

## The Sixth Sunday of Easter

Alleluia, Christ is risen! **He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

### *The Collect for the sixth Sunday of Easter:*

God our redeemer, you have delivered us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of your Son: grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his continual presence in us he may raise us to eternal joy; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

### *A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles:*

While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, 'Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?' So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.

(Acts 10.44–48)

*The word of the Lord.*

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### *The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John:*

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. 'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

(John 15.9-17)

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

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*May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord.*

Today's reading is another section of Jesus' long discourse to his disciples before his arrest and subsequent crucifixion. Here, Jesus clearly states that the relationship he has with his disciples, and the relationship he desires with us, is akin to that of his own relationship with his heavenly Father; "*As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love.*" To experience such divine love, Jesus explains we should 'remain' or 'abide' in his love. This doesn't mean that God will simply stop loving us if we disobey him, it seems clear to me that that cannot be the case as we hear elsewhere in John's Gospel; "*For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.*" (Jn 3.16) I refuse to believe that God, who loves his creation so fiercely, will allow many to perish after risking everything in the incarnation and accomplishing so much in the resurrection. What would have been the point? We are told that the greatest commandment is, "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.*" This is the greatest and first

*commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'* (Mt 22.37-39) If this is what God expects of us, then his love for us must be equally all pervading but unlike us unalloyed by human faults and frailties. Love is not something we can know simply by observing it objectively, rather it is something we must experience. And when we experience what it means to love and to be loved, we are changed. Love for another necessarily makes us vulnerable because love inevitably opens us up to the possibility of hurt, rejection and disappointment. God's understanding of us too is changed by love, a love that necessitated his being born as one of us, of becoming vulnerable to rejection, hurt and even death but a love that transcends and transforms such things on rising from the tomb. Whenever we come together in worship, we are no longer just a group of individuals, we are a community seeking to abide in Christ and in return we are expected to extend that love in caring for and welcoming others. That task of true Christian welcome is a tremendous responsibility. However, showing people that they matter, that they are loved by God who earnestly wants to have a relationship with them through Christ, is our shared task, as members of the body of Christ. We are best equipped to do this when we listen closely for God's guidance as to how best we will bear fruit that will last. Ultimately, we have the assurance that God our Father will give us whatever we need for the task when we prayerfully ask him in Jesus' name. So, what are we waiting for?

May God bless you all.

***Additional prayer for the sixth Sunday of Easter:***

God our Father,  
whose Son Jesus Christ gives the water of eternal life:  
may we thirst for you,  
the spring of life and source of goodness,  
through him who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen**

Alleluia, Christ is risen! **He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

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**CHRIST CHURCH, READING LATEST – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY:**

**OUR SUNDAY EUCHARIST IS AT 10AM EACH WEEK.  
(THERE IS CURRENTLY NO SUNDAY 8AM OR TUESDAY 10AM SERVICE)  
EVENSONG IS AT 6PM SUNDAY. PLEASE SEE NEWSHEET FOR DATES.**

**SOCIAL DISTANCING, EXTRA CLEANING AND HYGIENE MEASURES, TRACK AND TRACE, AND THE USE OF FACE-COVERINGS WHILE IN CHURCH WILL REMAIN MANDATORY.**

**Please follow all guidance as indicated in church  
PLEASE NOTE THAT CONGREGATIONAL SINGING IS NOT ALLOWED AT PRESENT.**

**PLEASE WATCH OUT FOR FORTHCOMING COMMUNICATIONS REGARDING ANY CHANGES**

**Please do share this information with those who may have not received it.**

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If you have any queries regarding this please email Fr. Peter: [fr.peterday@virginmedia.com](mailto:fr.peterday@virginmedia.com) or telephone: 07702043857

**Please note: IF YOU, OR ANYONE YOU HAVE BEEN IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH ANYONE WITH COVID 19 SYMPTOMS OR HAVE ANY SYMPTOMS OF 'COVID-19' YOURSELF, PLEASE DO NOT ATTEND CHURCH.**

**Wishing every blessing for you and yours this Eastertide - Fr. Peter**