

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter

### Words of welcome

#### Opening words

Deep peace of the running wave to you  
Deep peace of the flowing air to you  
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you  
Deep peace of the shining stars to you  
Deep peace of the Son of peace to you

#### Collect

Risen Christ, for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred:  
open the doors of our hearts, that we may seek the good of others  
and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace,  
to the praise of God the Father.

**Amen**

#### A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John - Alison Peacock

<sup>19</sup> When it was evening on 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.' <sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' <sup>22</sup> When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup> If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.' <sup>24</sup> But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup> 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.' <sup>26</sup> 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.' <sup>27</sup> 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.' <sup>28</sup> Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' <sup>29</sup> 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.' <sup>30</sup> Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. <sup>31</sup> 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.

## Reflection - Anne

In this morning's gospel we find Jesus appearing to disciples at a time when they were filled with fear, and saying "Peace be with you" - words that, I think, would have gone straight to the heart of that frightened little group of followers. And Words that may go straight to our hearts too.

For the first disciples and maybe for us Peace was what was needed more than anything - peace to calm the fear - to relieve the confusion - to quell the fear inside..

Thomas, of course wasn't there when all this happened and when they tried to explain to him later - he just wouldn't believe them - and who could really blame him for that. "Unless I see", says Thomas "I will not believe".

Doubting Thomas has become a familiar phrase in our vocabulary - it's not a very complimentary thing to say to folk. And yet in Thomas, we see an honesty - we see someone who questioned - who wouldn't simply accept what others told him. We see someone for whom personal experience of events was important - who wouldn't accept second hand knowledge or facts. It takes courage to ask difficult questions - especially when those around you seem full of certainty.

I guess all of us can associate with Thomas - because I'm sure that at one time or another there has been doubt - times when we have questioned God, times when our faith simply hasn't been enough.

But Jesus knew exactly what Thomas needed, and so, a week later, we find Jesus appearing to the disciples again and saying the same words "Peace be with you" - it's like an action replay just for the benefit of Thomas. Jesus shows Thomas his wounds "Put your finger here and see - reach out and put your hand in my side". The words from Isaiah that we use on Good Friday include the words "By his wounds we are healed" - and that was certainly the experience of Thomas that day. Because, in truth, it wasn't Jesus who was the wounded one - it was Thomas.

Thomas was wounded by grief, loneliness, doubt and despair. His wounds were invisible - but nonetheless, very real. Only Jesus was able to see them and it was Jesus who touched Thomas's wounds and made him whole again. It was by touching and being touched that Thomas was healed of his unbelief as well as of his other wounds.

There's nothing wrong with doubt - if it wasn't for doubt there would be no need for faith. I'm sure that for Thomas there were other moments of doubt throughout his life - times when he questioned just who this Jesus was who he claimed to follow - times when he clung onto his faith only by his fingertips

May all of us, like Thomas have the courage to doubt, and as we do so discover more of the God who has endless faith in us. Amen.

## **Intercessions and The Lord's Prayer - Tom & Hannah P**

Lord Jesus Christ, you appeared to your disciples and brought them peace. Help us, and all your Church, to rejoice in your life-giving presence. Bring us through doubts and fears to know your love.

Lord hear us

**Lord, graciously hear us**

Lord Jesus Christ, your resurrection brought new life to a broken world. Bless and guide all those in authority at this challenging time, those for whom responsibility lies heavy on their shoulders. Give them wisdom, compassion and a desire for justice and peace.

Lord hear us

**Lord, graciously hear us**

Lord Jesus Christ, you cared for the sick and the isolated. Be with all those who care for others today. We continue our prayers for the NHS, and for those who work in care homes and in our community. We remember especially staff and residents at our Local Health Centres and at Monet Lodge, Ashley House, Holmfield and Brocklehurst.

Lord hear us

**Lord, graciously hear us**

Lord Jesus Christ, you desire our good above all other and speak tenderly to the afflicted. Hold close to you those whose needs we know and those whose needs are known only to you. We remember the sick in body, mind and spirit.....and pray that as you suffered pain in your own body and healed it in others they may find their peace in you this day.

Lord hear us

**Lord, graciously hear us**

Lord Jesus, you were handed over and crucified for our salvation. Bring into your presence all who have died. We pray for the souls of Wally Marshall, Leslie Powner, Jean Peacock and Delores Hanson. We pray too for all who mourn their passing.

Lord hear us

**Lord, graciously hear us**

We join all our prayers together in the prayer that Jesus gave us.

**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.**

### **Closing response - Anne**

O God of life, do not darken your light to us

O God of life, do not close your joy to us

O God of life, do not shut your door to us

O God of life, do not refuse you mercy to us

And, O God of life, crown us with your gladness and grant us your peace.

### **Blessing**

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, fill our hearts and minds with the knowledge and love of God, and the blessing.....

### **Hymn**

Ye choirs of new Jerusalem,  
your sweetest notes employ,  
the Paschal victory to hymn  
in strains of holy joy.

Triumphant in his glory now  
his sceptre ruleth all,  
earth, heaven, and hell before him bow,  
and at his footstool fall.

While joyful thus his praise we sing,  
his mercy we implore,  
into his palace bright to bring  
and keep us evermore.

All glory to the Father be,  
all glory to the Son,  
all glory, Holy Ghost, to thee,  
while endless ages run.

Alleluia! Amen.

*Copyright 1988 The Iona Community*