

Bulletin for Sunday 24 April 2022

Good morning friends

Like Lent, Easter is not just a week but a season (Eastertide) which runs right through to Pentecost (Whitsun); so this is the second Sunday of Easter...

Let's pause as we prepare to worship... and then praise God as we sing; I suggest, today, the second version / translation in the hymnbook of this Eastertide hymn:

Hymn: Yours is the victory (R&S 247 ii)

Prayer: Risen and living Christ,
in the middle of our busy lives
we come to meet you, and to worship you.
We bring the whole of ourselves,
our hopes, our fears, and our questions...
We come, with open hearts and minds,
to hear the truth, and to find your peace,
and most of all to praise your name!
We ask your blessing on everything we do,
and on everything we give in your service,
today and every day. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Readings: Psalm 150 and John 20: 19-31

Reflection: When Mary Magdalene brought news of Jesus' Resurrection to the disciples, they couldn't cope with it - maybe they didn't believe, or maybe they didn't understand, or maybe they were just stunned, but anyhow, their reaction was to gather together, to hide away, and to lock the doors in fear.

After Jesus appeared amongst them, speaking peace and breathing the Holy Spirit on them, they tried to pass on the joyful news to the temporarily-absent Thomas. But just as they had struggled with what Mary had told them, so now Thomas found it impossible to believe what he was told. He felt he needed something more tangible. So when Jesus came a second time he offered Thomas exactly that; and Thomas reacted with faith.

Is it wrong to seek evidence? Jesus didn't seem to think that it was. Doubt and questioning - and, perhaps, even some healthy scepticism - can often be part of the journey of faith. They can be a means of increasing our knowledge, widening our experience, and deepening our commitment.

In a world where what is real seems to be constantly brought into question by conflicting reports, and where fake news can be loud and confident, we too could end up confused and huddled behind locked doors. Robust questioning, and genuinely seeking the truth, are more helpful; and we can trust the Spirit to lead and teach us through the questions.

Hymn: Jesus, Lord, Redeemer (R&S 240)

Prayers: Compassionate God,
the wounds which Thomas needed to see
speak of your love and your understanding.
So we hold before you now
the dark places of this world - Ukraine,
Afghanistan, Yemen and all places of violence;
refugee camps and small boats carrying the desperate;
so many other places of pain, cruelty and despair.....
We pray for our own communities and loved ones,
for the hungry, the sick, the dying and the grieving...
In Jesus 'name we ask all our prayers,
including the unspoken prayers of our hearts. Amen

Hymn: Tell out my soul (R&S 740)

Blessing: May God, who is beyond our understanding
lead us into truth...
and may the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us and with all those we love,
this week, and always. Amen

There will be a ' Sunday at Six 'service on Zoom at 6pm on Sunday - all welcome.

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