



# God's Word for This Week

The Grouped Parishes of Powerscourt with Kilbride

**SUNDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2020**  
The Third Sunday of Easter

## **COLLECT OF THE DAY**

Almighty Father,  
who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples  
with the sight of the risen Lord:  
Give us such knowledge of his presence with us,  
that we may be strengthened  
and sustained by his risen life  
and serve you continually in righteousness and truth;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## **THE OLD TESTAMENT READING. Isaiah 43: 1-12**

**43** But now thus says the Lord,

he who created you, O Jacob,  
he who formed you, O Israel:

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name, you are mine.

<sup>2</sup> When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;  
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;  
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,  
and the flame shall not consume you.

<sup>3</sup> For I am the Lord your God,  
the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour.

I give Egypt as your ransom,  
Ethiopia\* and Seba in exchange for you.

<sup>4</sup> Because you are precious in my sight,  
and honoured, and I love you,  
I give people in return for you,  
nations in exchange for your life.

<sup>5</sup> Do not fear, for I am with you;

I will bring your offspring from the east,  
and from the west I will gather you;  
<sup>6</sup> I will say to the north, 'Give them up',  
and to the south, 'Do not withhold;  
bring my sons from far away  
and my daughters from the end of the earth—  
<sup>7</sup> everyone who is called by my name,  
whom I created for my glory,  
whom I formed and made.'

<sup>8</sup> Bring forth the people who are blind, yet have eyes,  
who are deaf, yet have ears!

<sup>9</sup> Let all the nations gather together,  
and let the peoples assemble.

Who among them declared this,  
and foretold to us the former things?

Let them bring their witnesses to justify them,  
and let them hear and say, 'It is true.'

<sup>10</sup> You are my witnesses, says the Lord,  
and my servant whom I have chosen,  
so that you may know and believe me  
and understand that I am he.

Before me no god was formed,  
nor shall there be any after me.

<sup>11</sup> I, I am the Lord,  
and besides me there is no saviour.

<sup>12</sup> I declared and saved and proclaimed,  
when there was no strange god among you;  
and you are my witnesses, says the Lord.

## THE EPISTLE READING

### 1 Peter 1: 17-23

<sup>17</sup> If you invoke as Father the one who judges all people impartially according to their deeds, live in reverent fear during the time of your exile. <sup>18</sup>You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, <sup>19</sup>but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish. <sup>20</sup>He was destined before the foundation of the world, but was revealed at the end of the ages for your sake. <sup>21</sup>Through him you have come to trust in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are set on God.

<sup>22</sup> Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth\* so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply\* from the heart.\* <sup>23</sup>You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God.\*

## THE GOSPEL READING. Luke 24: 13-35

13 Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles\* from Jerusalem,<sup>14</sup> and talking with each other about all these things that had happened.<sup>15</sup> While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them,<sup>16</sup> but their eyes were kept from recognizing him.<sup>17</sup> And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad.\*<sup>18</sup> Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?'<sup>19</sup> He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth,\* who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,<sup>20</sup> and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him.<sup>21</sup> But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.\* Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning,<sup>23</sup> and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive.<sup>24</sup> Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.'<sup>25</sup> Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared!<sup>26</sup> Was it not necessary that the Messiah\* should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?'<sup>27</sup> Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

28 As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on.<sup>29</sup> But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them.<sup>30</sup> When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.<sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.<sup>32</sup> They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us\* while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?'<sup>33</sup> That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together.<sup>34</sup> They were saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!'<sup>35</sup> Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

## POINTERS FOR PRAYER

### On the Gospel Reading:

Through the Scriptures over the past weeks there have been two instances where the risen Lord is not recognised by his followers. At the empty tomb, Mary is overcome by her grief and confusion and does not immediately recognise Jesus and on the road to Emmaus in this week's scripture, it is no doubt human confusion and grief that causes the two men to flee Jerusalem and, in doing so, to become somewhat oblivious to the person of Christ with them on the road. In both instances it is interesting to note that it is not facial recognition that reveals the Christ to these people rather it is smaller intimacies such as the tone of voice used in saying Mary's name or the touch of bread and wine in the act of supper. Perhaps this speaks directly into and understanding of the type of connection with Christ that is far more than appearance. Perhaps today we could consider the connections with Christ in our own person, where we find him and who he is to us.

*Risen Lord, bring us to the understanding and remembrance of the times in our lives when we have encountered you in the places and faces we know. Where are the places and what were the situations in which you have encountered Christ in the past?*

### On the Old Testament Reading:

*'..Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.*

*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;* We would be hard-pressed to find more reassuring words from our creator than the ones given to us in this weeks' Old Testament reading from Isaiah. The second half of the book of Isaiah in particular offers several texts of comfort and reassurance from God and if there is a particular difficulty within your life at the moment I advise you to read the words of our First Reading carefully again and perhaps read further into the writings of this book.

*God of all creation; your hand has guided us and all your people throughout all time. Today we are reminded of your care for us and that we are under the protection of the Almighty Creator of all things! Give us grace anew today to rest in the knowledge that you are with us and protect us through all the twists and turns of our lives. In what areas of your life do you particularly need God's guidance and protection? Could you pray for someone else who might need this too?*

### **On the Epistle**

The combination of these readings today covers the broad span of God's presence with us and his work through us. Not only has God loved and protected us from the beginning of time, not only does Christ accompany us along the road of our lifetime but now we are reminded that we have the capacity to *love one another deeply\* from the heart*'. This freedom is given to us by the death and resurrection of our Lord and we mirror his love for us outward from ourselves into the lives of those around us.

*Risen Lord,*

*This present time has opened the doors of communication throughout the world and unified us as a human race. We have seen examples of 'loving deeply' in the courageous acts of those who place themselves frontline at high risk and in the simple acts of outreach across streets and balconies, social media and small local kindnesses throughout our villages and countryside. Today we pray for an increased capacity to love more deeply; a deeper recognition of exactly what depth of love you have already shown us, not only in your life on earth, but in your death upon the cross for us.*

*Renew and strengthen us this day and in the week to come; influence our prayers and intentions to move outward from ourselves and into the lives we cannot see, who at this time are in great need.*