

St. Thomas' Cardiff & All Saints Boolaroo

5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

10th May 2020

Christ is Risen
He is Risen Indeed

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

Everliving God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life: give us grace to love one another, to follow in the way of his commandments, and to share his risen life; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for 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 7.55–60

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

But filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 'Look,' he said, 'I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!' But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' When he had said this, he died.

Hear the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Psalm

Psalm 31.1–5, 17–18

To the leader. A Psalm of David. In you, O LORD, I seek refuge; do not let me ever be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me. Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily. Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me. You are indeed my rock and my fortress; for your name's sake lead me and guide me, take me out of the net that is hidden for me, for you are my refuge. Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God. Do not let me be put to shame, O LORD, for I call on

you; let the wicked be put to shame; let them go dumbfounded to Sheol. Let the lying lips be stilled that speak insolently against the righteous with pride and contempt.

Second Reading

1 Peter 2:11-25

A Reading From Peter's First Letter

Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul. Conduct yourselves honourably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honourable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge. For the Lord's sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme, or of governors, as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing right you should silence the ignorance of the foolish. As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil. Honour everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honour the emperor. Slaves, accept the authority of your masters with all deference, not only those who are kind and gentle but also those who are harsh. For it is to your credit if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, where is the credit in that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps 'He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.' When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

For the word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Gospel

John 14:1-14

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

'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.' Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.' Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

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

Talk: [5th 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

Risen and reigning Lord, assure our troubled hearts that you have gone to prepare a place for us, so that where you are, we may be also. You alone are the way, the truth, and the life by whom the Father comes to us, so that through you, we have seen him and know him.
Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Risen and reigning Lord, we give you thanks and praise for mothers young and old. We pray for young mothers, who give life and count toes and tend to our every need; May they be blessed with patience and tenderness to care for their families and themselves with great joy. We pray for our own mothers who have nurtured and cared for us; May they continue to guide us in strong and gentle ways. We pray for mothers who are separated from their children because of war, poverty, or conflict; May they feel the loving embrace of our God who wipes every tear away. We pray for women who are not mothers but still love and shape us with motherly care and compassion. We remember mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers who are no longer with us but who live forever in our memory and nourish us with their love.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Risen and reigning Lord, we pray for family and colleagues, friends, for neighbours and strangers, For those with whom we break bread at home, for those we have missed at work, in the community, and in our church, giving thanks for Social Media and the Internet which allows us to keep in touch with those we love. Guide our leaders as they decide which restrictions for the Covid-19 pandemic can be relaxed and help us to remember to continue to do our part especially by keeping our social distancing.
Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Risen and reigning Lord, whose touch alone could heal the sick; hear our prayers for your servants who are ill, for those on our prayer lists, those recovering from operations especially Margaret and those we carry in our hearts. We ask for your help and mercy to restore them to health especially those affected by the Coronavirus. Thank you for the continuing work of our Health Service risking their lives while coping with the pandemic.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

Risen and reigning Lord, we pray for those whose hearts have been saddened by the death of someone close and dear to them, for members of our families who have died and whose anniversary we recall. Help us to experience the comfort of the Holy Spirit within us, and the fellowship of the church family around us until we are reunited once more in that family house which is your heavenly kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Risen and reigning Lord, we thank you for showing us the Way, in human terms that we find easier to understand and which helps us to recognise all the wonderful things in your world for which we should be grateful

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

If following Christ is seen as a way to avoid suffering and struggle, we will be deeply disappointed by the message of this week's Lectionary readings. Beneath all of them lies the reality that Jesus, and those who followed Jesus, faced persecution, accusation and suffering. They were not exempt from life's troubles, and sometimes their faith even brought suffering on them. And so we witness Stephen who is stoned for his witness to Christ, but who entrusts himself to God. We read the words of the Psalmist who, facing persecution and attack, commits himself to God's care and protection. Peter tells of how Christ was rejected, but God honoured him and has built a community of light with Christ as the foundation. And Jesus, reassuring his disciples, reminds them that they can find peace in trusting him, and connecting with God through him. The gift of this week is the assurance that, even as we face suffering, our lives are in God's hands, and, if we will entrust ourselves to God's care, we will find peace and will be partners in God's work in our world. This is not the message of ease and of guarantees of the "good life" that we might hope for. But, it is something much better. It is an assurance that as we live in this world and experience its pain, along with all people, we are partners with God, and we have the confidence that our lives and their ultimate destiny are in God's hands.

When the minister and his wife visited our neighbour, her four-year-old daughter answered the door. "Mum!" she yelled toward the living room. "God's here, and he brought his girlfriend."

Late for a seminar and unable to find parking, a young man pulled into a spot behind a church. It was only after he'd gotten out of the car that he spotted this sign: "No parking. Forgiveness is our business, but don't make it harder than it already is."

When I asked my friend if she was planning to attend church, she just shook her head. "I haven't gone in a long time," she said. "Besides, it's too late for me. I've probably already broken all seven commandments."

Barista: How do you take your coffee? Me: Very, very seriously.

FR GARY'S SERMON

In a "Peanuts" comic strip, there was a conversation between Lucy and Charlie Brown. Lucy said that life is like a deck chair. Some place it so they can see where they're going; some place it so they can see where they've been; and some place it so they can see where they are at the present moment. Then Charlie Brown replied: "I can't even get mine unfolded." Yeah, poor Charlie Brown.

But you know, maybe his trouble with the deck chair could be an illustration of how we all have trouble, from time to time, with getting our lives to unfold the way we want them to.

In fact, we might even feel a bit like this-(*show ship*) a sailing ship that could easily get lost at sea, if it weren't for the skills of the ship's navigator. And this reminds me of the opening line of the poem *Sea Fever*, written by John Masefield, because it says: "I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky, And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by."

So maybe some of the difficulties we might be having, with getting our lives to unfold in the way in which we want them to, might have something to do with how we're navigating our way through life. But it needn't be this way if Christ is our guiding star. For he alone can show us the way to God.

This is what Jesus is telling his disciples in today's gospel reading; but not before he promises them a heavenly home. And he describes this home as a permanent "dwelling place." It is not like the "earthly tent" in which we now live. In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians it's described as a "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." A tent is a temporary, fragile dwelling for a traveler. What Jesus has promised us is a permanent dwelling for those who have completed the journey of life. Jesus further described our "dwelling place" as something he is preparing for us now, that he might share with us for eternity.

For Jesus said: "I go (to) prepare a place for you ... that where I am, there you may be also." These verses tell us what Jesus is doing right now -- preparing a permanent dwelling place for us. And we don't need to speculate about what this dwelling place will be like. It's enough to know that we will be with Jesus forever. This is our eternal inheritance. Paul tells us that we will be "joint heirs with Christ," and Peter speaks of an inheritance that is in imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for us all.

Again and again, Jesus had told his disciples where he was going, but somehow they had never understood. "Yet a little while, I am with you," he said, "and then I go to him that sent me." He had told them that he was going to the father who had sent him, and with whom he was one, but they still didn't understand what was going on. Even less did they understand the way by which Jesus was going, because that way led to the cross.

At this moment, the disciples were bewildered men. But there was one among them, who could never say that he understood what he did not understand, and that was Thomas. He was far too honest and far too much in earnest to be satisfied with any vague, pious expressions, Thomas had to be sure. So he expressed his doubts, and his failure to understand, and the wonderful thing is that it was the question of doubting a man, which provoked one of the greatest things Jesus ever said.

People needn't be ashamed of their doubts, because it's very true that those who seek will in the end find. And so Jesus said to Thomas: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through me." In Him alone we see what God is like; and He alone can lead people into God's presence without fear and without shame. And we know that Jesus' promises are true because we now have the presence of his Spirit as a down payment, and guarantee.

So, as God's people, my we never forget that Jesus, our guiding star, is, indeed, the Way the Truth in the Life, and that the power and joy of His Spirit is available for us today and always.