

Morning Worship for the third Sunday of Easter

Preparation

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He has given us new life and hope.

He has raised Jesus from the dead.

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Opening Prayer

Faithful one, whose word is life:

come with saving power

to free our praise,

inspire our prayer

and shape our lives

for the kingdom of your Son,

Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Cast your burden upon the Lord:

And he will sustain you.

Create in us clean hearts O God:

And renew a right spirit within us.

Cast us not away from your presence:

And take not your Holy Spirit from us.

Give us the joy of your saving help:

And sustain us with your life-giving Spirit.

Blessed be the Lord day by day:

The God of our salvation who bears our burdens.

We confess our sins.

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.

Lord, hear us and help us.

We have lived by the light of our own eyes,
as faithless and not believing.

In your mercy, forgive us.

Lord, hear us and help us.

We have lived for this world alone,

and doubted our home in heaven.

In your mercy, forgive us.

Lord, hear us and help us.

May the God of love and power

forgive you and free you from your sins,

heal and strengthen you by his Spirit,

and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord. ***Amen.***

Praise

O Lord, open our lips:

And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Let us worship the Lord:

All praise to his name.

Gloria in Excelsis

Glory to God in the highest,

and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King,

almighty God and Father,

we worship you, we give you thanks,

we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,

Lord God, Lamb of God,

you take away the sin of the world:

have mercy on us;

you are seated at the right hand of the Father:

receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One,

you alone are the Lord,

you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,

with the Holy Spirit,

in the glory of God the Father.

Amen.

The word of God

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd, 'Let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.' Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and to the other apostles, 'Brothers, what should we do?' Peter said to them, 'Repent, and be baptized 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. For the promise is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him.' And he testified with many other arguments and exhorted them, saying, 'Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.' So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added to their number. (Acts 2:14a, 36–41)

A reading from the gospel Luke.

On that same day, two of the disciples were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' Jesus asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see Jesus.' Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he

interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized Jesus; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!' Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread. (Luke 24:13–35)

A reflection by Revd Joy Cousans, Vicar at St Mary's

Last week in the Bible reading from John's gospel, we heard of the disciples in lockdown, fearful and traumatised by the events of Jesus' death. Jesus met with them and that encounter transformed them. Thomas declared 'My Lord and my God'. In today's reading from Luke it is still Easter Sunday and two of Jesus' disciples are travelling the seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus. One is Cleopas and the other an unnamed disciple, possibly his wife. Luke describes them as 'looking sad'. They are discussing the disturbing events of Jesus' arrest, trial and crucifixion and trying to make sense of them. Their world has been turned upside down.

Perhaps some of these feelings resonate with us. We may feel disillusioned and discouraged by our present situation. We may feel alone, cut adrift from the usual pattern of our lives, unable to see our friends and family, unable to meet together for worship and fellowship. In their confusion and distress, Jesus draws alongside the two travellers and helps them to look at things afresh. Although they don't recognise Jesus and think he is a stranger, they are enabled to share with him their deepest fears and all that is troubling them. They pour out the story of the events of the last few days: how they thought Jesus was sent by God yet he had been condemned to death and crucified. How the women claimed they had seen Jesus and that he was alive again but they have severe doubts about the women's story. Jesus walks and talks with them. He discusses the Jewish Scriptures and explains all that has happened in the context of God's overarching plan of salvation. 'Then beginning with Moses and all the

prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.' (Luke 24:27)

Cleopas and his friend still do not recognize Jesus, but they long to spend more time with him and urge him to stay for the night with them in Emmaus. It is as they share a meal together, when Jesus gives thanks to God and breaks bread, that they recognize him. That moment of breaking bread has echoes of other meals with Jesus. It recalls the feeding of the five thousand and more especially the Last Supper. Through his actions of blessing and breaking bread, they know he is Jesus. And at that point he disappears from their sight. Despite the late hour and the distance they have already travelled, the two disciples immediately set off back to Jerusalem to share their joyful news with the disciples there. By this time, Jesus has also appeared to Simon Peter as well as to the women. Increasingly, his followers are daring to believe that the astounding news is true: Jesus is risen from the dead.

By encountering Jesus, by speaking and listening to him, his first followers came to believe that he was alive and that he would be with them whatever they faced. I believe Jesus is with us in our experience of lockdown. He is alongside us, ready to listen as we pour out our own feelings to him as did the couple on the road to Emmaus. One of the ways we can experience Jesus with us is through prayer.

St Ignatius taught a way of praying in which you imagine that you are part of a gospel story. The companions walking to Emmaus, meeting and sharing with Jesus is a good story to use. We prayerfully imagine that we are there in the story, able to share with Jesus all that we find difficult, confusing and worrying. We then prayerfully listen to Jesus' response as he gives words of encouragement and hope. If you are interested in finding out more about this way of praying, a good place to start is Margaret Silf's book 'Landmarks' (DLT 1998)

What does Easter mean? It means good news. The good news that Jesus was raised to life on the third day and that he appeared to his followers. We too can have a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. We too can declare as Thomas did 'My lord and my God'. We too can experience transformation in our lives. The other good news is that although we are apart, we still belong together as a community of Christian people. We can support one another through prayer, through our worship and through acts of kindness and deeds of friendship. It may be a phone call, or a card or letter to someone on

their own. Above all, Easter means hope. This hope is not dependent on circumstances but on the message of good news. That Jesus is risen from the dead and that through him we can have eternal life as we trust in him. Alleluia. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Our faith

Let us declare our faith in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Christ died for our sins
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he was buried;
he was raised to life on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures;
afterwards he appeared to his followers,
and to all the apostles:
this we have received,
and this we believe. Amen.**

Prayers of intercession- Eileen Bennett

Lord help us to trust you, help us to know that you are with us, help us to believe that nothing can separate us from your love revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord we pray for our Bishops, our Vicar and Curate, our Reader, Churchwardens and PCC. For our Queen and her family, for those in authority, for our National Health Service and carers, and wisdom to those in Government who make decisions on our behalf.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

In our prayers for the parish we remember those who live in Dagnall, in Dunstable Road, Nelson Road and Hamilton Close, and in our own church, the pastoral ministry in the community, and in the wider world, Food Banks and all who run them and those who access them. In our prayers for the church this week we pray for The Church in Ireland and in our own Diocese, All Saints Church, Hockerill in the Deanery of Bishops Stortford.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We pray for the lonely, the sick and the dying, the isolated, for those who are frightened and anxious, for the stressed, hungry, and those living in poverty. For the bereaved, the hospital patients and for those who are in fear of dying. We pray for ourselves, our friends and families, that we may support each other in this time of crisis and

grant us generosity, empathy, selflessness and thoughtfulness and to appreciate and give thanks and praise for everything that you have given us.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We remember those who have recently died, and those whose year's mind falls at this time and we bring to mind those on our sick list, and in our thoughts today and we ask that you grant them healing in body mind and spirit. Comfort and heal the sufferers from the virus and restore them to health and strength; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

Rejoicing in the fellowship of The Blessed Virgin Mary, our patron saint, and all your saints, we commend ourselves and all Christian people to your unfailing love.

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

A prayer for the coronavirus outbreak

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

We join together with Christians throughout the world in the prayer that Jesus taught us.

**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.**

Conclusion

The Collect for the day

Almighty Father,
who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples
with the sight of the risen Lord:
give us such knowledge of his presence with us,
that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life
and serve you continually in righteousness and truth;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

God has claimed us as his own.
He has brought us out of darkness.
He has made us light to the world.
Alleluia. Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

We end with the words of the Grace, an ancient Christian prayer of fellowship, remembering that although we are not together in person, nothing can separate us from the love of God found in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
and the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all evermore. Amen.**



If you would like us to pray for you during this time of stress and anxiety, please leave a prayer request on the website email address or contact Joy (vicar@stmaryseatonbray.org.uk)

Reverend Joy Cousans
Reverend Stephen Burge

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