

John 20:19-31. Early on Easter Day, Mary Magdalene has discovered that Jesus' body is missing from the tomb; the door is open, so it looks as though someone has stolen it (v. 1). She has seen a man standing near the tomb. When he speaks to her, she recognizes him as Jesus. She has told the disciples: "I have seen the Lord" (v. 18). Later the same day, Jesus joins the disciples, gathered behind locked doors. He shows them that he is the one who was crucified (v. 20). Jesus confers on "the disciples" (not including Thomas, but perhaps a group larger than the ten) "peace" (vv. 19, 21) and "the Holy Spirit" (v. 22). As God "breathed" life into Adam, the proto-human, so Jesus now breathes the new, spiritual, life of recreated humanity into his followers. Aided by the Spirit, they continue Jesus' judicial role in the world, forgiving the sins of the faithful and holding others blameworthy ("retain", v. 23) for their actions. Thomas is expected to believe without having seen, but he demands: show me the evidence! (v. 25) The next Sunday, the community gathers again (v. 26). Upon seeing, Thomas makes the most complete affirmation of faith of anyone in the gospel (v. 29). Henceforth the faith of all Christians in all ages will rest on the testimony of the first believers. Vv. 30-31 tell us John's purpose in writing the book. His eyewitness account is intended to help us, who were not witnesses of Jesus' life, death, resurrection and ascension to "come to believe" and thus "have life in his name", eternal life. © 1996-2020 Chris Haslam

~ Notices ~

Ukraine Appeal clareanglicans.ie or: www.christianaid.ie

Turkey and Syria Earthquake relief - Bishop's appeal
www.bishopsappeal.ireland.anglican.org/give

Future concerts:

Genie Ensemble – Friday 5th May – 7.30pm - St Columba's

Jaskane Trio – Sat 10th June – 5.00pm – St Columba's, Ennis

Living the Questions Course – sign-up sheet in church

Meditation- St Columba's – Every Thurs 7.30pm- church room.

Lectio Divina – please let me know if you would be interested in forming a group who would meet to read and reflect upon scripture together. See sign-up sheet.

Book Club - 1st (or 2nd) Tuesday of every month – please ask Sue or Carolyn (St C) or Clare (SP) for details.

Confirmation - Please let the Rector know if you are thinking of becoming confirmed in 2020 – I have three names so far.

Easter Vestries:

Kilnasoolagh – Tuesday 18th April at 7.30pm
Ennis/Spanish Point - Sun 23rd April after 11.30am service

Invitation– I am being installed as Canon at St Mary's Cathedral Limerick, confirmed for Sunday May 7th at 4.00pm.

Website: clareanglicans.ie

YouTube: www.youtube.com/c/clareanglicans

Facebook: www.facebook.com/clare.anglicans

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2nd Sunday of Easter 2023

(Year A)

Readings and Hymns

Collect

Risen Christ, for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred: open the doors of our hearts, that we may seek the good of others and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace, to the praise of God the Father. **Amen**

Suggested Hymns

In conjunction with the online service you might like to view these hymns on YouTube:

1) Christ is alive (260)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Rgr3E6dxlg>

2) O love that will not let me go (592)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nt69WDtYNLo>

3) Forth in thy name o Lord I go (567)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUVAbXgJyqQ>

Acts 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.

Psalms 16

Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge.

I say to the Lord, 'You are my Lord;

I have no good apart from you.'

As for the holy ones in the land, they are the noble, in whom is all my delight.

Those who choose another god multiply their sorrows; their drink-offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names upon my lips.

The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.

The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage.

I bless the Lord who gives me counsel;

in the night also my heart instructs me.
I keep the Lord always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices;
my body also rests secure.
For you do not give me up to Sheol,
or let your faithful one see the Pit.
You show me the path of life.
In your presence there is fullness of joy;
in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.

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 honour 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.

Commentary

Acts 2:14a,22-32 Luke has described the coming of the Holy Spirit, a divine intervention in the world, as best he can in human terms: it was "like the rush of a violent wind" (v. 2) and "divided tongues, as of fire" (v. 3). Now Peter, on behalf of the other "eleven" (v. 14) apostles (Matthias has been chosen to replace Judas) has begun interpreting the event to them, "devout Jews from every nation" (v. 5). He has recalled

God's prophecy made through Joel (vv. 17-21): that "in the last days" there will be cosmic signs (including "fire"), then "I [God] will pour out my Spirit", and then people will "prophecy" (probably enthusiastically share the faith) and salvation will be offered to all "who [call] ... on the name of the Lord". The "last days" are the time of the Church (1:6-8). Having demonstrated from Joel that the end times are at hand, and therefore salvation is also at hand, Peter now demonstrates how we have access to salvation. First he shows that Jesus is the Messiah, from Psalm 16 (the quotation in vv. 25-28). Jesus, "a man attested ... by God with deeds of power" (v. 22) was turned over by Jews to the Romans to be executed – as part of God's plan for saving humankind. But God did not "abandon" (v. 27) him (permanently) to death. In the resurrection, Peter sees fulfilment of a prophecy of David that "your Holy One" would not experience "corruption" (or death). David was not speaking about himself because we can see "his tomb" (v. 29) today! So he must have been speaking of Jesus, who was raised from the dead (v. 32). Therefore, Jesus the Messiah gives access to salvation, and the way to be saved is to repent, and be baptised in his name (v. 38). Peter's sermon is the crux of the message of Acts: the Spirit has been poured out to give power to God's people; the end times are here; the Messiah has appeared; and a message of salvation must be preached so that those who hear may receive new life in Christ.

Psalm 16 The NRSV translation is significantly different from Peter's quotation in Acts. He quotes the then-current Greek translation loosely (probably from memory); it takes liberties with the Hebrew original. Vv. 1-2 summarize the psalm. The speaker probably takes refuge in worship in the Temple; he sees God as supreme good (v. 2). He takes the members of the faithful community, "the holy ones" (v. 3) as models for living; he will not worship with those who choose pagan gods – and not even associate with them (v. 4). His fate and his future ("portion and ... cup", v. 5) are in God's hands. The author compares his devotion to that of a Levite. For other tribes, there were "boundary lines" (v. 6) between tribal territories in Israel, but Levites received no land; the psalmist's "chosen portion" (v. 5) is God himself. God gives him "counsel" (v. 7) and deep understanding ("heart"). God teaches him his ways. Because God supports him, he will not stumble ("be moved", v. 8) in following godly ways. V. 10 is unclear: it may refer to immortality or just to living a full lifetime. "Forevermore" (v. 11) may be meant literally but is more likely to mean throughout the rest of my life.

1 Peter 1:3-9 The author has addressed this letter to those "chosen and destined" (v. 2) by the Father and "sanctified" by the Holy Spirit in order "to be obedient to Jesus Christ" and to share in the forgiveness available through Christ's sacrificial death (v. 2). ("Blessed be ...", v. 3, is a traditional Jewish prayer form.) The Father, in his mercy, has caused us to be born again ("new birth", baptism) into a hope which is very much alive, "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ". Our rebirth is also into "an inheritance" (v. 4): in the Old Testament, the inheritance was principally Palestine, but for the Church, it is heavenly. Palestine was lost in war, but our inheritance is "imperishable", indestructible, free from sin ("undefiled") and never lost. We, through our trust in God ("faith", v. 5) are guarded by God's power – for "salvation" – already accomplished but to be shown to all at the end of time ("last time"). In all of this (v. 6), the readers rejoice even if they have had to suffer "trials" (ostracism or persecution). These verify their faithfulness to God – as the purity of gold is tested by heating it. Such fidelity will be rewarded when Christ comes (to judge) at the end of time (v. 7). Their faith is such that they love him, believe in him and rejoice, even though they (unlike Peter) have never seen him (v. 8). Why? Because they are aware that they are being saved now – this being a logical and temporal goal of trust in God.