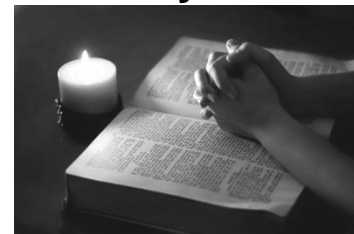




Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

Sunday 12th April 2020 – Easter Sunday

1. Start with stillness and quietening down; then gently read the passage, noticing any feelings and connections to your own experience.
2. Read the passage again and spend understanding. *The notes in your Bible may be of help at this point.*
3. Read the passage a third time - wondering how you yourself might pray the text over the next few days.
4. Over the next week, set aside times to come back more than once to the passage. You could read it all or part of it again, slowly. Perhaps there is a special word for you in this passage of Scripture? Keep this word or phrase in your thoughts and gently repeat it, bringing it to mind and allowing God to speak to you in your heart.
5. Finally, come back to the text to conclude: What is God in this scripture asking of you this week? What is the one challenge, one little change you are asked to make or the thing you have been asked to do? Then say a prayer of thanksgiving for the good news in the passage. End in quiet prayer.



THIS SUNDAY'S GOSPEL – Matthew 28:1-10 'He is Risen'

1 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. 2 There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. 4 The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. 5 The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." 8 So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

A Short Thought

Traditionally, we have found it easy to think of the cross as the measure of God's love for us. Because of the focus on the cross, we find it more difficult to think of the resurrection as also the love of God, perhaps "all the more so"! The originality of the Fourth Gospel says it all: the disciple Jesus loved, the head cloth recalling Lazarus (see how much he loved him) and, not least, the great figure of Mary Magdalene (Mary!). In summary, Jesus died and rose again for love of us. Let us be loved!

SOME POINTERS FOR PRAYER

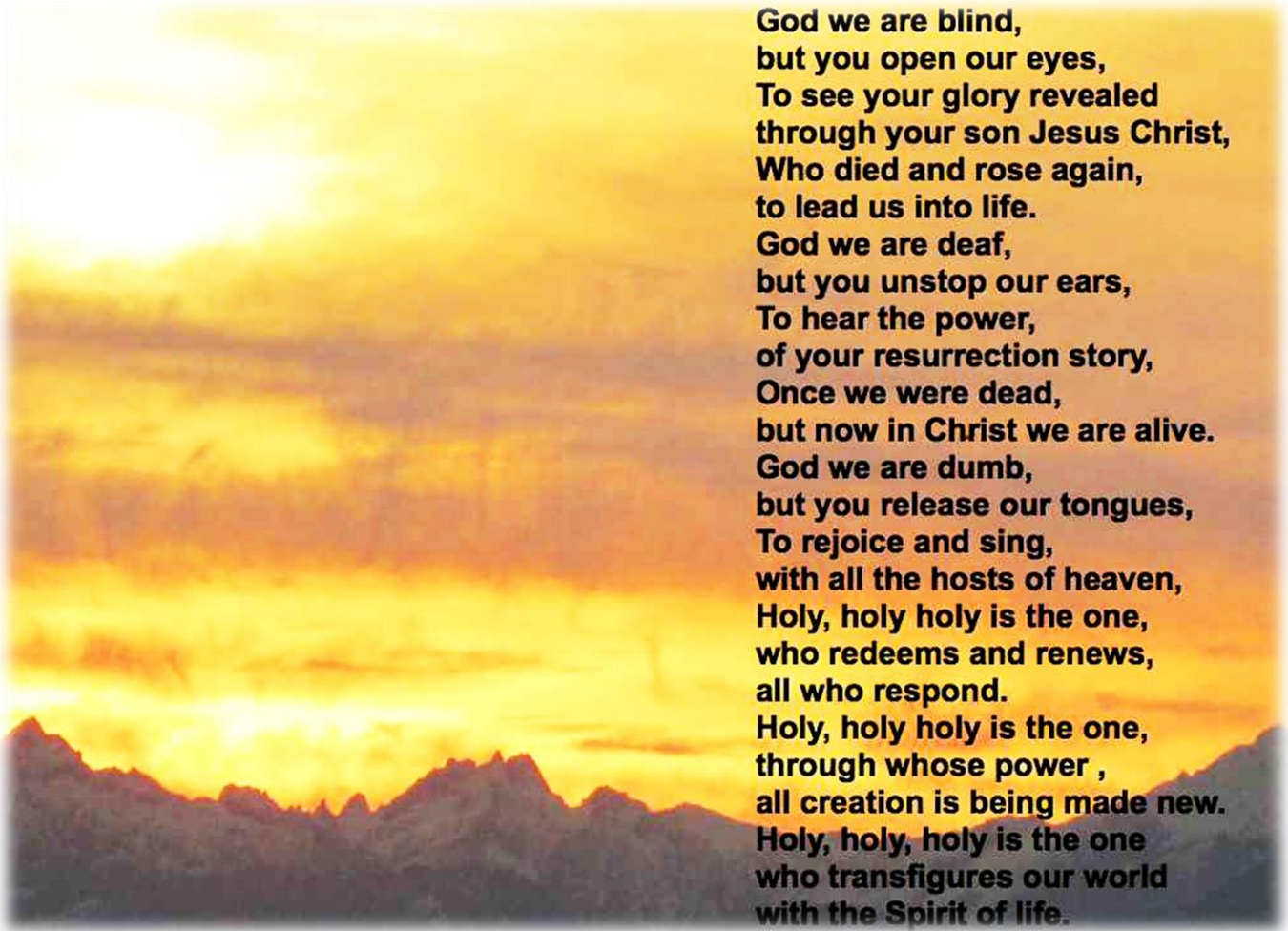
1. The disciples are in a state of shock after their traumatic loss. Jesus, the one in whom they had placed so much hope, has been murdered and buried. Then, before they have time to recover, they get another shock. The body of Jesus is missing. Have you had experiences in which one tragedy or crisis follows quickly after another? What was that like for you? How did you cope? Who, or what, sustained you?
2. Mary and Peter, and the other disciple, came and discovered that the tomb was empty. In this text no explanation is given. They are left in a state of bewilderment 'for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead'. Have you been in situations, faced with events you cannot explain, possibly events that have dashed your hopes in another person, or in God? What has that been like for you?
3. Yet in spite of the lack of explanation, the beloved disciple 'saw and believed'. Have there been times when others have done something that you could not understand, and which they could not explain at the time, and yet you believed that all was not as it seemed; times when you decided to trust in spite of the evidence? Have there been times when others have shown this kind of faith in you, when you were not able to offer satisfactory explanations, and all you could say was 'trust me'?
4. Have there been times in your relationship with God when you have felt that you were faced with an empty tomb, and still you believed? What have you learned about life, about love, from such experiences?

Prayer -

Loving God, you love us more than we can imagine or take in. Help us to allow ourselves to be so loved by you, that your love may penetrate our hearts, our lives and our loves. We ask this through Jesus, who died and rose for love of us and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen**

Prayer in these uncertain times

We pray for all those in our country and throughout the world suffering from the Corona Virus. May its victims and their families be strengthened by the support of our community of faith and restored soon to full health. We also pray for our leaders and medical personnel who deal with the virus. May we keep calm and may we join together in solidarity with care and compassion to tackle this emergency. This we ask in confidence through Christ Our Lord. Amen



**God we are blind,
but you open our eyes,
To see your glory revealed
through your son Jesus Christ,
Who died and rose again,
to lead us into life.
God we are deaf,
but you unstop our ears,
To hear the power,
of your resurrection story,
Once we were dead,
but now in Christ we are alive.
God we are dumb,
but you release our tongues,
To rejoice and sing,
with all the hosts of heaven,
Holy, holy holy is the one,
who redeems and renews,
all who respond.
Holy, holy holy is the one,
through whose power ,
all creation is being made new.
Holy, holy, holy is the one
who transfigures our world
with the Spirit of life.**