

'Spiritual Communion' in the weeks after Easter

*You may wish to find a space for prayer in front of a cross, a candle, or a special place. The words in **bold** you are encouraged to say out loud as worship and prayer.*

Opening Prayer

The Church of which we are members is not defined by the walls of a building but by the Body of Christ of which we are members.

We are joining with Christians everywhere to be nourished by the one who tells us, 'I am the Bread of Life'.

Opening Sentences Reminding us of our Easter Joy

Alleluia. Christ is risen. **He is risen indeed. Alleluia, Alleluia, alleluia.**

I am the first and the last, says the Lord, and the living one;
I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.

Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. **Alleluia.**
He has defeated the powers of death. **Alleluia.**
He turns our sorrow into dancing. **Alleluia.**



Prayers of Preparation and Confession

Almighty God to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen

The world began with chaos and with darkness.
But God spoke with Love and created order and light,

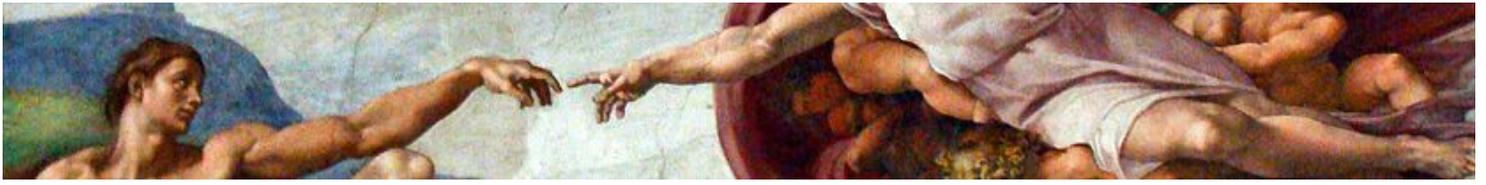
We face the truth that in our 'wisdom' we have invited these primitive forces back into our lives,
We reflect on the times we have experienced chaos and darkness in our lives,
And on how we have too often acted to disrupt order and light in the lives of others.

Silence

Lord, we seek a renewal of the order and light that comes through the true 'Wisdom' of Christ.

You may wish to pray

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.



A reading from the Gospel

Read John 14 v 15-21 (A reflection attached to the end of the service sheet)

Intercessions

Let us pray for the needs of the world, for our local community, and for those close to you.

End with the Lord's Prayer. **Our Father...**

Let us give thanks for the saving death and resurrection of Jesus and ask him to be with us now and in the week ahead.

Lord, as I spend time in your presence I am aware of how blessed I truly am.
I think of the love and laughter in my life, the things which restore order and light,
And I feel grateful.

**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.**

Here are words you may trust.

Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead:

He is our salvation, **our eternal glory.**

If we die with Him, **we shall live with Him;**

If we endure with Him, **we shall reign with Him.**

For he has broken the power of death;

and brought life and immortality through the gospel. (2 Timothy 2.11-13)

Blessing and Peace

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

The Peace of the Lord be always with you



Reflection on John 14 v 15-21

It is a recurring theme in many conversations during 'lock-down' that we have forgotten what day it is .. or indeed what month! And then a further realisation that it really doesn't matter what day it is anyway!

More serious though is the danger that we also forget something of who we are .. or even what we are .. in these troubled times. In particular those on furlough or unable to work find themselves faced with the uncomfortable question of what it means to be unable to fulfill their role in the world. But this is also true of those whose role is built around relationships, whether grandparent or carer or friend, which cannot at this time be expressed in the manner we have been accustomed to. And so we are confronted with the question 'who am I' when unable to do the things which give us our sense of identity.

Whilst the question is widespread at the moment it is not without precedent in human experience (in fact as the Bible reminds us 'there is nothing new under the sun which has not happened before' (Ecclesiastes 1v 9). We might do well to remember this in what we keep being told are 'unprecedented times' causing us further anxiety and stress .. but I digress!). The question of how identity and work, or job, are connected is widespread at present, but it is not new. For those who are, or have ever been unemployed, those who have ever been made redundant, those whose work as homemaker has not been given proper recognition, those who have retired, the relationship between work and identity has already been revealed as false. For when we cease to work we do not cease to **be**. And for many this has never been more challenging than in this time of lock-down.

What can we say about this matter from the passage of scripture we have read this morning. Is there something Jesus is saying in this message to the Church about the family relationships that Christians experience in and with God that offer us an identity beyond simply what we do to make a living?

In the passage Jesus talks about the Holy Spirit, whom he calls the Spirit of Truth. He tells us this Spirit will reveal to us the truth of who we truly are - children of God within whom God lives. Is that not a remarkable truth? That we hold within ourselves a spark of the Divine! Sit quietly for a moment with this thought in the presence of God. Jesus tells us this morning ' He abides with you, and He will be in you'.

How does this knowledge make us feel about ourselves as Christians? How does it affect our sense of identity and who we are? It is not something which changes when we retire or when we change jobs or once our children have left home. This identification as someone who contains something of the Divine within you is beyond the trappings of this world. And it brings with it a deeper sense of self which must not be forgotten when days become blurred and weeks turn into months. You are a child of God and are loved as such.

This truth can not only transform our sense of self worth but also inform all our relationships – because when we believe this about ourselves we will also recognise that within everyone else is that same spark of the Divine. This gives meaning to all we say and do.

This week and beyond let us seek to be children of God in our own hearts and minds and let us tell others that they too have worth because of who we are in the sight of God!