others even though you are not able to receive the sacrament itself.

Jesus Christ is with us and feeds us, giving us what we need – especially his peace. For many of us in the catholic tradition (catholic with a small ‘c’ includes Anglicans), being able to celebrate the Eucharist is important. Even when there is only the priest and one other person, representing the people of God, present, together they represent the body of Christ. The Eucharist is always celebrated on behalf of the people of God. How many people are there and receive communion is irrelevant for its efficacy. The Eucharist has a cosmic place in the world and is part of Christ's ongoing work of redemption. In one of our Eucharistic Prayers (C) we find these words “ Heavenly Father ...we offer through him this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Grant that by his merits and death, and though faith in his blood, we and all your Church may receive forgiveness of sins and all other benefits of your passion.” Praying for those benefits is what the Church means by *spiritual communion*.

Today, as we reflect on our gospel reading and our faith, of course we are saddened that we cannot meet together to share our lives and break bread together. There is a huge gap – but, of course, since his resurrection, Jesus' presence with his disciples has not been constrained by walls; he is with us now, in our homes or together on ZOOM. He will come to us in unexpected ways, as he did in the scriptures. It is he who continues to connect us and feed us, even more so, when we invite him to stay with us. Amen.

A prayer for spiritual communion

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have given me,
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.

Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.

O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may I know you more clearly,
love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

after the Prayer of St Richard of Chichester.

Here are the words of two hymns you may like to sing or pray this week

Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia!
Our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!
Who did once, upon the cross, Alleluia!
Suffer to redeem our loss, Alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia!
Unto Christ, our heavenly King, Alleluia!
Who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia!
Sinners to redeem and save, Alleluia!

But the pain which He endured, Alleluia!
Our salvation hath procured, Alleluia!
Now above the sky He's king, Alleluia!
Where the angels ever sing, Alleluia!

There is a redeemer
Jesus, God's own Son
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah
Holy One

*Thank you, oh my father
For giving us Your Son
And leaving Your Spirit
'Til the work on Earth is done*

Jesus my redeemer
Name above all names
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah
Oh, for sinners slain

When I stand in Glory
I will see His face
And there I'll serve my King forever
In that Holy Place

May you know the Peace of the risen Christ, who came and stood among his disciples and said 'Peace be with you'. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.

Alleluia! The peace of the risen Christ be always with you.

If you would like to chat, please give us a ring:

Revd Jutta: 07958 360 564 Rev Cat 07530 412988 Roger Elmer 07810 274586
Sylvia Dickerson 07903 739487 Malcolm Gibbs 07906 663530 Mary Bullass 625135
Gloria Elmer 745590 Rev Jackie Sears 07962172639 Revd Pat Wright 01473 464748

Please pray for:

Those with chronic or long-term illness: Eric Dickerson, Rosemary, Adam, Jenny and Andrew Barfield, Kathy Steele, Frank D., Andrew Derrett, Peggy (has not been well), Pat, Natacha, Christine, Stephen, Julie, Samantha, Jill, Rex, Molly Johansen,

Those undergoing treatment or currently ill: Mike Harding, Emily & family (9 years old with cancer), Juliet Adams, Matthew Hare, Gloria Elmer, Margaret Christian, Helen Harlow, Jean Dominy, Leslie Bloomfield, Pete Tancred, Val's niece and Michelle (Covid19), Katie,

Thank you for recovery: Tilly (after an accident), Mark Eley (severe illness)

All who are affected by the Coronavirus, their families and friends, in the UK and around the world; **for all health care staff and all who are working long hours in the service of others.** For all who are living alone and self-isolating.

For victims of conflict and natural disaster around the world, support agencies and peacemakers.

Those who have recently died, among them : Margita, Alan Seeley R.I.P



Birthdays this week:

Malcolm Gibbs,(29th)
Roger Dunnett (1st)

Pray for members of the St Thomas Congregation
(each week we will include a dozen names)

Zoe with Conran, Kurt & Rebecca, James Matthews, Stephen Marginson, Sma & Michael, Christine Perfect, Janet, Roger & Harvey, David Pitt, Helen with Neil, James, Sophie & Adam, Linda Savage & family, Jackie Rathbone, Rachael with Abigail, Georgina & Ellie

Online Church Services:

Sunday 26 April: 10am ZOOM Worship

Tuesday 27 April: 7.30pm LiveStream

**Meditation on facebook/
StThomasPilgrimCommunity**

Wednesday 28 April:

10 am Livestream Eucharist

facebook/StThomasIpswich

Please, look out for a worship video on our facebook page on Sunday morning

Church Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/stthomasipswich/>

Church website:

<http://stthomasipswich.org.uk/>

IMPORTANT REQUEST: NW Ipswich Big Local Trust
Fresh Food Fridays support for Covid-19

Do you know of any people/ families in need who could benefit from the BLT Fresh Food Friday support scheme, to receive a box of fresh food for free?

If you know anyone in need in the Big Local Trust area of Whitton, Whitehouse or Castle Hill, **could you please let Jutta know as this works via referral.**

Thank you. Jutta

Contacts:

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Cat's day off: Mondays