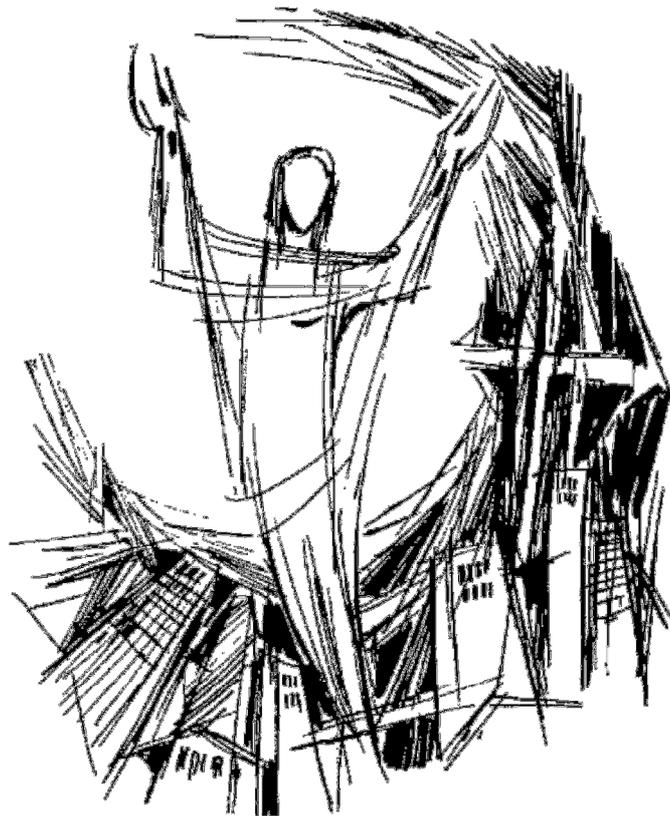


**Second Sunday of Easter 19<sup>th</sup> April 2020**

**Jesus Appears to his Disciples**



*If you would like to do so, please light a candle. Let us have a moment of silence as we prepare to worship – separately but together.*

*For those on Zoom please join in with the words in bold.*

*Opening Prayer*

**We are in the presence of the Living God, Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

*Opening Sentences of Scriptures (Acts 2: 14, 22-24, 32)*

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd:

“Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

“God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.”

Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

**Those who believe in him shall never die. Alleluia.**

*Confession*

*A moment of silence to bring anything on our hearts before God.*

**Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord,  
we come to you in sorrow for our sins,  
and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.  
We have lived by our own strength,  
and not by the power of your resurrection.  
In your mercy, forgive us.**

May the God of love and power  
forgive us and free us from our sins,  
heal and strengthen us by his Spirit,  
and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

*Today’s reading is John 20: 19-end. I have separated it into three parts with a short reflection after each part. For those on Zoom Cathy will read the scripture.*

*Reading 1: John 20: 19-23*

<sup>19</sup> On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' <sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

<sup>21</sup> Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' <sup>22</sup> And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup> If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.'

### *Reflection*

Jesus is risen. Mary has seen him and told the disciples. Two of them have seen the empty tomb. And yet they are behind a locked door for fear of the Jewish leaders. Does anything sound familiar? Here we are in lockdown, in fear for our own lives and/or fearful for what this awful virus might do to loved ones who are either going onto the frontline as key workers, or who are vulnerable because of underlying conditions. And I know there are lots of other causes for fear too. The disciples were also feeling what many of us feel – grief and that can be disorienting.

Into that situation comes Jesus and transforms things. He breathes on them. He can breathe. He is alive. More than that he brings new life. This is a mirror of the image of God breathing life into Adam.

And Jesus brings peace. Twice he says Peace be with you! Yes please. I want some of that. This is not a promise of freedom from all difficulties. It is the promise of peace in the midst of trouble.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:7)

Peace be with you.

**And also with you.**

## *Reading 2: John 20: 24-29*

<sup>24</sup> Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> 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.'

<sup>26</sup> 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!' <sup>27</sup> 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.'

<sup>28</sup> Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!'

<sup>29</sup> Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'

## *Reflection*

A week has gone by and the disciples still seem to be in lockdown. It shows how transformation and rebirth is not necessarily a big bang moment. It can be more of a process, a journey. I find that very encouraging. The disciples were still learning as are we.

And then we come to Thomas. He missed out on the first visit of Jesus and is sceptical. He has questions and doubts. And that is OK. We know that is so by the way that Jesus reacts. He does not admonish Thomas or tell him off. He is patient and understanding. He knows what Thomas needs and he offers it. Jesus is compassionate with us. His love never fails and if we have questions we can talk to him about them.

I feel for Thomas with his label "doubting". His response to Jesus is a confession of faith. He says "My Lord and my God!"

Let us confess our faith now by saying together:

*The Song of Christ's Glory (Philippians 2: 5-11)*

- 1 Christ Jesus was in the form of God,  
but he did not cling to equality with God.**
- 2 He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant,  
and was born in our human likeness.**
- 3 Being found in human form he humbled himself,  
and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.**
- 4 Therefore God has highly exalted him,  
and bestowed on him the name above every name,**
- 5 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth;**
- 6 And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.**

*Reading 3 John 20: 30-31*

<sup>30</sup> Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. <sup>31</sup> But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

*Response*

Jesus is the resurrection and the life.

**Those who believe in him shall never die. Alleluia.**

*An Act of Spiritual Communion*

**My Jesus,  
I believe that You are always with us  
I love you above all things,  
And I desire to receive You into my soul.  
Since I cannot at this moment  
Receive You sacramentally,  
Come spiritually into my heart.  
I embrace You as if You were already there  
And unite myself wholly to You.  
Never permit me to be separated from You.  
Amen.**

*Intercessions*

In joy and hope let us pray to the Father.

For all who are affected by coronavirus,  
through illness or isolation or anxiety,  
that they may find relief and recovery:  
Lord, hear us,  
**Lord, graciously hear us.**

For those who are guiding our nation at this time,  
and shaping national policies,  
that they may make wise decisions:  
Lord, hear us,  
**Lord, graciously hear us.**

For doctors, nurses and medical researchers,  
that through their skill and insights  
many will be restored to health:  
Lord, hear us,  
**Lord, graciously hear us.**

For the vulnerable and the fearful,  
for the gravely ill and the dying,  
that they may know your comfort and peace:  
Lord, hear us,  
**Lord, graciously hear us.**

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,  
to the mercy and protection of God.

Merciful Father,  
**accept these prayers  
for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

*Collect for Second Sunday of Easter*

**Risen Christ,  
for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred:  
open the doors of our hearts,  
that we may seek the good of others  
and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace,  
to the praise of God the Father.  
Amen**

*Lord's Prayer*

Rejoicing in God's new creation  
as our Saviour has taught us, let us pray:

**Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be your name,  
Your kingdom come,  
Your will be done,  
On earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
As we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
But deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours now and for ever.**

**Amen.**

*The Blessing*

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!  
By his great mercy he has given us a new birth  
into a living hope  
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

*1 Peter 1.3*

With the power that raised Jesus from the dead at work within you,  
go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Alleluia, alleluia.

**In the name of Christ. Amen. Alleluia, alleluia.**