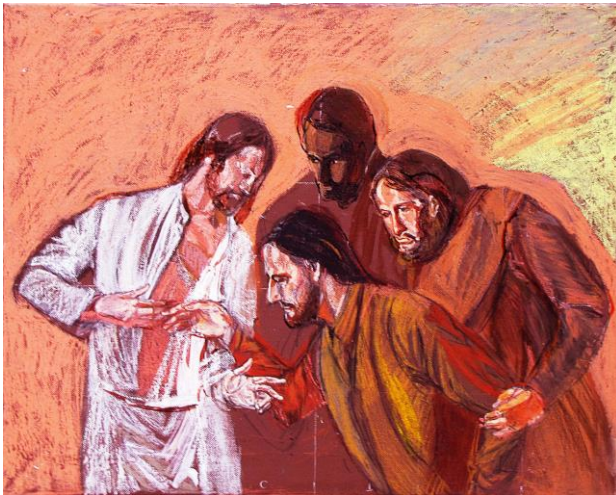


The Parish Church of St Matthew
Northampton

The Second Sunday of Easter

Year B



The incredulity of Thomas and the victory of faith

The Parish Mass

Sunday 7th April 2024

10.15 am

Welcome to St Matthew's Parish Church

This morning's Gospel reading has been referred to as the 'Johannine Pentecost'. But everything is less dramatic than in the Acts of the Apostles. The risen Jesus appears to his apostles, shows them his wounds (these serve to identify him as the same one who died), and bestows peace on them.

Then he inaugurates the mission of the Church. This mission is the exact same mission he received from the Father (a mission accomplished by his death and resurrection): the reconciliation of people with the Father, through the forgiveness of sins. To carry out their mission he gives them the gift of the Spirit and the power to forgive sin. The power over sin is exercised first in baptism, in the eucharist, and in the sacrament of reconciliation.

The various Gospels mention doubt when Jesus appears to his followers after the resurrection. But John dramatizes that doubt in an individual. Paradoxically, however, from the lips of this 'Doubting Thomas' comes the highest profession of faith in the Gospels: 'My Lord and my God'.

Writing for a generation that has not 'seen' the Lord, the evangelist adds the comment: 'blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.' Originally John's Gospel account ended where today's passage ends.

It is our custom to spend some time in quiet preparation before the liturgy begins, and save further conversation until we meet socially for refreshments afterwards. The following prayer, based on today's themes, may be found helpful:

Reflection

Faith is a great gift.

But the story of 'Doubting Thomas' shows just how frail is the human container in which this gift is carried.

It is very difficult to remain a believer on one's own.

We really need to belong to a believing community, whose common faith strengthens the faith of each individual.

The early Christians show us the way to go.

They supported one another by praying and worshipping together, and by offering a loving service to one another.



Order of Service

¶ The Gathering

§ *Stand at the sound of the bell*

Hymn

All

**COME, ye faithful, raise the strain
Of triumphant gladness;
God has brought his Israel
Into joy from sadness;
Loosed from pharaoh's bitter yoke
Jacob's sons and daughters;
Led them with unmoistened foot
Through the Red Sea waters.**

**'Tis the spring of souls today:
Christ has burst his prison,
And from three days' sleep in death
As a sun hath risen;
All the winter of our sins,
Long and dark, is flying
From his light, to whom we give
Laud and praise undying.**

**Now the queen of seasons, bright
With the day of splendour,
With the royal feast of feasts,
Comes its joy to render;
Comes to glad Jerusalem,
Who with true affection
Welcomes in unwearied strains
Jesu's resurrection.**

**Neither might the gates of death,
Nor the tomb's dark portal,
Nor the watchers, nor the seal,
Hold thee as a mortal;
But today amidst thine own
Thou didst stand, bestowing
That, thy peace, which evermore
Passeth human knowing.**

Words *Aisomen pantas laai* John of Damascus (c.675-749)
translated John Mason Neale (1818-1866)

Music St John Damascene
Arthur Henry Brown (1830-1926)

Priest † In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
All **Amen.**

The Greeting

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

The Easter Proclamation

All Alleluia. Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

The service is introduced

Invitation to Confession

Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord,
we come to you in sorrow for our sins,
and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.

A pause for reflection

Confession

All **God our Father,
long-suffering, full of grace and truth,
you create us from nothing and give us life.
You give your faithful people new life
 in the water of baptism.
You do not turn your face from us,
nor cast us aside.
We confess that we have sinned against you.
We have wounded your love
and marred your image in us.
Restore us for the sake of your Son,
and bring us to heavenly joy,
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Absolution

 May the God of love and power
 forgive † and free you from your sins,
 heal and strengthen you by his Spirit,
 and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord.
All **Amen.**

Gloria in Excelsis

All **Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you,
we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

The Collect

Let us pray.

Almighty Father,
you have given your only Son to die for our sins
and to rise again for our justification:
grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness
that we may always serve you in pureness of living and truth;
through the merits of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

§ *Sit*

¶ The Liturgy of the Word

The Acts of the Apostles

Reader A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

The whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection

of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

Acts 4.32-35

All This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Psalm

Reader Behold how good and pleasant it is
to dwell together in unity.
It is like the precious oil upon the head,
running down upon the beard,
Even on Aaron's beard,
running down upon the collar of his clothing.

All **Mercy and truth are met together;
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.**

It is like the dew of Hermon
running down upon the hills of Zion.
For there the Lord has promised his blessing:
even life for evermore.

All **Mercy and truth are met together;
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.**

Psalm 133

§ *Stand*

Holy Gospel

Acclamation

1. Choir
2. Choir and Congregation

Al - le - lu - ia.

Jesus said, 'Blessed are those who have not seen
and yet have come to believe'.

All **Alleluia.**

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

All



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.

John 20.19-31

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All



Homily

§ Sit

The Apostles' Creed

§ Stand

Brothers and sisters,
I ask you to profess the faith of the Church.

All **I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

Prayers of the Faithful

Priest As members of a community that is sustained by God's promises,
let us bring our needs before God with confidence.

§ Kneel

After each petition

All Lord God, you are light:
in you is no darkness at all.

After the final petition

Priest Lord, may you support us all day long,
till the shadows lengthen,
and the evening falls,
and the busy world is hushed,
and the fever of life is over,
and our work is done;
then in your mercy, grant us a safe lodging,
a holy rest, and peace at the last.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

§ *Stand*

¶ The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Sign of Peace

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples
and said, 'Peace be with you'.
Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia.

All Alleluia. The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you. Alleluia.

Let us offer one another a sign of Christ's peace.

Hymn

§ *A collection is taken. Please give as you are able.*

All **ALLELUYA, alleluya, alleluya!**
O sons and daughters of the King,
Whom heavenly hosts in glory sing,
Today the grave hath lost its sting, Alleluia!

**On that first morning of the week,
Before the day began to break,
The Marys went their Lord to seek, Alleluya!**

**That night the apostles met in fear,
Amidst them came their Lord most dear,
And said: 'Peace be unto you here!' Alleluya!**

**When Thomas afterwards had heard
That Jesus had fulfilled his word,
He doubted if it were the Lord. Alleluya!**

**'My piercèd side, O Thomas see;
My hands, my feet, I show to thee;
'Not faithless, but believing be. Alleluya!**

**No longer Thomas then denied;
He saw the feet, the hands, the side;
'Thou art my Lord and God,' he cried. Alleluya!**

**Blessèd be they who have not seen,
And yet whose faith hath constant been,
In life eternal life they shall reign. Alleluya!**

**And we with holy Church unite,
As evermore is just and right,
In glory to the King of light. Alleluya!**

Words Latin, Jean Tisserand, OFM (died 1494)
translated by James Mason Neal (1818-1866)

Music O filii et filiae
Melody in Airs sur les hymnes sacrez, 1683
arranged by Henry Walford Davies (1869-1941)

Invitation to Prayer

Pray, my brothers and sisters,
that our sacrifice may be acceptable to God,
the almighty Father.

**All May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands
for the praise and glory of his name,
for our good, and the good of all his Church.**

Prayer over the Gifts

O Lord, accept the offerings of your people
and those you have brought to new birth,
that, renewed by the confession of your name and by Baptism,
we may attain unending happiness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Eucharistic Prayer

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

All Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

All Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
almighty and eternal Father,
and in these days of Easter to celebrate with joyful hearts
the memory of your wonderful works.
For by the mystery of his passion Jesus Christ, your risen Son,
has conquered the powers of death and hell
and restored in men and women the image of your glory.
He has placed them once more in paradise
and opened to them the gate of life eternal.
And so, in the joy of this Passover,
earth and heaven resound with gladness,
while angels and archangels and the powers of all creation
sing for ever the hymn of your glory:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Lord, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness;
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit,
and according to your holy will,
these gifts of bread and wine
may be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;

who, in the same night that he was betrayed,
took bread and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:

Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks;
he gave it to them, saying:

Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All



And so, Father, calling to mind his death on the cross,
his perfect sacrifice made once for the sins of the whole world,
rejoicing in his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,
and looking for his coming in glory,
we celebrate this memorial of our redemption.
As we offer you this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,
we bring before you this bread and this cup
and we thank you for counting us worthy
to stand in your presence and serve you.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people
and gather into one in your kingdom
all who share this one bread and one cup,
so that we, in company with Mary the Virgin Mother of God,
Saint Thomas, and all the apostles and saints,
may praise and glorify you for ever,
through Jesus Christ our Lord;

by whom, and with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,
for ever and ever.

All



A- men.

The Blessed Sacrament is elevated and bells are rung

§ Kneel

The Lord's Prayer

The power of God is greater than the power of death.
Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

All

**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 this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

Jesus says, I am the bread of life,
whoever eats this bread will live for ever.

All **Lord, our hearts hunger for you;
give us this bread always.**

Agnus Dei

All **Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Invitation to Communion

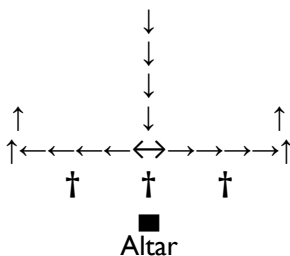
All Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

Giving of Communion

Jesus 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,
alleluia.

*Baptized persons who are communicant members of other Churches
are warmly invited to receive Holy Communion, as shown below.*

*Alternatively, if you wish to receive a blessing, please bring this booklet
with you.*



Spiritual Communion – *for those at home*

Act of Reception

All In union, blessed Jesus,
with the faithful gathered at every altar of your Church
where your blessed Body and Blood are offered this day,

(and remembering particularly my own parish ...)

I long to offer you praise and thanksgiving,
for creation and all the blessings of this life,
for the redemption won for us by your life, death,
and resurrection,
for the means of grace and the hope of glory.

(and particularly for the blessings given me ...)

I believe that you are truly present in the Holy Sacrament,
and, since I cannot at this time receive communion,
I pray you to come into my heart.
I unite myself with you and embrace you with all my heart,
my soul, and my mind.
Let nothing separate me from you;
let me serve you in this life until, by your grace,
I come to your glorious kingdom and unending peace. Amen.

After communion:

Speak your message of peace to our hearts;
show us your wounded hands and side;
and send us forth to your service
in the power of the Holy Spirit,
and to the glory of your name. Amen.

Based on John 20:19-23

Hymn

All

BLESSED Jesu, Mary's son,
For mankind to earth thou camest,
But the saving battle won,
Now at God's right hand thou reignest:
On thy people pour thy blessing,
Gathered here, thy name confessing.

By this sacramental sign,
Token of thy bitter passion,
Through these gifts of bread and wine
Thine own image in us fashion:
By this food thy grace doth send us
From all ills of soul defend us.

In this mystery of grace
Which we celebrate before thee,
Come, O Saviour, show thy face
To the faithful who adore thee:
All our sins by thee forgiven,
Grant us here the joys of heaven.

Words George B Timms (1910-1997)

Music Liebster Jesu (Dessau)
Melody by J R Ahle (1625-1673)
Harmony Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Prayer after Communion

Let us pray:

§ *Stand*

Lord God our Father,
through our Saviour Jesus Christ
you have assured your children of eternal life
and in baptism have made us one with him:
Deliver us from the death of sin
and raise us to new life in your love,
in fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All

Amen.

**God of truth,
we have seen with our eyes
and touched with our hands the bread of life:
strengthen our faith
that we may grow in love for you and for each other;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Hymn

All

**CHRIST the Lord is risen again!
Christ hath broken every chain!
Hark, the angels shout for joy,
Singing evermore on high,
Alleluya!**

**He who gave for us his life,
Who for us endured the strife,
Is our Paschal Lamb today!
We too sing for joy, and say
Alleluya!**

**He who bore all pain and loss
Comfortless upon the cross,
Lives in glory now on high,
Pleads for us, and hears our cry.
Alleluya!**

**He whose path no records tell,
Who descended into hell;
Who the strong man armed hath bound,
And in highest heaven is crowned.
Alleluya!**

**Now he bids us tell abroad
How the lost may be restored,
How the penitent forgiven,
How we too may enter heaven.
Alleluya!**

**Thou, our Paschal Lamb indeed,
Christ, today thy people feed;
Take our sins and guilt away,
That we all may sing for ay,
Alleluya!**

Words *Victimae paschali laudes immolent Christiani*
Wipo of Burgundy (attributed),
Anonymous German, Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878)

Music Württemberg
adapted by William Henry Monk (1823-1889)

Notices for the Community

§ Sit

¶ Sending Out

§ Stand

All The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Solemn Blessing

All May you never doubt that God will fulfil the promises
he has made to us in Christ.
Amen.

All May the Lord keep you steadfast in faith,
joyful in hope, and untiring in love.
Amen.

All By his holy and glorious wounds
may Christ our Lord guard you and keep you.
Amen.

All And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son †, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.
Amen.

Sung Dismissal

Deacon

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia.

All

In the name of Christ, al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia.

§ Please turn towards the Madonna and Child sculpture

Regina Caeli

All **Joy to thee, O Queen of heaven, alleluya** *(9 rings)*
He whom thou wast meet to bear, alleluya
As he promised, hath arisen, alleluya
Pour for us to God thy prayer, alleluya.

All Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluya
for the Lord is risen indeed, alleluya.

God of life, you have given joy to the world *(9 rings)*
by the resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.
Through the prayers of his mother, the Virgin Mary,
bring us to the happiness eternal life;
we ask this through Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Music The Easter Hymn

Organ Voluntary

Christ ist erstanden BWV 627 *J S Bach (1685-1750)*

The procession departs

Those leaving immediately are asked to be aware of those who wish to listen to the music

§ *Refreshments are served in the parish centre after Mass, please do join us*

§ *If you are a newcomer to the parish or area please introduce yourself to the clergy or speak to a member of our Welcome Team.*

Collection – responding to God’s generosity

We invite you to make a monetary offering towards the ministry and mission of St Matthew’s Church. You may do so using any of the following methods:

Cash, cheques, stewardship envelopes - using the receptacle provided at the back of church. If you are a taxpayer please use the envelopes in the chairs, and fill out the details in order that our parish may also benefit from the Gift Aid (an extra 25p for every pound given) associated with your giving.

Contactless giving - using the terminal provided. Just press the button for the amount you wish to give - £5, £10, or £20, and then hold your bank card over the reader.

Giving on your smart phone - using the QR code printed below. It gives you the option of any amount, Gift Aid, and making a regular payment.

Giving online - click the donate button on the parish website or Facebook page and follow the instructions.

Your generosity is gratefully received. Thank you.



Our thanks are due to Mandy and Mark Ludlow
who have generously financed the production of this week’s service booklet

**Please take this booklet home
as an aid to prayer and reflection during the week,
and then re-cycle it.**

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