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EASTER 3B

14th April 2024

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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The Vine at Home

Sunday 14th April 2024 – Third Sunday of Easter – Year B

Opening Prayers

Take a moment to centre yourself and listen to your breath. Once you feel still and a bit calm, you might like to read these words out loud.

God of all time – today I worship you as the Author of Life, the Source of all that is good. I pause in wonder; to give thanks for the world you have created, for my life, for this day.

God of all time – today I worship you as the Incarnate Word, the One who knows what it is to be human.

God of all time – today I worship you in the power of the Holy Spirit, poured out on me this and every day.

Use this time - this time marked for worship and reflection, but also this whole day, my whole life, as a blessing for the world. May I receive your love, and share it with the world.

Amen.

You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are comfortable.

Hymn:

82 STF – O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder - [YouTube](#)

Readings: Luke 24:36b-48 - [Click for reading](#)

Responding to the reading

Don't necessarily try to answer all these questions now, but read them through, and reflect on anything that speaks to you.

- What does "peace" mean to you, and how does Jesus' greeting of "Peace to you" challenge your understanding of peace in today's world?
- How can you embody Jesus' message of peace as an agent of reconciliation in the place that you call home and in the wider world, particularly in the face of division and conflict?
- In what ways can the church or community that you are connected to work towards justice and liberation for the marginalised and oppressed, following the example of Jesus' ministry? How are we already doing that? Is there something different or more you could be doing, or could stop doing?
- Reflecting on the concept of peace as transformation, how can you allow Jesus' message of peace to transform your hearts, minds, and actions, and how can we be agents of transformation in our communities?

These are big questions, take your time with them, think them over, make some notes, talk to a friend. Perhaps some of these thoughts might help you as you continue to reflect.

In the Luke passage, you can read that Jesus' disciples were filled with fear and doubt, grappling with the reality of his resurrection. Did they believe? Did some of them, and not others? Were they fearful that they might have got themselves caught up in something rather bigger than they had realised?

Perhaps they also had mixed reactions to the recognition of how radical this Jesus message was... If the rumours were true, that Jesus really was coming back from the dead (or already had), then this might well be the revolution, it might just change everything... surely a time of great uncertainty, conflict and pain was ahead, even if it was to bring about the change they wanted... Maybe some of them were energised by this, but most – we can see – were full of fear and doubt.

Yet, in the midst of their turmoil, Jesus offers them peace. This radical peace transcends circumstances and transforms hearts. It is in this context of potential revolution, political unrest and radical change that Jesus begins with peace. The resurrection, remember, was illegal... Jesus' body had been condemned, and was now no longer dead. But this was not an act of war, rather one of ultimate, deep, radical peace.

True peace cannot exist without justice. Jesus' ministry was marked by a commitment to justice and liberation for the marginalised and oppressed. As followers of Christ, we are called to work towards a world where all are treated with dignity and equality, where justice flows like a mighty river. Not that we continue to invest in the status quo, because it's 'easier', but we work for those who do not get a good deal at the moment, and ensure that peace also brings justice.

Finally, Jesus' greeting of "Peace to you" signifies more than a mere wish for tranquillity. It is a proclamation of transformation - a transformation of hearts, minds, and communities. As you seek to embrace Jesus' message of peace, each of us is called to be transformed and to be agents of transformation in the world around us.

As you reflect on Jesus' words, "Peace to you," may you be challenged and inspired to embody radical peace in your life and in our world. May the peace of Christ be with you.

Hymn:

313 STF – Thine be the glory - [YouTube](#)

Blessing

May you go out with joy and be let forth with peace, and may the streets and houses be filled with hope, and the trees of the field clap their hands!

May you go and be that people – a joy-filled, joy-giving, joy-bringing kind of person, an Easter person!

Go in peace.

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week Ahead

Monday 15th April

God of hope and possibility

Today I look out on a world that needs hope, that needs the potential for everything to look different.

Help to stretch my imagination for justice, Lord my God,
Amen.

Tuesday 16th April

- Write a note or a message to a friend with a Bible verse in it that you think might be relevant to your life.
- Tell them you're thinking of them, and pray about them as they receive it.

Wednesday 17th April

On this day in 1521 (yes, 503 years ago!), the trial of the reformationist Martin Luther began over his controversial teachings that helped change the landscape of the Christian church.

Today we pray for all who are daring to push the boundaries of what is 'acceptable' and 'normal', in order to help us grow and develop as church, as people, as a world.

Thursday 18th April

- Think about the fruits of the spirit.
- Pick one of them that you don't feel you are very good at, or that needs some intentional work.
- Spend some time praying about this, and then practice it for a whole day in all you do.

Friday 19th April

- Creator God, great shepherd of the sheep, fill me with your hope as I pray. Holy Spirit, give me the strength and courage for this day, fill me with the peace I need, and the joy of being surrounded by your love. Help me to notice where your love is at work in the world, and to get involved where I can.
Lord of love, show me what is mine to do today.
Amen.

Saturday 20th April

- Pour a glass of water.
- Think about the things you do that get in the way of your relationship with God. You might think it muddies the water of your life, but God forgives us for all these things, and offers us living water.
- Drink some of the water and give thanks for the way God reaches out to you with love and forgiveness.