

6th Sunday of Easter

Words of welcome

Welcome to our worship on this Sixth Sunday of Easter, which, as you can see comes, in part, from Christ Church.

Today we give thanks to the God who loves us and who calls us to love one another. We pray, in this service and in the days ahead, for the grace to grow in acts of loving service. And we pray too for all those, in whatever way, show loving kindness to those in need.

Opening words

The God of heaven has made a home on earth

Christ dwells among us and is one with us

The highest of all creation lives among the least

Christ journeys with the rejected and welcomes the weary

Come now all who thirst

And drink of the water of life

Come now all who hunger

And be filled with good things

Come now all who seek

And be warmed by the fire of love

The Collect

God our redeemer, you have delivered us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of your Son:

grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his continual presence in us he may raise us to eternal joy;

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.**

A reading from John's gospel

Jesus said to his disciples: ¹⁵'If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. ¹⁷This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. ¹⁸I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. ¹⁹In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. ²⁰On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. ²¹They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.'

For the word of God in scripture,
For the word of God among us,
For the word of God within us,
We give thanks.

Reflection

This world we live in seems to be fraught with uncertainty. Here in the UK after the Government made their most recent announcement, and as they try their utmost to tackle the coronavirus pandemic, it seems that our lives are in a constant state of unpredictability. We don't know when the lockdown will be lifted, when some of us might be able to return to work as normal, when we'll be able to get back into our church buildings, when we'll be able to go to the theatre or cinema, when we'll be able to have that much needed cup of tea with friends and family, the list goes on and on. More harrowing, certainly, is the fear we have for those close to us who are especially vulnerable, and the implications of the virus for them. For the moment, it seems, we are existing in a precarious place, from which, we do not know when we will be able to leave.

In today's Gospel reading, there is a real sense that Jesus is preparing the Disciples for a troublesome and uncertain future. It is set just after they have shared the Last Supper, and sees Jesus look ahead to His death and His resurrection. It is a challenging and theologically dense passage. The reading, however, may be considered one of promises. There is a promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit and, as many Biblical commentators point out, the future presence of Jesus is promised through the Spirit. There is also the promise of the resurrection itself, and in this, the knowledge that Jesus and the Father are one, and that with the arrival of the Spirit, Jesus would dwell within the Disciples, and they within Him. Whilst this concept of mutual indwelling is quite tricky to unpack, I think what is clear is that through the Spirit, we have the assurance of the resurrected Jesus' presence in our lives. A presence we honour by

obeying His commandments, the greatest of which are to love God and to love one another. I don't know about you, but I've been astonished by the acts of kindness displayed by so many members of the British public over the last few weeks. From volunteering for the NHS, to raising money, to delivering shopping, people truly have been demonstrating incredible acts of love towards one another. I wonder if in the midst of the sorrow and the chaos, there is actually something quite spiritual going on.

I think, with this in mind, there are two key things we can take from today's reading. Firstly: keep loving one another, keep looking out for one another and know that in doing this, we are honouring God. Secondly: by the power of the Holy Spirit, the resurrected Jesus is with us. The same resurrected Jesus who triumphed over evil and death, in whom we have the assurance of life everlasting, and the world to come.

Prayers

Love of the Father, love of the Son, abide in your Church.

Pour out your Holy Spirit of truth

and challenge the narrowness of our vision and charity.

We join our praises with all who worship and adore you in their homes today.

We pray for our Bishops, Archdeacon and Area Dean, and Anne and Tom our clergy.

Risen Lord **Fill our hearts with Easter joy.**

Loving Father, you challenge the structures of the world with a justice that reaches beyond self interest.

Hold before us the standard of true peace

and keep us faithful to the ways of your commandments.

Risen Lord **Fill our hearts with Easter joy.**

Loving Son, you challenge us with a new standard to live by.

Confront us with the consequences of our actions and lead us to repentance.

Restore in all people the image of your glory

Risen Lord **Fill our hearts with Easter joy.**

Loving Spirit, breathe upon your frail ones your life restoring presence.

As we pray for all who are ill we remember too all who work in the NHS

and in the caring profession, especially the staff and residents of Ashley House, Holmfield, Monet Lodge and Brocklehurst.

Raise us up to sing of your goodness and mercy.

Risen Lord **Fill our hearts with Easter joy.**

Blessed Lord, you hold all souls in life.

Bring all the departed to the place of refreshment and peace.

We pray for all who have gone before us on the

journey of faith and remember the anniversary of Bill Gee.

Bring us all to share in the life you give.

Rejoicing in the fellowship of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
St Christopher, St Matthias and all your saints
we commend all for whom we have prayed to your unfailing love.

**Merciful Father,
accept these prayers for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

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 Responsory

Dear friends, let us love one another

Because love comes from God.

This is what love us

It is not that we have loved God, but that God loved us

Dear friends, if this is how God loved us

Then we should love one another

If we love one another

God lives in union with us, and his love is made perfect in us

Closing prayers

A collect from the BCP

Let us pray

O Lord, from whom all good things do come:

Grant to us thy humble servants,

that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that are good,

and by thy merciful guiding may perform the same;

through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

In darkness and in light,

in trouble and in joy,

help us, holy God, to trust your love,

to serve your purpose and to praise your name,

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Blessing

The love of the Lord Jesus draw you to himself
The power of the Lord Jesus strengthen you in his service
The joy of the Lord Jesus fill your hearts
And the blessing.....

Hymn

(thanks to Richard McHale & Lucy for recording this week's hymn – from up in Cumbria!)

**Love Divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down,
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
All thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
Pure unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.**

**Come, almighty to deliver,
Let us all thy grace receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve thee as thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
Glory in thy perfect love.**

**Finish then thy new creation
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation,
Perfectly restored in thee,
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise!**

c.The Iona Community