



Sunday Worship at Home 21st April Easter 4

Opening Prayers:

Alleluia. Christ is Risen

He is Risen Indeed Alleluia

Faithfull one whose word is life, come with saving power to free our praise, inspire our prayer and shape our lives. For the kingdom of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Invitation to confession:

Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed for us.
Let us rejoice by putting away all malice and evil and
confessing our sins with a sincere and true heart.

Friend of sinners, you bring hope in our despair.

Lord have mercy.

Healer of the sick, you give strength in our weakness.

Christ have mercy.

Destroyer of evil, you bring life in our dying.

Lord have mercy.

May almighty God who sent his Son into the world to save sinners,
bring us his pardon and peace, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Collect:

Risen Christ, faithful shepherd of your Father's sheep: teach us to hear your voice and to follow your command, that all your people may be gathered into one flock, to the glory of God the Father.

Psalm 23 A Psalm of David.

¹ The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures;

he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.⁴ Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff—they comfort me.⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

Reflection on the Psalm: I decided to reflect on the given psalm for today rather than the Gospel, which is also about Jesus the good shepherd. This is a psalm which is a favourite for most people so deserving of some thought. There is a poetic softness to the text which speaks about shepherds, green pastures and still waters, which can lull us into thinking that it's quite an innocuous reading – no great drama there. Yet, if you ever feel you are running on empty with nothing left in your tank, I could do no more than recommend you read the

above psalm over and over again; it was written for such occasions. It acknowledges that, sometimes life can be tough. Wilderness and shadow, valley and trouble are common human experiences, but the psalm also suggests that this harsh reality should not be feared because God – the Good Shepherd, loves us and will guide us through. Indeed, wandering through a confusing landscape may turn out to be a guided pathway. The agitation of shadows may lead to a time of stillness and the dark valley may even turn out to be a place of restoration. The contrasts in the psalm culminate in the line “and my cup shall be full”. And that is comforting! So much of what affects us comes from fear or loss, but in this reading we are assured that in the presence of the shepherd, all will be well.

So in what way does the image of Jesus the good shepherd resonate with you? Have you ever experienced the strength of the good shepherd when you needed it most, or have you ever found yourself being the good shepherd to someone else? I hope for you that the answer to both questions is “Yes”. Jesus, the good shepherd, did a remarkable thing in laying down his life that we might live, let us take his example this Easter season as a gift from God to thrive as Christians in our homes and communities to bring God’s goodness into the world through our actions. Amen

The Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. **Amen**

Be still and pray: and include prayers for the church, the needs of the world in crisis at this time. Pray for peace in all areas of conflict that those who lead us do so with calm, common sense and authority. Take time to remember those who are ill and those whose earthly life has ended.

The Lord’s Prayer:

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, in 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; lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever **Amen**

Final Prayer:

May God, who through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ has given us victory over death, bless us and give us his peace today and always

Amen.

Reverend Irene