

Reflection Easter 2

We are living in strange times at the present. When I read the Gospel for this Sunday, there seem to be a number of parallels with the situation in which we find ourselves now. We are in lockdown; we mustn't leave our homes except for very specific reasons. There is a lot of fear for many, especially the very vulnerable. Uncertainty about the future is great. We read of the disciples being locked into the house for fear of the Jews. They were in lockdown. They feared being identified and suffering the same fate as their Lord, for being his followers. They are also all in doubt and uncertainty, not least Thomas who is not present at Jesus's first appearance. Can they believe what Mary has told them? Can we believe everything we hear in the news? We hear the leader of a certain nation calling everything 'fake news' except that which supports his take on things.

When Jesus appears the disciples do believe, all except Thomas who is not there who says he won't believe until he can touch Jesus wounds. A week later Jesus appears again, and Thomas does believe, without touching him. The truth is that Jesus is risen; He has conquered death. He gives us his life giving Spirit as he gave it to the disciples. He carried them through difficult times, and he carries us now in these times of danger and uncertainty when we follow Him in faith.

Phil Baker

Church of England coronavirus prayer Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy. Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

NEXT SUNDAY 26th April 2020

SERVICES Public worship suspended



READINGS

(NT): Acts 2:14a, 36-41

NT: 1 Peter 1:17-23

GOSPEL: Luke 24:13-35

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St Thomas, Exeter

Sunday 19th April 2020

Easter 2

The **Community Larder** has now started, and there will be a drop-off point again next week at St Thomas Hall on Wednesday and Friday (22 & 24 April), between 10 and 12. Toothpaste, shower gel and rice are in short supply. You could use this as part of a walk, but do not take any unnecessary risks. To help social distancing, people will be asked to go in via the main door and out through a Fire Exit, and leave goods in the main hall. Collections are from St Thomas Methodist on Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays 10-12, from next week. People need a clergy referral to access this, so if you know anybody who is running short of supplies/money, please let me know. This might apply especially to families whose adults were working but cannot now.

Worship is a collective activity, which we are all missing. We are thinking of ways of engaging a bit more, so if you have a prayer, bible reading, or thought which you would like to share, anonymously or not, please speak to a one of the staff as part of the regular contact, or do ring the Parish Office number and leave a message. We will publish these in due course.

Fr David



Collect

Almighty Father, you have given your only Son to die for our sins and to rise again for our justification: grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness that we may always serve you in pureness of living and truth; through the merits of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Acts of the Apostles 2.14a, 22-32

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. "You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know— this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. For David says concerning him, 'I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken; therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced; moreover my flesh will live in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One experience corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; you will make me full of gladness with your presence.' "Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne. Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying, 'He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh experience corruption.' This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.

1 Peter 1.3-9

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire— may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

John 20.19-31

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

Post-Communion Prayer

Lord God our Father, through our Saviour Jesus Christ you have assured your children of eternal life and in baptism have made us one with him: deliver us from the death of sin and raise us to new life in your love, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen

NOTICES

As with the last two Sundays, it would be good if we try to say our prayers in some form **together at 10.30** on Sunday mornings, and to be intentionally holding each other up to God, and praying for the wider community of St Thomas. I encourage you to try this.

Parish Finance Please, please keep your envelopes and any other giving safely. More on this later, but you might like to know that we are losing c£1000 per month from the closure of the hall.