**Worshipping together while apart**

**Morning Prayer for Wednesday 14th April 2021**

**Readings**

Psalm 16

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

**Reflection**

At the start of this chapter, Paul reminds the Corinthians of the message of the gospel in one of the earliest ‘creeds’ we have:

Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures; he was buried;

He was raised to life on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures;

Afterwards he appeared to his followers, and to all the apostles:

This we have received, and this we believe.

Incidentally, this was the creed Rebecca used for the open-air communion service on Easter Sunday morning. A wonderful reminder of just what we had come together to celebrate.

But I wonder how easy is it to believe all that it says? Paul obviously felt that the Corinthian church needed to have it spelt out, and he used the ‘legal’ evidence of two or more witnesses to support what he had to tell them, evidence from the scriptures – including Psalm 16 as well as part of Isaiah 53 – as well as eye-witness accounts from those who had actually seen the risen Jesus, including himself.

Paul’s encounter with the risen Jesus on the Damascus road must have been profoundly significant for him, a Pharisee, to have his belief in resurrection so vindicated and it was this, I believe, that turned him from someone who zealously persecuted Christians to someone so passionate in his subsequent mission to share this amazing news with so many people.

This is also the purpose of all the gospel writers, as St John puts it “These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that, by believing, you may have life in his name.” But even though we have the scriptures, how easy is it for us to really believe?

In the Lent book *Looking Through the Cross* by Graham Tomlin I was reminded again of how Jesus came to turn everything upside down. In John’s gospel, in particular, we hear repeatedly of Jesus turning worldly values upside down, last shall be first, servants not masters; and he even puts the overturning of the money changers in the Temple at the beginning of his gospel, rather than in its chronological position, to emphasise that this is one of his major themes. When I read in Tomlin’s book that “the world sees life leading to death, but Christians see death leading to life” I realised that all the examples we read in the gospels were simply leading up to the one great reversal – that of death leading to life, rather than life leading to death – and, for perhaps the first time, I really understood.

And so, as we travel through this Eastertide and study this wonderful chapter in Paul’s letter to the Corinthians, I pray that we may all find our understanding increasing so that we may grow in the knowledge of God’s love for us and of his Kingdom Power in our lives.

**What is God saying to you through these readings and reflection?**

**What does God want you to do about it?**

**Prayers**

**An Eastertide Collect**

We thank you heavenly Father, that you have delivered us from the dominion of sin and death and brought us into the Kingdom of your Son; and we pray that, as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his love he may raise us to eternal joys; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

**Intercessions**

Lord, we pray for the roads in our Parishes and for the canal and its boat people, fishermen and walkers, that all who live and pass by there may acknowledge your blessings in their lives.

We pray for those anxious about the future, for themselves and their loved ones, that they might know your peace, and your strength through the darkest times.

We remember the life of the Duke of Edinburgh, giving thanks for him and his long life of service and dedication to this country. We pray that the Queen and Royal family will know God’s comfort in their grief and find hope in Jesus’s promise of eternal life for all who believe in him.

We pray for those needing hospital treatment and for those caring for them, that they may receive your comfort and your healing.

We pray for our schools, for governors, teachers and students, that wise decisions are made.

And we pray for ourselves, that we may grow in faith and in the knowledge of our Father’s great love for us all.

In Jesus’ name we pray, **Amen.**

*Alternatively, you might like to use these prayers*

Let us pray to God, who alone makes us dwell in safety:

For all who are affected by coronavirus,

through illness or isolation or anxiety,

that they may find relief and recovery:

Lord, hear us,

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

For those who are guiding our nation at this time,

and shaping national policies,

that they may make wise decisions:

Lord, hear us,

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

For doctors, nurses and medical researchers,

that through their skill and insights

many will be restored to health:

Lord, hear us,

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

For the vulnerable and the fearful,

for the gravely ill and the dying,

that they may know your comfort and peace:

Lord, hear us,

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,

to the mercy and protection of God.

**Merciful Father, accept these prayers**

**for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**