

Sunday 28th April 2024 - EASTER 5

Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled Neither Let Them Be Afraid



Hello everyone,

How are you doing? I mean, really, how are you doing? It's a question I've been asking myself, as we walked together to the cross through Lent, and as we witnessed the empty tomb on Easter morning. How am I doing when the world seems to be falling apart all around me. With war in Europe and the middle east, famine in Ethiopia and Yemen, uprisings in Haiti and elsewhere, and most recently the earthquake in Taiwan. There seems to be some new horror everyday that speaks to us of the fragility and, perhaps, the hopelessness of life.

On top of all this, the readings during Lent and Easter have all had elements of fearfulness within them. Even our Lord seemed fearful as he prayed in the garden for The Father to change what had to happen. But, supported by faith in God and in the knowledge of what was promised after the horror of crucifixion, Jesus remained on his destined path.

Yes, fear and how we interact with it has been very much in my thoughts, prayers and reflections. In this period after Easter, I can totally relate to the disciples. They are huddled behind locked doors, afraid of what the Jews might do to them. Most probably they're still in shock from the crucifixion, even though they've heard that Jesus has risen. The truth for them at that moment is that He's not with them. And if Jesus could be tortured and killed as a blasphemous rebel — are they, his followers, next? From inside that locked room, things must look pretty bleak and frightening. They feel alone and even abandoned.

So, let's remind ourselves of Jesus's words while he was with them in the upper room before his betrayal. In John 14. 27 we can remind ourselves of his words of comfort before he left them:

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

But fear can be paralysing even when comfort is given. How often do we shut ourselves inside a "locked room" in our minds, shying away from hurts and unknowns, barricading our hearts from what might happen? Listening to that voice that convinces us the worst is going to happen. The Good News of Easter offers us all hope: Christ crucified and risen, not just knocking on the doors of our hearts but entering into those places where we are hiding.

When Jesus comes to the disciples in the upper room, he says to his friends, *"Peace be with you,"*.

I don't know about you but I absolutely love what comes next, as an antidote to fear. Not "Here I am — now grab your swords and help me fight back for what they did to me," but "look at my hands and my side." It's like he was saying; Yes! they killed me. Yes! it was awful. But look at me now! Put your fingers in those nail marks! They're real — but I AM ALIVE, better than ever in fact. PEACE be with you. There's no need to be afraid.

And it didn't stop there: Then Jesus breathed new life on them, the life of the Holy Spirit, and armed them for what lay ahead: not with fancy words or spears and swords but with forgiveness, love and hope. *"As the Father has sent me, so I send you,"* he said. *"I went out forgiving, loving and giving hope, even to the Cross, and won not death, but life! Now you go — and do the same."*

Our fears and anxieties are very real, they are how the Enemy woos us away from faith in Christ. The truth of the gospel is that it doesn't matter how you're facing the onslaught of the Enemy in your fear, whether it's sickness or discouragement, news and rumours of war, attacks on your faith or losing a Ministry Area leader: you only need to open your heart to Christ, let Jesus in where you are hiding in fear, and hear him say to you, don't be afraid!

In the words of St Paul to the Romans,
No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Romans 8: 37-39)

We, as a Ministry Area, are going through a time where, perhaps, some of us feel like the disciples in the upper room; Locking ourselves away for fear of what may come. But we must remember God has a plan, he knows our needs and he will hear our prayers.

In concluding, I quote Julian of Norwich:

“All shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well.”

Keeping you all in prayer,
Rev'd Linda Batt

READINGS

COLLECT

Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: grant that, as by your grace going before us you put into our minds good desires, so by your continual help we may bring them to good effect; through Jesus Christ our risen Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever **Amen**.

THE FIRST READING FROM THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

An angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over to this chariot and join it.' So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' He replied, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: 'Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.' The eunuch asked Philip, 'About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?' Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptised?' He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went

down into the water, and Philip baptised him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Acts 8:26–40

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 22:25-28, 30-31

Response: **O praise the Lord all you that fear him.**

From you comes my praise in the great congregation:
I will perform my vows in the presence of those that fear you.
The poor shall eat and be satisfied:
those who seek the Lord shall praise him;
their hearts shall live for ever. **R**

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord:
and all the families of the nations shall bow before him.
For the kingdom is the Lord's:
and he rules over the nations. **R**

He has saved my life for himself;
my descendants shall serve him:
this shall be told of the Lord for generations to come.
They shall come and make known his salvation,
to a people yet unborn:
declaring that he, the Lord, has done it. **R**

THE SECOND READING IS FROM THE FIRST LETTER OF JOHN

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may

have boldness on the day of judgement, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, 'I love God,' and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

1 John 4:7–21

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia! **Alleluia!**

Make your home in me, as I make mine in you. Whoever remains in me bears fruit in plenty. **Alleluia!**

Listen to the Gospel of Christ according to St John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.'

John 15:1–8

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Eternal God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life: grant us to walk in his way, to rejoice in his truth, and to share his risen life; who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen.**

PRAYER

Almighty God, whose son Jesus Christ is the True Vine, give us grace to grow as Christians in our community: to follow his example and listen to your call, to rejoice that you have made us, to draw closer to you and to encourage others in faith. Amen.

PLEASE SAVE THE DATE!

The 2024 Parish Trip to Winchester Cathedral will take place on Saturday 31st August 2024.



Easyfundraising total for St Cadoc's Refurbishment Fund has now reached £1728.13.

Please support us today at <http://efraising.org/XW7a62zaYB>.

Sponsor a chair total is currently £615.00. To find out how you may sponsor a chair, please go to <https://stcadocscaerleon.uk/st-cadocs-church-refurbishment-appeal/checkout.justgiving.com/53lh55wm54>

Thank you for your continuing support.

SERVICES

You are all invited to join us in our worship in person or watch via livestream on Sunday mornings from St Cadoc's. Please do not attend the services in person if experiencing any Covid symptoms. *Parishioners can park at the Hanbury Inn on Wednesdays. If they have refreshments (minimum spend of £5) following the service, the parking fee will be waived.*

Sunday 28th April

10.30am

EASTER 5

Sung Eucharist, Charles Williams CinW school hall, led by Rev'd Alan Maunder

Wednesday 1st May

10.30am

Churches Together Memory Café, Lodge Farm Church
Please note that there is no mid-week Eucharist.

Sunday 5th May

10.30am

Sung Eucharist, Charles Williams CinW school hall, led by Rev'd Sue Pratten

Monday 6th May

10.30am

EASTER 6 / ROGATION SUNDAY

Holy Communion at Caerleon House Nursing Home
Holy Communion at Eleanor Hodson House

Wednesday 8th May

10.30am

Churches Together Memory Café, Lodge Farm Church
Mid-week Eucharist, Ss Julius, Aaron & David RC Church

Thursday 9th May

ASCENSION DAY

Sunday 12th May

10.30am

EASTER 7

Sung Eucharist, Charles Williams CinW school hall, led by Rev'd Sue Pratten

Please note that Rev'd Sue is on post Easter /Annual leave from 10th April to 3rd

May. For pastoral emergencies and occasional offices, please contact

Fr David Matthews: ssjuliusandaaron@gmail.com

Rev'd Linda: parishoflliswerry@gmail.com



Chair Sponsorship for St Cadoc's Church

- The cost of one chair is £155 +VAT.
- The names of donors with a personal message or dedication will be recorded electronically and viewed on the website in due course.
eg **Pauline foster In memory of my grandfather, William Richard Foster**
- Minimum towards the chairs is £50 for a personal donation and £155+VAT for a business sponsorship
- We accept payment by bank transfer, <https://stcadocscaerleon.uk/st-cadocs-church-refurbishment-appeal/checkout.justgiving.com/53lh55wm54> and QR code and cheques payable to St Cadoc's Church PCC. Please indicate clearly on the back of the cheque, 'Chair Sponsorship'.
- To make a donation via JustGiving please use the button above or follow the QR code link. If you're a tax payer please consider adding gift aid to your donation as this increases the amount by 25%. Once you have made the donation please email phil.sergeant1@gmail.com providing your details and any personal message or dedication you would like recorded in the online register of sponsors.



Please note that once sponsored, the chair will remain the property of St Cadoc's church. Sponsorship of a chair does not entitle the sponsor to any special seating rights. The chairs are designed so that they may be moved and stacked where necessary. While the chairs are expected to last for many years and every effort will be made to avoid damage, there is no guarantee that any chair will be in the church indefinitely.

CONTACT

If you have anything you'd like to communicate to the people of St Cadoc's, please let Rev'd Sue know. Also, if Rev'd Sue can be of help to you at any time, please get in touch!

Vicar Rev'd Sue Pratten 01633 421485/vicar.stcadocs@gmail.com
(Monday is leave day)

Churchwardens Sue Batey 01633 430259/sbatey.stcadocs@gmail.com
Tim Ford 07305 638533/tim@woodsidejoinery.com

Safeguarding Officer Graham Davies 07980 567077
rosebank_davies@hotmail.com

Health and Safety Officer Tim Ford 0711683454/tim@woodsidejoinery.com
Beechwood MA Father David Matthews: 01633 258046

Rev'd Linda Batt: 07722 500805