**Morning Praise @ Home 24th April 2022**

**Opening prayer**

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and**

**repent.** **Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us**

**from our sin.** **Renew a right spirit within us** **and restore us to the joy of your salvation,** **through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image

to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Bible Readings Acts 5: 27 – 32 John 20: 19 – end

**Reflection from Ruth**

“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 … ” We might expect that the disciples would be celebrating by now. Instead, we find them huddled behind locked doors. John says that the doors were locked for fear of the Jews. Since the disciples themselves are Jews, of course, the statement cannot mean that they are afraid of Jews in general. Certainly they are afraid of the Jewish leaders who were behind the plot to kill Jesus. They are likely afraid for their lives. Jesus, however, will not be stopped by locked doors. He who is himself the “door” of the sheep (10:7) comes right through those locked doors and appears in the midst of his frightened sheep. He comes not to confront his disciples with their failures, but to grant them peace. His greeting, “Peace be with you,” carries the sense of the Hebrew greeting “shalom,” a blessing that connotes more than tranquillity, but a deep and holistic sense of well-being — the kind of peace the world cannot give (14:27). Then Jesus shows his disciples his hands and his side, so that they can see that it is he, the real, flesh-and-blood, crucified Jesus — not a ghost or apparition — who is before them. The disciples respond by rejoicing in seeing the Lord, just as Jesus had told them that they would (16:22). Again Jesus speaks a blessing of peace and tells them, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” The disciples are sent to continue Jesus’ mission of revealing God to the world. They will not be left on their own in this daunting task. Jesus had promised to send another Advocate (paraklétos, one who is “called alongside” someone) who would be with them forever (14:16-17). Now he fulfils that promise. In an act of new creation (cf. Genesis 2:7), he breathes into his disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit (20:22). This Advocate or “Spirit of truth” will teach them, remind them of all that Jesus has said to them, and guide them into all truth (14:26; 16:12-14). Jesus is not giving his disciples some special power to decide whose sins will be forgiven and whose will not. Rather, he is further specifying what it means to be sent, to make known the love of God that Jesus himself has made known. As people come to know and abide in Jesus, they will be “released” from their sins. If, however, those sent by Jesus fail to bear witness, people will remain stuck in their unbelief; their sins will be “retained” or “held onto”. The stakes of this mission are very high indeed.

For some reason (we are not told why), Thomas was absent and missed out on this first Sunday evening encounter with the risen Jesus. Although he has gained a bad reputation as “doubting Thomas,” he asks for nothing more than the others have already received: to see Jesus, wounds and all. The wonder of this story is that Jesus shows up again one week later to provide exactly what Thomas needs. And Thomas responds with the highest Christological confession of anyone in the Gospel. His is not simply a doctrinal confession, but a statement of trust and relationship: “My Lord and my God!” (20:28). Jesus’ response to Thomas (20:29) is not a rebuke, but rather a blessing for all those who will come to believe without having had the benefit of a flesh-and-blood encounter with Jesus. Indeed, the author goes on to declare that this is the very purpose of this book, addressing all of us who have not seen but have heard this testimony: “But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name” (20:30-31).

**Affirmation of faith**

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ

known in the world? **We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

**Prayers of intercession led by Philip**

Lord amid all that is so wrong in how we treat each other in this world, and indeed how we treat the planet itself, we thank you that we have been able to enjoy the natural beauty of our countryside this week in the Spring sunshine; the new-born lambs playing in the fields, the wonderful blossom on the trees and the revitalising warmth of the sun. We thank you for your creation.

We thank you for the calming and restorative effect it can have on us at a time when there is so much hatred and anger between people. Remind us Lord that you are the creator of all things and all things come from you. Forgive us for our neglect of nature, for taking it for granted, for abusing our natural resources and damaging our world.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**.

Lord we pray for the people of Ukraine. For the families forced to flee their homes, for teachers and workmen who have had to take up arms, who see terrible sights. We pray for those sheltering from bombs and missiles. We pray for the government of Ukraine and thank you for their inspiring courage in the face of the potential annihilation of their country and culture.

We pray for all those others around the world caught up in conflict, much of it less reported in the West. For all those families who have suffered loss and been forced to flee. Comfort them Lord and soften the hearts of those capable of helping them and who decide how they will be treated.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**.

Father we thank you for the opportunity to remember and reflect over the Easter period. We ask that we will continue to consider how your Son was given to us and lived among us, only to die for our sins on a cross. Help us to ensure we remember that we can put all our mistakes, all the wrong things we have thought, said or done, intentional or otherwise, on to you, knowing that we don’t have to carry the guilt or the baggage of our lives constantly on our shoulders every day.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for this church during the current vacancy. We ask for your encouragement to all those who are working to help find a new vicar. We ask for your guidance and wisdom Lord in all we do in our discussions as a church and with the Diocese. We ask that you will touch the heart of the person you want to come here as our vicar. Help us to trust in you that the right person will be found in your time, to your ends.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord we pray for any we know who are unwell and in need of your comfort, physically or emotionally.

Let us pause for a moment as we consider any known to us in need of our prayers at the moment.

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

**The Lord’s Prayer** As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

***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 today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be,

that you may live and work to his praise and glory,

and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit

be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen**