

Parish of St. Thomas, Apostle & Martyr, Ipswich

17th May 2020 - Sixth Sunday of Easter

Collect:

Risen Christ, by the lakeside you renewed your call to your disciples: help your Church to obey your command and draw the nations to the fire of your love, to the glory of God the Father.

Amen.

Psalm 66.8-end

8 Bless our God, O peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard,

9 who has kept us among the living, and has not let our feet slip.

10 For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried.

11 You brought us into the net; you laid burdens on our backs;

12 you let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; yet you have brought us out to a spacious place.

13 I will come into your house with burnt offerings; I will pay you my vows,

14 those that my lips uttered and my mouth promised when I was in trouble.

15 I will offer to you burnt offerings of fatlings, with the smoke of the sacrifice of rams; I will make an offering of bulls and goats.

16 Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for me.

17 I cried aloud to him, and he was extolled with my tongue.

18 If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.

19 But truly God has listened; he has given heed to the words of my prayer.

20 Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me.



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." (Acts 17.22-31)

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John (14.15-21)

“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 forever. 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.”

This is the gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, o Christ.



Reflection:

What does it mean to be in relationship with someone? It can happen in all sorts of

ways. You don't have to share a house with that person, or see each other every week, but perhaps you do. You could live far away, and only talk every few months, but that could still be a really deep bond. Maybe someone springs to mind when you see a certain flower, or you eat food you know they love, or you do something you last did together. Perhaps you've never met at all, but are online friends, pen friends, or talk on the phone.

Our gospel reading today is all about relationship, between Jesus, God, the Spirit, and us. And Jesus here assures us that we are all interwoven in a real, lasting relationship. When I was young, I sometimes used to think to myself, 'it isn't fair - the disciples got to see Jesus in real life and listen to him, and ask him questions. They had it so much easier...' But actually, being with Jesus in real life didn't mean that the disciples understood everything (in fact, they often seemed to completely miss the point!), nor did it mean that they were closer to God, or better at following Jesus' commandments. The disciples were very privileged, and I'm sure it was amazing to spend those years with Jesus, even through the confusing and heartbreaking bits. But what we have is just as special. Because, as Jesus explains in our reading, 'I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you'. The gift of the Spirit, which Jesus here calls the Advocate, means that we are always in relationship with God. We are being invited to share in what it is to dwell with God. It's like a divine dance, that we are part of. Through the gift of the Spirit, we are joined with God forever. And not only that, but we are joined with all Christians across the world, even the ones we will never meet or even hear of. We are drawn together into one circle of relationship.

So even today, as we are missing meeting together as a church family, as we miss being able to see people we love, remember that relationships are stronger than that, that they are powerful, and that they endure. Remember that we are one with each other and one with God, through Jesus' gift of the Spirit.

It really is remarkable. Even though we have never seen Jesus with our eyes, we know him in our hearts. And although we haven't seen the glory of God revealed on a mountaintop, we see God's glory shining in each other, as we keep Jesus' commandment to love one another. We share in a godly togetherness, a divine spark! And this is what we can hold onto, as we continue to journey through these strange and turbulent times, just like the first Christians in these early days of wonder after the resurrection. - Rev Cat

May you may know the Peace of the risen Christ, who came and stood among his disciples and said 'Peace be with you'. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.

Alleluia! The peace of the risen Christ be always with you.

Here are the words of two hymns you may like to sing or pray this week

*A new commandment I give unto you:
that you love one another
as I have loved you,
that you love one another
as I have loved you.*

By this shall all know that you are my disciples:
if you have love one for another.

By this shall all know that you are my disciples:
if you have love one for another.

You are my friends if you do what I command
you.

Without my help you can do nothing.

You are my friends if you do what I command
you.

Without my help you can do nothing.

I am the true vine, my Father is the gard'ner.

Abide in me: I will be with you.

I am the true vine, my Father is the gard'ner.

Abide in me: I will be with you.

True love is patient, nor arrogant nor
boastful;

Love bears all things, love is eternal.

True love is patient, nor arrogant nor
boastful;

Love bears all things, love is eternal.

1. All heav'n declares
the glory of the risen Lord.
Who can compare
with the beauty of the Lord?
For ever he will be
the Lamb upon the throne.
I gladly bow the knee
and worship him alone.

2. I will proclaim
the glory of the risen Lord,
who once was slain
to reconcile us to God.
For ever you will be
the Lamb upon the throne;
I gladly bow the knee,
and worship you alone.

Call this number ↓ for free, for a
greeting from Justin Welby, Archbishop of
Canterbury! Then listen to hymns being
sung, prayers, or reflections.

Give it a go, it's a lovely way to
worship from home!



A free phone line of hymns,
reflections and prayers

If you would like to chat, please give us a ring:

Revd Jutta: 07958 360 564 Rev Cat 07530 412988 Roger Elmer 07810 274586
Sylvia Dickerson 07903 739487 Malcolm Gibbs 07906 663530 Mary Bullass 625135
Gloria Elmer 745590 Rev Jackie Sears 07962172639 Revd Pat Wright 01473 464748

Please pray for:

Those with chronic or long-term illness: Eric Dickerson, Rosemary, Adam, Jenny and Andrew Barfield, Kathy Steele, Frank D., Andrew Derrett, Peggy (Covid 19), Pat, Natacha, Christine, Stephen, Julie, Samantha, Jill, Rex, Molly Johansen, Margaret Christian, Marion (Val's sister-in-law)

Those undergoing treatment or currently ill: Mike Harding, Emily & family (9 years old with cancer), Juliet Adams, Matthew Hare, Gloria Elmer, Helen Harlow, Jean Dominy, Leslie Bloomfield, Pete Tanced, Val's niece & Michelle (Covid19), Katie (cancer), Peter (suspected cancer), Hazel Messenger (cancer, very ill), Jim (severe back pain), Richard (June's nephew)

All who are affected by the Coronavirus, their families and friends, in the UK and around the world; **for all health care staff, esp. those in care homes, and all who are working long hours in the service of others.** For all who are living alone and self-isolating. All affected by domestic violence.

For the work of Christian Aid and other aid agencies, supporting victims of conflict and natural disaster around the world, support agencies and peacemakers.

Those who have recently died, and their families mourning their loss, among them: *Donald Pratt, Phyllis Meadows, Fr Daniel Gooderham* (curate at St Thomas from 1962-64; aged 95), Ian, R.I.P.



Birthdays this week:

Jenny Barfield (20th)

Pray for members of the St Thomas Congregation
(each week we will include a dozen names)

Edith, Gareth (Wed Euch), Eric, June (Baker) & family, Alan Banks, Jenny & Andrew, Michelle and Stephen, Jenny & Gerry, Pearl, Margaret & Leslie

Online Church Services:

Sunday 17 May - 10am ZOOM Worship

Tuesday 19 May - 7.30pm LiveStream

**Meditation on facebook/
StThomasPilgrimCommunity**

Thursday 21 May: Ascension Day

12 noon Livestream Eucharist

5 pm Evening Prayer

<https://www.facebook.com/stedscathedral/>

Sunday Worship Video & other Worship resources on the church facebook page.

Church Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/sthomasipswich/>

Church website:

<http://sthomasipswich.org.uk/>

Christian Aid Week 10-16 May

Love never fails. Coronavirus impacts all of us. But love unites us all.

Contacts:

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Jutta's days off are: Fridays & Saturdays

Assistant Curate: Revd Cat Connolly

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Cat's day off: Mondays

Thank you to everyone who has supported this –it's not too late to contribute:

Go their website: <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week>

Or send a cheque (payable to St Thomas PCC) to our Treasurer, Emma Knight, Rookery Nook, Bullen Lane, Bramford, Ipswich, IP8 4JD, to say it's for *Christian Aid week*. Emma will collect the cheques and pass the money on to Christian Aid.