



2nd Sunday of Easter

12th April 2026

He is Risen!! Therefore, do not be afraid!

The Lord is Risen, He is Risen indeed!!! We are people of the resurrection, we walk in the light of Jesus Christ. This phrase is still very dear to our hearts following the forty days of Lent as we journeyed with Jesus in the wilderness, as we followed Him to the cross.

We have now entered the fifty day season of Eastertide, between Easter and Pentecost, when we will encounter the resurrected Jesus through the eyes of His disciples. The disciples were gathered together on that first day of the week, the doors were locked because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders.

As we heard in the Gospel reading, Jesus came and stood among them and said "Peace be with you", He showed them His hands and His side, and again said "Peace be with you". As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you. He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

We all know the story of Thomas who doubted Jesus' resurrection and did not believe because he had not seen Jesus that first night, so a week later Jesus returns to the house. The disciples were gathered again with the doors locked, and Jesus appeared to them and said "Peace be with you".

Thomas then saw Jesus' hands and side and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" And Jesus said, "because you have seen me you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

The end of our Gospel reading says, "Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

Just as Jesus presented Himself to his friends following His resurrection, may we encounter him afresh this Eastertide, renew us and release us into the joy of resurrection life.

We all have different ways of meeting up with Jesus I'm sure. As we journey through this season we will meet with Him through His disciples and through our personal relationship with Jesus and our corporate worship as we gather together we can share our stories and encourage each other.

It can be a complicated journey especially for those of us who were not necessarily brought up in the faith. We do rely on faith and our belief system in many situations as we are often faced with miraculous stories that make us question and doubt.

We need to remember that the Bible is a bit like a library, a collection of different books, 66 in the Protestant tradition and 73 in the Catholic tradition. The books of the bible were written by over forty different authors over a period of roughly 1500 years. Although published together in a single volume, the Bible is better understood as a library or anthology of diverse literature with widely differing purposes, ranging from historical records to personal correspondence.

Books like Genesis, Exodus and Acts are designed to record history, recount the origin of Israel, and narrate the life of Jesus and the early church. Books such as Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes address philosophical questions about suffering, the meaning of life and practical daily wisdom. Then we have the Psalms, a collection of songs and hymns used in worship.

Leviticus and Deuteronomy provide specific legal, ceremonial, and moral codes for the nation of Israel.

Then we have books such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel; they are messages from God calling people back to obedience and warning of judgement. In the Epistles which are letters in the New Testament, eg, Romans, Galatians etc., they are written by leaders like Paul to specific churches or individuals to address local problems, teach doctrine and provide practical instruction.

The book of Revelation uses rich imagery and symbols to explain God's control over history and the future end times.

Even books that cover similar topics often have different purposes based on their intended audience. The Gospels recount the life of Jesus but with different focuses, Matthew highlights Jesus as the king of the Jews while Mark highlights him as a servant. Letters like 1 Corinthians were written to solve specific conflicts, while Romans is a more systematic explanation of theological principles.

Despite different purposes and styles, the collection is seen as having a consistent overarching narrative of creation, fall, redemption and restoration.

An amazing book that lays the foundation for our Christian journey, to be read often and shared by all.

So back to our Gospel for today, I can understand why the disciples and especially Thomas struggled with Jesus' resurrection; what would we have said? I know I probably would have been a doubting Thomas, the whole story of the Passion, Jesus' teaching and miracles just turned their belief systems upside down, not to mention the difficulties created by the Jewish authorities. Jesus' disciples and friends had no idea how this amazing story will end, beginning at the very birth of Jesus, it really is an amazing story that kept evolving in ways that nobody expected, despite the fact that the Old Testament continually refers to Jesus coming into the world.

From time to time we all struggle with doubt, especially during times of war, unrest, and all the suffering, death and destruction that comes with it. We need to pray for more than peace in our troubled world, we pray for the peace that our Lord gives, a peace that is beyond our understanding, a calmness, a feeling that God is indeed with us.

We need to spend time with God when we pray, we need to meditate and reflect in silence on all of the things that are troubling us.

God knows how we feel, he knows our thoughts, our worries and concerns, by spending time in silence, we allow ourselves to be calm and concise in our intercessions.

As we approach prayer, we need to firstly give thanks to God, we do have many things to be thankful for, friends, family, food and shelter, so many things in this country. Our focus then needs to be on seeking divine protection, peace and strength, rather than just victory. Effective prayers include interceding for victims, refugees, and leaders, praying for the many volunteers and agencies that provide food, water, medicines etc., praying for the softening of hearts that we find disturbing and finding comfort in faith.

Our prayers are not necessarily all about us and how we feel in any given situation, we look beyond ourselves and focus on others who are suffering in tragic situations.

It is a time for honest lament, urgent pleas for safety and trusting in a higher power amid fear. We are told repeatedly, do not be afraid. The Angel at the tomb says to the women, "Do not be afraid, He has risen." Jesus said, "Do not be afraid, I am with you always."

In Isaiah the Lord says, "Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand."

Another favourite is from Psalm 27, "The Lord is my light and my salvation - so why should I be afraid ? The Lord is my fortress, protecting me from danger, so why should I tremble ?"

This list of "do not be afraid" verses goes on and on and unfortunately we still don't always grasp it fully. I have some stickers here that say do not be afraid, he is risen. Please take one at the end of the service, take it home, stick it in your car, stick it on your bathroom mirror, stick it on your forehead so that others may see it. Just stick it somewhere so that we are constantly reminded!!

Jesus' crucifixion appears to Jesus' followers as the end, and a disappointing end at that, however, as we already know the ending to this story, it is actually a new beginning and we are filled with joy, love and hope as we move forward together with our Lord as our Saviour, our king and our companion on the journey, freed from the burden of sin.

Prayer from Lectio 365.

Lord Jesus, so many things in the world around me seem to be designed to induce fear and uncertainty. I yield my mind, my emotions, and my will to you. May all in me that feels unclear and messy become a message of hope for others.

Amen.