



Second Sunday of Easter

† Sunday 8th April 2018

In England & Wales

Cycle of Prayer – New members of the Church

Keynote: Today he is risen! This day we rejoice and are glad!

Acts of the Apostles 4: 32-35

'The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul; no one claimed for his own anything that he had, as everything that they owned was held in common.' It seems that the author, Luke – the evangelist – is recording the essentials of membership in the early Christian community, and they are still the essentials of membership in our own community today. The community of faith testifies *'to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power'*. Added to this fidelity to the *didache* – the teaching of the Apostles – there is a communal life, a sharing and caring in the *koinonia* – the community. For *'none of the members was ever in want'* – those who had land or houses would present money to the apostles. *'It was then distributed to any members who might be in need.'*

Responsorial Psalm 117 (118) – A processional song of praise and thanksgiving. Alleluia!

First Letter of John 5: 1-6

In writing this letter the apostle John seems to address some dissidents in the early Christian communities and to challenge their false beliefs. John emphasizes, the nature of true belief: *'Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ,'* John tells us, *'has been begotten by God.'* The apostle follows this with the further emphasis upon the importance of love in this rule of life, *'we can be sure that we love God's children if we love God himself and do what he has commanded... this is what loving God is... this is the victory over the world – our faith.'* John wants us to become perfect in love!

Gospel according to John 20: 19-31

Since earliest times, Christians have met on the first day of the week to celebrate and recall the resurrection of the Lord. Indeed, this day, Sunday, is often referred to as a 'Little Easter Day!' The sudden presence of Jesus in the upper room, where the doors were locked, does tell us that the risen Christ was in some way different. Yet, in spite of this his disciples and friends recognise Jesus as he stood among them and showed them his hands and his side. *'The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord... and he said to them again, "Peace be with you"'*. The gospel passage chosen today, tells of two of the post resurrection appearances of Jesus. In the first, Jesus gives the disciples their mission, *'As the Father sent me, so am I sending you...'* he breathed on them and said, *'Receive the Holy Spirit. For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven.'* The disciples are to continue the mission Jesus received from the Father. In the second appearance, we have the profound expression of faith by the 'doubting' Thomas who was absent on the first occasion, and clearly needed to see things for himself. After placing Thomas' fingers in the marks of the nails, Jesus says to Thomas, *'Doubt no longer but believe.'* So we are called to faith, and invited to exclaim with Thomas, *'My Lord and my God!'*

© Peter J Harrison 2018