



Sunday 18th April 2021 – Easter 3

Luke 24 v36b-48

Welcome to Praying Together but Separately

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

[ALLELUIA! SING TO JESUS](#)

[CHRIST THE LORD IS RISEN TODAY](#)

[I CANNOT TELL, WHY HE WHO ANGELS WORSHIP](#)

There are also hymns here from St Martin's in the Field:

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/hub/asset/hymns-and-choral-music>

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Risen Christ,
you filled your disciples with boldness and fresh hope:
strengthen us to proclaim your risen life
and fill us with your peace,
to the glory of God the Father. Amen

REFLECTION

Breathe slowly and deeply.
Ask God to speak to you through the passage that you are about to read.

BIBLE READING:

Luke 24 v36-48

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.' Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third

day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

SOME THOUGHTS FOR FURTHER REFLECTION:

There is something in this passage that begs us to ask the question (as perhaps we do every year) of Why did Jesus die? Or even why did Jesus HAVE to die? Or even, why did God let Jesus die? Or further still, what difference did Jesus' death make?

These, and other similar questions help us get to the heart of the Easter story – and the heart of our faith. And in answering them, we can perhaps better explain our faith (to ourselves!) and to those who are seeking – the newcomers, the enquirers, the children and young people, the new to faith etc. Being able to explain what we think happened on the cross and in the tomb matters – to us, to our understanding of the Easter mysteries, and I hope and pray, draw us closer to the Divine nature of God.

When I went to university to study Theology, people were worried I would lose my faith – studying faith and asking profound questions of it, was deemed risky and maybe something I should do with caution and some trepidation. I went away with trepidation about many things, but not losing my faith, after all if Jesus could rise from the dead, he could probably deal with my questions and doubts too!

In today's Gospel we are looking at the resurrected Jesus talking to the disciples, (Cleopas and his companion, have just hurriedly returned to Jerusalem to tell the disciples that he had seen Jesus on the road to Emmaus) and the disciples are talking about Simon Peter having seen Jesus too. So it is surprising that in this account when Jesus appears again, the disciples are terrified – Peter and Cleopas (and his friend) have already seen the risen Lord, and Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary (mother of James) had been told by angels that Jesus was alive. So with all these who had witnessed the resurrection, why was the prevailing attitude of terror and shock? With the risen Jesus in front of them, were they doubting and terrified.

Jesus as ever reassured them – it seems their terror was perhaps directed inwards. 'If this man who was once dead is now stood in front of me, I must be losing my mind' – that's kind of terrifying!

Jesus – reassured them by showing his wounds (now as a vicar I have been shown many wounds – it's an odd part of ministry! Knee replacement scars, brain surgery scars, an amputated foot and rather alarmingly a hip replacement scar! And on no occasion was this reassuring!) But Jesus' scars are reassuring – it is truly him in his wounded body. It is the Messiah – the one who was killed and dead and now dead now more. To prove his point further he eats some fish – he is not a ghost but a living breathing, once dead, man. A man who bears the scars of his crucifixion. The resurrection is not a magic time travelling trick that rewinds Jesus to pre-crucifixion time – but Jesus has moved through death, beyond death, beyond the tomb, where death is no more. Death is over. The victory is won.

So, just like the disciples did, we ask why. Why did Jesus die? What difference does that make? Well, there are many theories on this – and theologians better than me can explain in detail. But, I will say, in my own words, that Jesus died and rose again to put an end to death and sin. God's plan was never for death and sin to be part of our lives – but they are

(and so often humanity chooses this way of living), and they weigh heavy, and their stain is ingrained. But in his death and in his life, Jesus showed a way of love and forgiveness. A way that means however bad it gets, however awful the sin, or the death, God will break through and new life is possible. Jesus defeated death – Jesus redeemed us all in his death. However, bad it is, God’s love will not end, will not leave us, and will never be weakened or defeated. For God cannot die – God cannot end; in God new life is always being brought forth.

So why did Jesus die? To bring new life. To end death for all. To draw all people back to God. To end our death; yours and mine. To show God’s love was and is, stronger than anything else. Death is not the last word but a new beginning.

In this week, when we mourn a collective loss of Prince Philip, we are reminded of our own losses, our own griefs. But, we are people of hope – people who have seen the scars of the crucifixion and who know they are born in a living Christ. A Christ who has opened not just the tomb but the gates of heaven for all God’s children. Amen.

Kate Peacock

OUR PRAYERS

In joy and hope let us pray to the Father.

That our risen Saviour may fill us and (add the name of a friend or family member who is not yet a believer) with the joy of his glorious and life-giving resurrection ...
we pray to the Father.

Hear our prayer.

That isolated and persecuted churches
may find fresh strength in the good news of Easter ...
we pray to the Father.

Hear our prayer.

That God may grant us humility
to be subject to one another in Christian love ...
we pray to the Father.

Hear our prayer.

That he may provide for those who lack food, work or shelter ...
we pray to the Father.

Hear our prayer.

That by his power war and famine may cease through all the world ...
we pray to the Father.

Hear our prayer.

That he may reveal the light of his presence to the sick,
the weak and the dying,
to comfort and strengthen them ...
we pray to the Father.

Hear our prayer.

That, according to his promises,
all who have died in the faith of the resurrection
may be raised on the last day ...
we pray to the Father.

Hear our prayer.

That he may send the fire of the Holy Spirit upon his people,
so that we may bear faithful witness to his resurrection,
we pray to the Father.

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father,
you have delivered us from the power of darkness
and brought us into the kingdom of your Son:
grant that, as his death has recalled us to life,
so his continual presence in us may raise us to eternal joy;
through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

A PRAYER CONCERNING THE CORONAVIRUS

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
in their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

My Jesus,
I believe that You
are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
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 at least 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.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

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