

St. Thomas' Cardiff & All Saints Boolaroo

6TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

17th 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, you have prepared for those who love you joys beyond our understanding: pour into our hearts such love for you, that, loving you above all else, we may obtain your promises that exceed all we can desire; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, 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 17:22-31

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, ‘Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, “To an unknown god.” What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For “In him we live and move and have our being”; as even some of your own poets have said, “For we too are his offspring.” Since we are God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.’

Hear the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Psalm**Psalm 66:7-19**

O bless our God, you peoples: and cause his praises to resound, Who has held our souls in life: who has not suffered our feet to slip. For you have proved us, O God: you have tried us as silver is tried. You brought us into the net: you laid sharp torment on our loins.

You let our enemies ride over our heads, we went through fire and water: but you brought us out into a place of liberty. I will come into your house with burnt-offerings: and I will pay you my vows, The vows that opened my lips: that my mouth uttered when I was in trouble.

I will offer you burnt-offerings of fattened beasts, with the sweet smoke of rams: I will sacrifice a bull and the flesh of goats. Come then and hear, all you that fear God: and I will tell what he has done for me. I called to him with my mouth: and his praise was on my tongue.

If I had cherished wickedness in my heart: the Lord would not have heard me. But God has heard me: he has heeded the voice of my prayer. Praise be to God: who has not turned back my prayer, or his steadfast love from me.

Second Reading**1 Peter 3:8-22**

A Reading From Peter's First Letter

Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing. For 'Those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit; let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.' Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight people, were saved through water. And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

For the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Gospel**John 14:15-21**

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

'If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. 'I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.'

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

Talk: [6th 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

Creator God, We pray for and ask you to guide all bishops, clergy, wardens and decision makers as they
decide the best way forward for us so we can worship in our churches. We pray for prime ministers and
presidents, for bosses, for leaders and trendsetters, for all who wield power, that they may be guided by the
Spirit of Truth. We especially pray all the worlds' governments as they continue to do their best during the
Covid-19 Pandemic

Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer.

Father God, we pray for family and colleagues, friends, neighbours and strangers, For all those who we are
missing with whom we normally would break bread: at home, at work, in the community, and in our
church but we continue to pray for all who grow, harvest and prepare the food we eat and for those who
continue to deliver to shops and supermarkets. We give especial thanks for those in our shops and
supermarkets.

Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer.

Loving God, we pray for the sick and troubled, for the fearful and alone, for those in pain. We pray that all
who suffer, may feel the Spirits healing presence. We especially ask for healing for Beryl, those with
Corona Virus, those we carry in our hearts and we pray for and give thanks to our wonderful health service
who are at the frontline.

Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer.

Merciful God, we pray for those kept fresh in our memory, for those who have died recently and those who
mourn them, may they find rest in the Spirit's embrace and we commend them to your keeping for ever.

We pray for those whose anniversaries occur at this time.

Lord, in your mercy: hear our prayer.

God of heaven and earth, companion in life, Spirit of truth, to you alone we turn our eyes and lift our
hearts. Help us to keep your commandments and to love one another as you love us.

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 for ever. 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

Following from last week's word of assurance, the Lectionary continues in an attitude of comfort, emphasising God's nearness and God's strengthening of those who struggle. In Athens Paul speaks to the people of the city about a God who can be known and "in whom we live, move and have our being." He invites them to recognise that God is very near to all people whether they are aware of God or not. The Psalmist reflects on God's presence even during times of 'testing' and gives thanks for God's rescue and forgiveness, and celebrates that God does indeed hear the prayers of God's people. In Peter's letter the apostle continues to offer comfort to a persecuted church assuring them that they are following in Christ's nail-scarred footsteps, and that in Christ they are saved. And, in John's Gospel, Jesus offers the promise of the Spirit, assuring his disciples that by the Spirit they will always know that God is with them and in them, and they will enjoy the love relationship that Jesus has given them. The wonderful, challenging and comforting message of this week is that God is intimately available to us, and that God's presence and resources are accessible to us as we face the challenges and struggles of following Christ and living fully. The inevitable question this raises is whether we are willing to embrace God's presence, and rest in God's strength even as we wrestle with injustice and the big crises facing our world.

A doctor and a lawyer are talking at a party. Their conversation is constantly interrupted by people describing their ailments and asking the doctor for free medical advice. After an hour of this, the exasperated doctor asks the lawyer, "What do you do to stop people from asking you for legal advice when you're out of the office?" "I give it to them," replies the lawyer, "and then I send them a bill." The doctor is shocked, but agrees to give it a try. The next day, still feeling slightly guilty, the doctor prepares the bills. When he goes to place them in his mailbox, he finds a bill from the lawyer.

A scientist and a philosopher are being chased by a hungry lion. The scientist makes some quick calculations and says, "It's no good trying to outrun it. It's catching up!" The philosopher keeps a little ahead and replies, "I'm not trying to outrun the lion, I'm trying to outrun you!"

A dentist told a mother, "I'm sorry madam, but I'll have to charge you a \$100 for pulling your boy's tooth." The mother exclaimed, "A \$100! You said it was only \$20!" "Yes," replied the dentist, "but he yelled so loudly that he scared four other patients out of the office!"

An English teacher told his students that when pronouncing a word beginning with the letter "H" they should ignore the "H" as in hour, honour, and honest. That day when leaving for class, he left a note for his assistant, "Please heat my rice for me." When the teacher returned to his office, he met an empty bowl. He asked the assistant, "Where is my food?" The assistant replied, "You said I should heat the rice for you, but you also instructed us to ignore the 'H.'"

FR GARY'S SERMON

Well, today I'd like to show you this (show constellation globe) – it's a constellation globe and it shows all the constellations in the sky. (*putting a figure on the globe*) I can see Columba, which is the dove. And, then, moving farther north, I can see Orion the Hunter, who's right next to Taurus the bull. (*put the globe down*) And this reminds me of a night at Coonabarabran when I was with a group of tourists listening to an astronomer, pointing out a few of the constellations in the sky with his laser pointer and telling us a little bit about each one of them. When he came to Orion the hunter, who, ever since ancient times, has been imaginatively depicted in the stars with his shield and club, he explained how the intrepid hunter was lifting his club, high in the air, ready to land a blow on top of the head of Taurus the bull. It just goes to show how an astronomer, professional or otherwise, will always see far more in the sky than a lot of other people. A botanist will, likewise, see far more in a clump of trees than someone who doesn't know anything about botany. And a doctor will certainly find out far more about a patient by looking at him than an unskilled person ever would.

Always what we see and what we experience depends on what we bring to the sight and to the experience. This is like the way in which we cannot receive the Holy Spirit unless we wait in silence and expectation in prayer for the Holy Spirit to come to us. For the Holy Spirit gate-crashes on one's heart, he waits to be received. And when he is received, he urges us not to be afraid.

I once read about a five-year-old boy who was afraid of the dark. One day his mother asked him to go into the pantry for a can of corn. The pantry was dark and the light had blown, so he hesitated. Seeing his hesitation and trying to alleviate his fears, his mother said, "You don't have to be afraid. Jesus is in the pantry." The little boy brightened and yelled out, "Jesus, if you're really in there, can you hand me the corn please?"

Yes, if only our Lord would do that: just hand us everything we need or want. But more often, he simply provides us with the wherewithal for getting on with the work of his Kingdom. And it's the Holy Spirit, called the "Advocate", who Jesus promises to send to his disciples in today's gospel, who enables us to do this work. And it's interesting to look at the different ways in which the Greeks used this word. An Advocate, for example, might be a person called into a court of law to witness on someone's behalf and plead for their cause when they were under a charge that could lead to a serious penalty; or he might be a person called in to talk to a company of soldiers who needed a boost in morale that would put new courage into their minds and hearts. An advocate was always someone called in to help a person who was in trouble or distress or doubt or bewilderment.

So, when we think of our Lord urging us not to be afraid, we would do well to remember the Greek use of the word Advocate. For the Holy Spirit, in the form of the Advocate, is a gift that Jesus has made available to us all. And in our prayers we need to ask that the Holy Spirit be free to work in our lives. Through prayer we must ask of God first, before it will be given. Jesus teaches us that to receive the Holy Spirit, all one needs to do is ask.

The Holy Spirit is truly a gift from God coming in Christ's name to help Christians walk in God's light. But for God to use this gift in our lives, we need to stop struggling.

In water-safety courses a cardinal rule is never to swim out to a drowning man and try to help him as long as he is thrashing about. To do so is to commit suicide. As long as a drowning man thinks he can help himself, he is dangerous to anyone who tries to help him. His tendency is to grab the one trying to aid him and take them both down in the process. The correct procedure is to stay just far enough away so that he can't grab you. Then you wait. And when he finally gives up, you make your move. At that point, the one drowning is pliable. He won't work against you. He will let you help.

The same principle holds true in our relationship with the Holy Spirit. Until we give up, we aren't really in a position to be helped. We will work against him rather than with him.

The Holy Spirit is our supernatural helper. Whenever we struggle, we live below our privileges. Because we are all God's children, Jesus has promised us a supernatural place, a supernatural power, and a supernatural helper.

These legacies are available to us today and need only to be claimed.