

EASTER 6 17TH May 2020

Welcome - Thank you for joining us

Thought for the day

Hold on, literally for dear life, to this Christ who is God's dependable love who brings us through all suffering with the dynamism of resurrection life.

1st letter of Peter

COLLECT

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.

The Acts of the Apostles. ch17.22-31

Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, 'Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, "To an unknown god." What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and

breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him – though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said, "For we too are his offspring." Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.'

On the outskirts of Athens is a small hill which was once used by the rulers of Athens as a place for trials, debates and discussion. The hill was called Areopagus – the stone of Aries the Greek god of war. Under Roman rule it became Mars hill. Mars being the Roman god of war. But in Paul's time the older Greek name was used by the council that still met there. They issued punishments for all kinds of vices including blasphemies against their gods. Paul appeared before the Areopagus as an apologist for the Christian Gospel.

PSALM 66.7-18

Bless our God, you peoples; let the sound of his praise be heard.

7 Bless our God, you peoples; make the voice of his praise to be heard.

8 Who holds our souls in life, and will not allow our feet to slip.

9 For you, O God, have proved us; you have tried us just as silver is tried.

10 You brought us into the snare; you laid heavy burdens upon our backs.

11 You let enemies ride over our heads; we went through fire and water; but you brought us out into a place of refreshment.

12 I will enter your house with burnt-offerings and will pay you my vows, which I promised with my lips and spoke with my mouth when I was in trouble.

13 I will offer you sacrifices of fat beasts with the smoke of rams; I will give you oxen and goats.

14 Come and listen, all you who fear God, and I will tell you what he has done for me.

15 I called out to him with my mouth, and his praise was on my tongue.

16 If I had found evil in my heart, the Lord would not have heard me;

17 But in truth God has heard me; he has attended to the voice of my prayer.

18 Blessed be God, who has not rejected my prayer, nor withheld his love from me.

Bless our God, you peoples; let the sound of his praise be heard.

The first letter of Peter. ch 3.13–22

Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an account of the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil.

For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water.

And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you – not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

In your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John. ch14.15–21

Jesus said to his disciples:
'If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you for ever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.'

PRAYERS

**Lord of life we pray ..
for your church, separated as we are by
a situation beyond our control. Help us
to remember that we meet in prayer
with so many Christians the world over.
May we be alive with your risen life
offering your love to the searching world
.. for you are the one true God .**

**Lord of life we pray ...
for our government, for business
managers, for church leaders; that all
meetings and conferences where
important decisions must be taken .. may
be constructive, compassionate, and true
.. for you are the one true God**

**Lord of life we pray for our loved ones,
our friends and neighbours who seem so
far from us now. Help us to be thankful
for the contact offered by modern
technology. We continue to pray for all
who work in essential services and for
volunteers who help to keep others safe
at home. We place them in your care...
for you are the one true God**

**Lord of life we pray.. for those who are
ill, for those who have died and those
who mourn their passing, for all who are
anxious and in mental distress... Lord
you know our needs .. for you are the
one true God.**

**Lord of life your love for us is so great
and our love for you so small, thank you
for accepting what we are able to offer.
Amen**

There is a story told of a king of Sparta who boasted to a visiting monarch about the walls of Sparta. The visitor could see no walls ." Where are these walls you boast so much about" he asked. The king pointed to his bodyguard of magnificent troops "These" he said " are the walls of Sparta. Every man a brick"

*While our church buildings are closed
please remember that we are the bricks*

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During the lockdown and while we do not have a Vicar in post , If you need a priest urgently please phone the Area Dean, Revd Canon John Ford 01642 964664