



St Mary's Scottish Episcopal Church, Dunblane
Material for Worship on the Second Sunday of Easter
19th April, 2020

In some parts of the church, today is known as Low Sunday and seen as something of an anti-climax after the exuberance of Easter Day. We may be feeling low this morning as we face at least another three weeks of lockdown and find it easy to identify with the fearful and desolate followers of Jesus in our Gospel reading, **John 20.19-31**. As you light your candle and prepare to join in worship with me, Nerys, celebrating the Eucharist in the church, and the rest of the St Mary's family in their homes, let us take a moment to hand over everything that is troubling us to God who knows our hearts and shares our sorrows.



Jesus suddenly appears to his disciples even though they are shut away behind locked doors, bringing them peace and breathing his spirit of love on them. As you read the first part of the passage, can you think of ways in which you have experienced the peace and love of Christ during the last few weeks?

While his friends rejoice in having seen their Lord again, Thomas struggles. As you read the rest of the passage, place yourself into the scene as Thomas, noticing what Jesus does for him and his reaction.



Lambert WILSON Michael LONSDALE

OF GODS AND MEN



Last Wednesday evening, Davie, Sean and I watched a film called *Of Gods and Men* which we found profoundly inspiring and challenging. It tells the true story of a community of French monks living simply alongside their poor Muslim neighbours in the hills of Algeria during the civil war in the 1990s. As their lives come under threat by both government forces and rebel groups, the brothers grapple with the question of whether to stay or leave. It is Christmas and as they worship Emmanuel, God with us, recognising that God became human, not to rid the world of suffering but to struggle alongside us, the answer to their dilemma becomes clear...

Like Thomas, we sometimes find it hard to believe that God is with us, especially in times of difficulty. What changed things for Thomas was seeing Christ's wounds, recognising that this was the same Jesus who had been willing to be nailed to a cross in order to enter into our human suffering and who stayed there to the end. Are you able to respond with Thomas: 'My Lord and My God'? If so, you may want to say the words to Jesus now and imagine him breathing the spirit of love into your heart, filling you with God's peace.

Jesus came into the locked room, joining his friends as they were praying, so that they knew that they weren't alone. And Jesus still does that today. Whenever we gather in Jesus' name he joins us. He is here now with us as we worship apart but together. And just as he recognised where Thomas was at, he knows our needs too.

Let us bring those needs to God in prayer.

We bring to you, Lord, our world, thinking especially of areas where there is violence, oppression, poverty and injustice ...
Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We bring to you, Lord our own country, praying especially for those in positions of leadership and influence and for the needs of all who selflessly serve others ...
Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We bring to you Lord, those who are suffering, praying especially for ...
Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We bring to you, Lord, your Church in all its richness and all its need, all its diversity and all its division, praying especially for ...
Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We bring to you, Lord, our homes and families,
inviting you into all our relationships,
and into the joys and sorrows of our everyday lives.
Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We bring to you, Lord, ourselves.
Give us a fresh understanding of what it means to
live in you. Help us now to celebrate the reality of
your presence among us, filling us with new life and
new hope.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers
For the sake of your son,
Our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen



*Family Owen's Easter Garden
at the front of their house for all
the dog walkers and exercisers to see*

In John's account, no sooner is the word of peace offered than the risen Christ sends the disciples out into the world to do his work. At the end of the Eucharist every Sunday, we are sent out of church with the words, 'Go in peace to love and serve the Lord'. I wonder what being 'sent out' by Christ looks like to you today in our locked-down existence? As we bring our time of worship to a close, let's spend a moment asking our Lord how we can serve him this week, knowing that we will be enabled to do so by his Spirit.