

St. Thomas' Cardiff & All Saints Boolaroo

4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

3rd May 2020

Christ is Risen
He is Risen Indeed

Our help is in the Name of the Lord;
The Maker of heaven and earth.



O God, whose Son Jesus is the good shepherd of your people: help us when we hear his voice to know him who calls us each by name, and to follow where he leads; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Repent, and be baptised 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. **Acts 2.38–39**

CONFESSION

Heavenly Father, we confess to you our fears, our worries, and our anxieties. You have given us your perfect love which casts out all fear and your peace which transcends all understanding, but even still we feel dislodged, displaced, untethered, and uncertain during these times.
We believe, Lord; help our unbelief.

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

O God, make speed to save us.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

READINGS

First Reading

Acts 2:42-47

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Hear the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Psalm

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd: therefore can I lack nothing.
He will make me lie down in green pastures: and lead me beside still waters.
He will refresh my soul: and guide me in right pathways for his name's sake.
Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil:
for you are with me, your rod and your staff comfort me.
You spread a table before me in the face of those who trouble me:
you have anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full.

Surely your goodness and loving-kindness will follow me all the days of my life:
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Second Reading

1 Peter 2:1-10

A Reading From Peter's First Letter

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says: “See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone,” and, “A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.” They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for. But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

For the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Gospel

John 10:1-10

The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John chapter ten beginning at the first verse.
Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. “Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them. Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

For the gospel of the Lord
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ

Talk: [4th Sunday of Easter](#) (Click)

Let us together affirm the faith of the Church

We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father; through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

For he has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?" Hebrew 13:5-6

INTERCESSIONS

Let us pray

Lord, you are our Shepherd and we pray that you will protect us from all danger, especially at this time, by keeping watch over us, guide us towards green pastures where we can be nourished by your word and lead us to pure still waters where we can be refreshed by your love.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Lord, you are our Shepherd, your desire is for our wholeness and well being. We hold in tenderness and prayer the collective suffering of our world at this time. We grieve precious lives lost and vulnerable lives threatened. We ache for ourselves and our neighbours, standing before an uncertain future. We pray for all nurses, doctors and essential workers, keep them safe. We pray for a vaccine and cure to be found. Inspire our leaders to discern and choose wisely, aligned with the common good. Help us to practice social distancing especially as restrictions are lifted. Call us to profound trust in your faithful presence.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Lord, you are our Shepherd and we pray for our church leaders that they too may care for and lead us by following the example of love and service you demonstrated in your earthly ministry. We especially pray today for Peter our bishop and his assistants Charlie and Sonia and all clergy.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Lord, you are our Shepherd who seeks out the lost and the sick. We pray for those we know who are lost in illness and ask you to reassure them with the knowledge that you are watching over them in their suffering and that many are praying for their recovery. We pray for all those on our prayers lists, for those affected by the coronavirus and those we carry in our hearts.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Lord, you are our Shepherd so we pray for those who have died, for Daniel and his family and friends who ache with sorrow in their loss of a loved one. May they find rest in the Spirit's embrace.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Lord, you are our Shepherd, and we offer our prayers now for all people and their situations. For lives that are going through upheaval or distress caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and in circumstances which only you can change.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to 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.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.
Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.
Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us your peace.
Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have given me, for all the pains and insults you

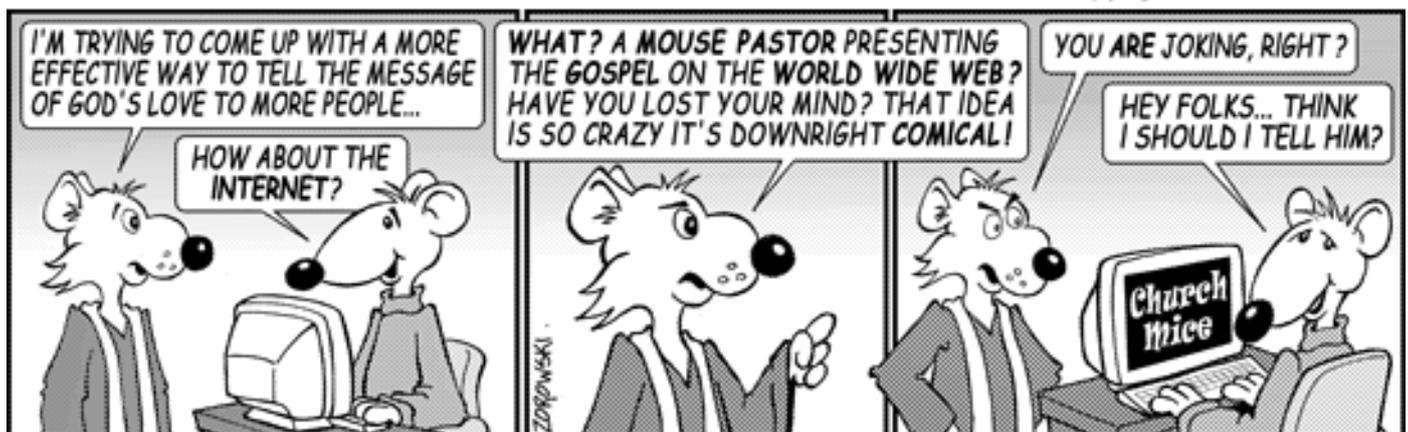
have borne for me. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart. O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

Lord, in these days of mercy, make us quiet and prayerful; in these days of challenge, make us stronger in you; in these days of emptiness, take possession of us; in these days of waiting, open our hearts to the mystery of your cross. Amen

May the Lord Jesus Christ be with us to protect us. May he go before us to guide us, and stand behind us to give us strength. May he look upon us, to keep us, and bless us. Amen

REFLECTIONS ON READINGS

This week the Lectionary offers a wonderful and rich connection of ideas. In this season of the resurrection, the life of Christ is still uppermost in our minds, and Jesus' promise that he has come to give life is at the heart of our reflections. The rest of the Gospel, though, and the other readings, all reflect on how life is lived when the care and compassion of God direct us. In the Acts reading we are given a glimpse at the true community of the first disciples and their care for one another. In Psalm 23 we are reminded of God's care and attention toward God's people. In Peter's letter, written to those who are being persecuted for Christ's sake, there is the assurance that their suffering is not meaningless, and that it is a sharing in Christ's sacrifice, even as God – the Shepherd and Guardian of the believers' souls – watches over them. Finally, Jesus, in speaking about his life, warns about those who pretend to care for 'the sheep' but don't. In a confusing contrast he is both the Shepherd who does care, and the gate through which the true Shepherd enters to call the sheep, and through which the sheep pass in order to find pasture and life. While it is not the purpose of this short reflection to unravel all of these metaphors, the essential message is clear – the life of Jesus is given and received by mutual care, compassion and protection. The resurrection does not offer some individualised, blissful life. Rather, it calls us into a life that is shared with others who follow Christ, to whom we belong and for whom we are responsible, even as they as are called to care for us. It is only together – in community – that Christ's life can be known and enjoyed.



At our weekly Bible study, the leader asked an elderly gentleman, Walt, to open the meeting with prayer. Walt did so in a soft voice. Another man, straining to hear, shouted, "I can't hear you!" Walt replied, "I wasn't talking to you."

En route to church to make his first confession, my nervous seven-year-old grandson asked me what he could expect. "Confession is where you tell all the bad things you've done to the priest," I told him. He looked relieved. "Good. I haven't done anything bad to the priest."

During his fourth week of basic training, the soldier was able to make a brief phone call to his grandmother. He said he was attending church on base every week, which I was pleased to hear. "Everyone goes to church here," he added. "It's the only place we don't get yelled at."

The sentence in the Thanksgiving edition of my church bulletin intended to say "Thank you, Lord, for the many miracles we are too blind to see." But in what might have been a classic Freudian slip, the sentence read "Thank you, Lord, for the many miracles we are too blond to see."

FR GARY'S SERMON

Well, many year ago now, when I was visiting a couple in their well-looked-after heritage home, the husband told me he had bought the home because he wanted a house with character. But the closest I've ever come to buying a house with character, would've been when I bought this (*show the model*) — a small die-casted model of a medieval castle. And, for something that's not much bigger than a match box, it certainly packs in a lot of detail. You can see windows and battlements, and even the individual bricks that make up the walls and towers. And whenever you're looking at any stone -masonry structures like this, it interesting to bear in mind that it all began with a single stone – the cornerstone, the first and most important stone that was laid, because all the other stones are laid in reference to this first, cornerstone.

And likewise Jesus is the cornerstone of our faith because as Christians everything we do needs to be done in reference and response to the voice of Jesus, the Good Shepherd. In our reading from Peter's first letter we're told that "The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of a corner." The stone that's spoken of here is Jesus Christ, who was rejected by the Jewish leaders and then became the cornerstone of the church. And it's because Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of the church that the church is in existence today. If Jesus had not been the cornerstone of the church, then the church would have collapsed long ago; just as a building in Jesus' time would have collapsed if a faulty cornerstone was used for its construction.

And right now, in this time of social restrictions, when we're feeling cut off from a lot of the things that are an important part of our church culture, I think we have an opportunity to focus on the essence of our faith, which is of course Jesus the Good Shepperd. Because at the end of the day Christians are asked to give their allegiance, not to any dogma or abstract article of belief, but to the living Lord, the Risen Christ, who speaks, and lives with his people, regardless of the changes and chances of this fleeting world.

In the book "The practice of the presence of God," which has been a Christian classic for nearly 300 years, Brother Lawrence, who grew in his understanding of God's presence while working in the kitchen of a monastery, is described as being a man who had the ability to completely abandon himself into God's hands. He never worried about what would become of him; rather, he threw himself into the arms of infinite mercy. The more desperate things appeared to him, the more he hoped -- like a rock beaten by the waves of the sea and yet settling itself more firmly in the midst of the tempest. This is why he said that the greatest glory one can give to God is to entirely mistrust one's own strength, relying completely on God's protection. Everything was the same to Brother Lawrence -- every place, every job. The Good brother found God everywhere, as much while he was repairing shoes as while he was praying with the community. He was in no hurry to go on retreats, because he found the same God to love and adore in his ordinary work as in the depth of the desert. Brother Lawrence knew what it meant to live in God's presence. A presence that is always there, offering us a life of abundance; an abundance that can be found when we're doing any outdoor exercise, household chores, backyard gardening, supermarket shopping or just giving someone a call or a helping hand.

But, in these challenging times, I think we need to remember that when Christ is living with us, he is always encouraging us to move up to a higher level: putting us into situations where we have to be very much braver, or more patient, or more loving, than we ever dreamt of being before. It all seems so unnecessary: but this is because we have not yet had the slightest notion of the tremendous thing that God means to make us.

George McDonald, makes this point in parable where he asks you to imagine yourself is a living house. "Christ comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what he's doing. He's getting the drains right, and stopping leaks in the roof and so on: you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you were not surprised. But presently he starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts terribly and doesn't make any sense. What on earth is Christ up to? The explanation is that he is building quite a different house from the one you thought of -- throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were going to be made into a decent little cottage: but Christ is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it himself."

George McDonald, is certainly right in saying that Christ wants to make us into palaces that he himself intends to lived in. But if we don't allow Jesus Christ to be the cornerstone of our own house of faith, then our faith may very well collapse whenever Christ starts to rebuild our house of faith into a palace of faith. In the time of Jesus, a wise builder after seeing a building collapse may well go back and check the cornerstone of his own house.

So It might be a wise thing to check the cornerstone of our own faith; for if Christ is the cornerstone of our church, he should also be the cornerstone in the lives of each and everyone us; providing us with the assurance that we will always be sustained by the grace and love of our Lord Jesus, the Good Shepherd.