

# THE SUNDAY SUPPLEMENT

26th April 2020 – Third Sunday of Easter

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Welcome to this week's *Sunday Supplement*. For those who are able, a service of Holy Communion is available on our YouTube channel.

## To get in touch:

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## SUNDAY WORSHIP

This week it is my great pleasure to introduce volunteers into the weekly recording of Holy Communion. Steve Ward (Ulpha) and Stuart Colvin (Kirkby) have kindly contributed readings of a very high quality, for which I am hugely grateful.

If you would like to contribute a recording of a reading, **or the intercessions**, that would be a wonderful contribution. Please get in touch.

An Act of Spiritual Communion can be found on page 4 of this Supplement. It can be used on its own, or in conjunction with the Eucharist on YouTube, if you choose to watch that online.

Daily Morning Prayer (audio only, except Mondays) and, on Sunday, Holy Communion (video) can always be found on our YouTube channel, as follows:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMSD6J4ngi9rCe7kzY66Xfw>

## READINGS & COLLECT

Acts 2:14a, 36-41

I Peter 1:17-23

Luke 24:13-35

Almighty Father,  
who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples  
with the sight of the risen Lord:  
give us such knowledge of his presence with us,  
that we may be strengthened and sustained by his  
risen life  
and serve you continually in righteousness and truth;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## SUNDAY MESSAGE

*Also available as the sermon in our video service.*

There is an important line in our second reading, in which Peter compares our earthly life to one of exile, away from where we are truly meant to be. To his Jewish listeners, this would immediately have conjured up images of the exile in Babylon: the waters by which the Jews wept, when they remembered Zion. All three of our readings this morning have in common the idea of exile.

The image that accompanies our second reading is an imagining of the departure from Jerusalem into exile. You might have wondered what such a dramatic scene was doing there. In the background, we could see the smoke and flame from the sacked city; in the foreground, the cruelty of the enemy soldiers.



Peter isn't trying to say that God has made this world as a cruel exile for us, something to be endured until we get home. On the contrary, this world is God's good creation and it is a gift to us. I have felt that afresh this week as I have driven on my various errands and tasks around the parishes. The image of exile is just that: a comparison. Peter is saying is that this world is full of trials, such that we feel like exiles from the perfection that we grasp for. His assurance is that God walks alongside us and has an eternal rest prepared for us in heaven.

A similar idea is at work in Peter's sermon, of which we heard a portion in the first reading from Acts. "Save

yourself from this corrupt generation,” says Peter. It’s not that the corrupt world needs to be abandoned. Peter isn’t encouraging people away from the world. Rather, through repentance and baptism, he is offering a means of living in this world, with all its gifts, while also being reconciled to God and being assured of the promise of eternity.

We encounter two people in our Gospel reading today who are exiles. Physically, they are exiles from Jerusalem. Emotionally, they are also exiles: bereft and far from God. Who are they, and why do they feel this way?

They are two followers of Jesus, hiking out of Jerusalem on the first Easter morning. One is called Cleopas, the other is unnamed. They are not disciples from the inner circle. They are just ordinary followers of Jesus.

These two disciples have seen Jesus dead and buried. We find them journeying to Emmaus, a place which (appropriately to the mood of the story) is now lost to us. They are leaving Jerusalem behind: perhaps because the Holy City, Zion, seems to have nothing for them any more. Picture them as the figures that accompanied the Gospel reading, but also in that darker scene which accompanied the reading from First Peter.

As they walk, a fellow traveller becomes involved in their discussion. The stranger does not seem to know anything about the events in Jerusalem. The two disciples respond as though their topic of conversation should have been obvious, as though there could be no other: “Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?”. They instruct him about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. But they focus primarily on his death, placing responsibility on the powers that be, “our chief priests and leaders,” for handing him over to be tried, condemned, and crucified. Their hope is expressed in the past tense—they “had hoped” he was the Messiah—the implication being that such hopes are abandoned now. They have no confidence in the present rulers, but they have found no alternative. They are effectively wandering, to the lost Emmaus.

All this despite the amazing things reported by some of the women of their company. These disciples do not seem heartened by the resurrection, but baffled; incapable of adding any interpretation or meaning. They simply report what has happened: Some of the women claimed to have been to the tomb, where they saw angels who told them that Jesus was alive. Other disciples went to the tomb, but no one had seen Jesus. I think that this is the state in which Luke knows that

we, and indeed all his readers since that time, find ourselves. We have heard the reports, but no one has seen Jesus. What do we believe?

Jesus chastises them for being “foolish” and “slow of heart to believe.” He teaches the travellers “the things about himself in all the scriptures”. As he teaches them, they recall later, their hearts begin “burning within” them. When they arrive at Emmaus, they invite the stranger to stay and eat with them. Before the meal, “He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them”, repeating his actions from the Last Supper a few days before. During the meal “their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.” The unbelief of Cleopas and his friend is now gone as they rush back to Jerusalem to tell the others what they have seen, to witness to those who are gathered there.



At the beginning of this story the resurrection is a problem for Cleopas and his friend. What is over is over. The alive are alive and the dead are dead. A dead person coming to life is impossible: one of those things that upsets all one’s expectations. If what the women said was true, that Jesus was alive, it was frightening — that the dead might come back to life.

If it was not true, then other followers of Jesus, in their grief, were losing touch with reality — and that was also frightening.

We have the expression that someone is a “doubting Thomas” from John’s Gospel, but we could equally have an expression “doubting Cleopas” or “doubting whoever that other disciple was.” Or we could have inserted our own name. But something happened, something that broke all the rules of nature and did not make sense.

If the resurrection ceases to be a problem for us, ceases to be a source of incredulity, at least some of the time,

then perhaps we have lost sight of what a miracle God has accomplished.

Most the time, however, the resurrection is not a question but an answer. It becomes so when the resurrection helps account for what one has experienced, as it does for the disciples. It is a conclusion at which one arrives because it is the only one that makes sense. It is a solution that helps explain what has been heard and seen and felt. What we have in this account from the road to Emmaus is the resurrection becoming an answer for the two disciples, as the most sensible way to explain events in their own lives. They were in exile: apart from Jewish society because of their adherence to Jesus; apart from the other believers due to their sense of confusion and loss following the crucifixion.

The resurrection becomes an answer for Cleopas and his friend. And it brings an end to exile. In the same way it can be an answer for us when we feel exiled from the world, or from God. Jesus died not to save us from the world and whisk us off to heaven, but to reconcile the world and ourselves to God, that we should not wander aimlessly, but rush back to the Holy City to tell everyone the Good News. That news includes the discovery that we were not alone after all, because God is with us, walking beside us, and yet (paradoxically) he is just as surely waiting for us at the end of our life's journey.

During the present Easter Season, we may have special reason to feel exiled or alone. Remember that Christ is Risen. On your journey of life, continue to encounter him in prayer, in scripture, in the church and – above all – as on the Emmaus Road, in the face of every stranger you meet.

Alleluia, Christ is Risen!  
**He is Risen Indeed, Alleluia!**

## NOTICES

### Christian Aid Week: 10-16 May

The lockdown is currently extended until 7<sup>th</sup> May, but the overwhelming likelihood is that it will continue (at least in the sense of social distancing) thereafter, which means that it will preclude Christian Aid week in its usual form of services, events and door-to-door collections. However, *Christian Aid Week is not cancelled!*

There will be more information nearer the time, but suffice to say for now that there will be opportunities to pray and worship in support of Christian Aid Week,

as well as virtual quizzes and fundraisers. Watch this space.

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/about-us/christian-aid-week/coronavirus-guidance>

### Community support group

If you need help that you can't get elsewhere, no matter what your age or circumstances, you can email [duddoncommunity@outlook.com](mailto:duddoncommunity@outlook.com) In Kirkby, you can phone Stephen Tudway (01229) 715259 or Linda Dean (01229) 889630. In Broughton and the valleys you can phone Stephen Tudway (01229) 715259 or Selwyn Wright (01229) 716797. We will be pleased to point one of our volunteers in your direction.

## PLEASE PRAY FOR

The family and friends of Christine Nuttall RIP, whose funeral took place at Thorncliffe Crematorium last Friday at 11am.

The family and friends of Graham George RIP, whose funeral will take place in Woodland Churchyard this Monday at 11am.

The family and friends of Norman Rawlinson RIP, whose funeral will take place in Kirkby Churchyard this Wednesday at 1pm.

Rest Eternal grant unto them, O Lord,  
**And let light perpetual shine upon them.**

## CLOSING PRAYER

*Living God,  
your Son made himself known to his disciples  
in the breaking of bread:  
open the eyes of our faith,  
that we may see him in all his redeeming work;  
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. Amen.*



CartoonChurch.com

# AN ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

*You may wish to set aside a space for prayer in front of a cross and/or candle, in a part of the house which is calm and comfortable and perhaps decorated for Easter.*

*The Act of Spiritual Communion is best used at the time of normal church services, or as a personal response after listening to a broadcast or livestreamed service.*

*Guidance appears in italics. You may wish to say aloud the words in bold type.*

## Introduction

*Begin by making the sign of the cross and thinking of those who might otherwise be sitting around you in church.*



**In the name of the Father,  
And of the Son,  
And of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.**

## Reflection

*Human sin disfigures the whole creation, which groans with eager longing for God's redemption. We confess our sin in penitence and faith.*

**God of mercy,  
we acknowledge that we are all sinners.  
We turn from the wrong that we have thought  
and said  
and done,  
and are mindful of all that we have failed to do.  
For the sake of Jesus, who died for us,  
forgive us for all that is past,  
and help us to live each day  
in the light of Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

*May God our Father forgive us our sins and bring us to the eternal joy of his kingdom, where dust and ashes have no dominion.*

## The Word of God

*Read one or more passages of scripture, perhaps the readings set for the day. Sunday readings can be found in the Sunday Supplement. You may wish to read the sermon.*

## Prayer

*Begin with the Collect. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to the needs of the world, our community, family and friends and to the prayers you ought to offer for them.*

*Pray for the whole church of God, for its continuing life and flourishing during the lockdown, for its financial security, and for its reinvigoration. Listen to God to hear where he is at work and where he wants us to follow him.*

*Spend time in silence to reflect on your own circumstances and to feel assured that God is with you.*

*End with the Lord's Prayer:*

**Our Father, who art in heaven... or**

**Our Father in heaven...**

## Prayer for Communion

*This prayer may also be used at the appropriate point while watching a live or recorded service of Holy Communion.*

**Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,  
for all the benefits you have given me,  
all the pains and insults you have borne for me.  
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,  
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.  
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,  
may I know you more clearly,  
love you more dearly,  
and follow you more nearly, day by day.  
Amen.**

*(After the prayer of St Richard of Chichester)*

## Closing prayers

**God, you are everything to us, giving us life,  
filling us with love, and setting us free from sin  
that we might live in you. Accept the work of  
our hands this day, take our lives, give us your  
peace and renew us in the service of Jesus  
Christ our Lord.**

*Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.'*

**The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,  
and keep us in eternal life. Amen.**