**Fourth Sunday of Easter Sunday 3 May 2020**

**Welcome and Introduction**

Good morning, thank you for joining me for this act of worship, I hope you are keeping well? There is a song to open our worship, a special treat to close, two Bible readings all of which you will find in the accompanying text on the website. Don’t forget that Sunday Club have lots of activities prepared on their own page on our website.

It is the Fourth Sunday of Easter and over the next few weeks we are using Paula Gooder’s book ‘This Risen Existence’ thinking about what the resurrection means for us and for the way we live our lives. Although I cannot do justice to each chapter in 5 minutes, it might set us thinking!

**Call to Worship**

*You may wish to light a candle*

As God’s people we have gathered in God’s presence, separated by distance but united in God’s love, let us begin by a moment of quiet, settling our hearts and minds.

In the name of the Father…

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!

He is Risen indeed, Alleluia!

We gather as people on a journey.

Speak to us, God!

Continue creating us!
Inspire our hearts.
Enlighten our minds.
Guide our actions. Amen.

**Song**: **The Lord’s my shepherd** *(Stuart Townend)*

<https://youtu.be/xXPPzuCJMCs>

As we come to a **time of penitence,** let us keep a short silence

Come, Holy Spirit of God,

***All***   **and search our hearts with the light of Christ.**

Like Mary at the empty tomb, we fail to grasp the wonder of your presence.

Lord, have mercy. *Lord, have mercy.*

Like the disciples behind locked doors, we are afraid to be seen as your followers.

Christ, have mercy. *Christ, have mercy.*

Like Thomas in the upper room, we are slow to believe.

Lord, have mercy. *Lord, have mercy.*

May almighty God,

who sent his Son into the world to save sinners,

bring us his pardon and peace, now and for ever.

***All***   **Amen.**

**Readings**

**First Reading** Acts 2:42-end

42They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. 44All who believed were together and had all things in common; 45they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, 47praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

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

**Gospel Reading**

Alleluia, alleluia.

Jesus said, ‘I am the resurrection and the life.

Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live,

and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.’ Alleluia. *John 11.25,26*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John. **All:** Glory to you, O Lord. Alleluia

**Gospel John 10:1-10 Jesus the Good Shepherd**

10‘Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. 2The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. 5They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.’ 6Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

7 So again Jesus said to them, ‘Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. 8All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. 9I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. 10The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

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

**Homily**

As you may know, John’s Gospel has twice as many resurrection appearances as in the other Gospels. Interestingly they all speak of an initial experience confirming the fact of the resurrection to help the person to understand what it means, followed by a further experience normally to a larger group, which also commissions the disciples to further action. In John’s Gospel, Mary sees Jesus in the garden and then Jesus sends the Spirit on the disciples. Thomas sees and comprehends Jesus and finally at the meal by the seashore Jesus commissions Peter to care for his sheep.

In John 21:1-19 Simon Peter tells the disciples he is going fishing and they join him. Maybe Peter is fed-up, maybe he finds reassurance in doing a long familiar task, that of fishing. Maybe he was trying to reassure himself that having denied Jesus three times, let his beloved friend and master down, at least he knows how to fish (although on this night, he also fails at fishing!)

***(Jesus and the Miraculous Catch of Fish***

*21 Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee.[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+21%3A1-21&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26900a)*] It happened this way: 2Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus[*[*b*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+21%3A1-21&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26901b)*]), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. 3“I’m going out to fish,” Simon Peter told them, and they said, “We’ll go with you.” So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. 4Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.*

*5He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?” “No,” they answered.*

*6He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.*

*7Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. 8The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.[*[*c*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+21%3A1-21&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26907c)*] 9When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.*

*10Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.” 11So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. 12Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. 13Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. 14This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.)*

In this passage the disciples had been fishing all night and had caught nothing, I expect they were feeling all very fed-up and despondent. A man on the shore tells them to fish on the right-hand side of the boat and suddenly they caught 153 fish! The disciples recognised Jesus at this point and Peter leaps into the water towards his friend and master. Have you ever wondered why there were so many fish? After all there were only 8 of them including Jesus, and even if they were all very hungry, they would only be able to eat 16 or maybe 24 of the fish. Just as at the wedding at Cana where he produced ridiculous amounts of wine, now he produces fantastic quantities of fish. This last miracle is just like his first, he is ridiculously, wonderfully generous! This is the first experience of the resurrected Jesus, now look at the second experience and what it leads to.

***(Jesus Reinstates Peter***

*15When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”*

*16Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”*

*17The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”*

*Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. 18Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” 19Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”)*

When they had finished eating, Jesus speaks with Simon Peter. He repeats his question three times *“Simon son of John, do you love me?”* Jesus wasn’t nagging or provoking Peter, the three times he asked the question were the exact number Peter needed, they matched exactly the number of times Peter denied him. Peter is invited to state his commitment, belief and loyalty. Jesus’ responses turned Peter away from shame and self-recrimination and outward to the world and charged him to care for Jesus’ flock. Peter is to show his love by caring for Jesus’ lambs; he is to love Jesus by feeding and nurturing like a shepherd. Jesus’ final command to Peter in :19, is ‘follow me”. Jesus is saying to Peter, I know you and I know you love me, now follow me; and that following finds expression in caring for the Shepherd’s flock. He is to show that love by taking care of the other members of the flock.

Our mission after recognising Jesus, affirming our love for him, is that we are to go out and care for his flock in whatever way we are called to do. We all have a calling, we all have gifts and talents that are God given, use them in his service. We have been given so much by this ridiculously generous Jesus, the call and commission is to follow him, and we do that as individuals and as a community, together. Amen.

**Prayers**

**A personal prayer**

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples, ‘I am with you always’.

Be with me today, as I offer myself to you.

Hear my prayers for others and for myself, and keep me in your care.

Lord Jesus Christ, you taught us to love our neighbour, and to care for those in need as if we were caring for you. In this time of anxiety, give us strength to comfort the fearful, to tend the sick, and to assure the isolated of **our** love, and **your** love, for your name’s sake. Amen.

**A prayer with children**

Dear God, my friends are not allowed to go to school or come over to play. I’m sad because I miss them. They must be feeling miserable and lonely as well. Please be close to them. Please be with friends in hospital or who are not feeling happy at the moment. Please help us them to get better and for all of us to know that you love us. Amen.

**A prayer of St Benedict**

O gracious and holy Father, give us wisdom to perceive you, diligence to seek you, patience to wait for you, eyes to behold you, a heart to meditate upon you, and a life to proclaim you, through the power of the spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Collect for the Fourth Sunday of Easter**

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. Amen

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

We are drawing towards the end of our time together in a few minutes, and here are a few….

**Notices**

As you know, all of our gatherings happen on-line so please join in by asking church office for a link to the video Zoom meetings, we look forward to seeing you!

Even when we are allowed to hold services in church, these video services will continue for a while as we are reaching people across the world, well beyond the physical location of Lille, and we are delighted to have you join in wherever you are, you are most welcome!

Do look at the new page on our website, with ideas of things to do, especially during lockdown.

We’ve made a short video about "Life in lockdown" and you can find it on our YouTube channel at this link

<https://youtu.be/EfjtyCxdkVs>

May I again say thank youto each of you who continue to give to the church either online or by bank transfer? The building may be closed, but the mission of the church continues as we take God’s word out into the world. You may not be able to add to the collection plate, but you can still contribute using one of the methods on our [Giving page](https://christchurchlille.fr/about-us/donations/). It is simple and it really helps, thank you.

You can also just scan this QR code



**Blessing**

May Christ the Good Shepherd

be the loving guardian of your soul

and the source of your abundant life.

And the blessing of God almighty…

**Final song** is one written and performed by Amanda, and who has kindly allowed us to use it.

<https://youtu.be/rkwpbluIlcs>