



New Life!

The Collect of the Day

Almighty Father,
you have given your only Son to die for our sins
and to rise again for our justification:
Grant us so to put away the leaven
of malice and wickedness
that we may always serve you in pureness of living and truth;
through the merits of your Son
Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Old Testament Reading – Genesis 8: 6-16

6 At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made ⁷and sent out the raven; and it went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. ⁸Then he sent out the dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground; ⁹but the dove found no place to set its foot, and it returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took it and brought it into the ark with him. ¹⁰He waited another seven days, and again he sent out the dove from the ark; ¹¹and the dove came back to him in the evening, and there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf; so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. ¹²Then he waited another seven days, and sent out the dove; and it did not return to him anymore.

¹³ In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and saw that the face of the ground was drying. ¹⁴In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry. ¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you.

The Epistle – 1 Peter 1: 3-9

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶In this you rejoice,* even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, ⁷so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸Although you have not seen*him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, ⁹for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.



The Gospel Reading - John 20: 19-31

19 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' ²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.'²²When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin*), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

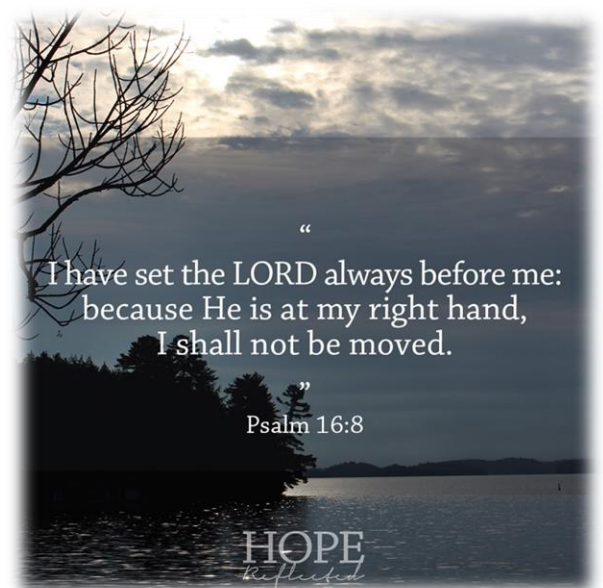
26 A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach

out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' ²⁸Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' ²⁹Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. ³¹But these are written so that you may come to believe* that Jesus is the Messiah,* the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

The Psalm 16

- 1 Preserve me, O God,
for in you have I taken refuge;
I have said to the Lord, 'You are my lord,
all my good depends on you.'
- 2 All my delight is upon the godly that are in
the land,
upon those who are noble in heart.
- 3 Though the idols are legion
that many run after,
their drink offerings of blood I will not offer,
neither make mention of their names
upon my lips.
- 4 The Lord himself is my portion and my
cup;
in your hands alone is my fortune.
- 5 My share has fallen in a fair land;
indeed, I have a goodly heritage.
- 6 I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel,
and in the night watches he instructs my heart.
- 7 I have set the Lord always before me;
he is at my right hand; I shall not fall.
- 8 Wherefore my heart is glad and my spirit rejoices;
my flesh also shall rest secure.
- 9 For you will not abandon my soul to Death,
nor suffer your faithful one to see the Pit.
- 10 You will show me the path of life;
in your presence is the fullness of joy
and in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.



Pointers for Prayer

The First Reading from Genesis reminds us of the faithfulness of Noah in obeying God's commands and in hearing them in the first place! Perhaps there is something in particular that requires a decision or a change in your life or yourself that has come

to the fore this week. Ask God for a renewed ability to be able to hear what he is saying to you about this situation and the grace to follow where he leads, in faith.

Noah was patient in critical circumstances and without truly knowing what the future would bring in this new world God was preparing. Who do you know who might be fretful or anxious in particular at this time? Is there someone whose future is uncertain? Perhaps you could ask God's presence to be known in this life and his protection and comfort along with his guidance. How patient and trusting are we of God at this present time?

(Genesis) 15'Then God said to Noah, 16'Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you.

After a long wait, God gave Noah and his family a new beginning and a fresh start. Surely this is our prayer for this world and its people today. What old habits do you wish to 'leave in the ark' behind you as you move forward. Pray for God's help with this.

St. Peter's First Letter mentions '...even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, 7so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire..'

Some would say that there is no such thing as coincidence with God in the lives of each individual. Usually the trials that come are way lead to our growth as we are more likely to grow as a person and spiritually in the difficult times rather than the times when our lives are easier. Today we pray for our own faith in God and for our ability to grow from the testing times put in front of us. What are your personal challenges today?

21Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' *22When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.* Of all the times in the Church's calendar, this week is a week of celebration and the reminder of the phenomenal life-giving power of God. The risen Christ's first encounter with his disciples following his resurrection mirror his care and understanding of them and challenges they have been through surrounding his death. He offers PEACE to them – *his* peace, not the peace we obtain from this world but a spiritual inner peace. He follows this with a physical transference of the Holy Spirit by his breath. Breath is often the word used to describe the Spirit of God. It is the life-giving breath which animates all things. How then can any one part of God's creation be apart from another? How does this change how we regard and care for the earth and all its living creatures?

Life-giving breath is the link between all the scriptures today as Noah is afforded new life, Peter reminds us of 'new birth' and Jesus himself breathes new life in the Spirit into those who follow him.

Today, give thanks for the risen Christ; the fulfilment of God's promise of eternal life and the immediate gift that Jesus gives back to his followers in the physical indwelling of the Spirit and the divine peace that this brings.