

Biblical Reflections and Prayers for the 'Eight Days'

5 June – 12 June 2011

Day 7 – Saturday 11 June LIVING IN RESURRECTION FAITH

Reading

Isaiah 60: 1-3, 18-22

Psalm: 118:1, 5-17

Romans 6: 3-11

Matthew 28:1-10

You shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates, Praise

I shall not die, but I shall live

...we have been buried with Christ by baptism into death...so we too might walk in newness of life

Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid...'

Commentary

The first Christians' devotion to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of the bread and the prayers was made possible, above all, by the life-giving Holy Spirit, bringing the power of the exalted Lord Jesus into their midst. This power is living still, and today's Jerusalem Christians witness to this. Whatever the difficulties of the present situation in which they find themselves – however much it feels like Gethsemane and Golgotha – they know in faith that all is made new by the truth of Jesus' resurrection from the dead.



The light and hope of the Resurrection changes everything. As

Isaiah prophesies, it is the transformation of darkness into light; it is an enlightening for all peoples. The power of the Resurrection shines out from Jerusalem, the place of the Lord's Passion, and draws all nations to its brightness. This is a new life, in which violence is put aside, and security found in salvation (God's wholeness – *shalom*) and praise.

In the Psalm we are given words to celebrate the central Christian experience of passing from death to life. This is the abiding sign of God's steadfast love. This passing from the terrors of death into new life is the defining reality of all Christians. For, as Paul teaches, we have, in baptism, entered into the tomb of Christ, having died with him so that we might live to share his risen life. We have died with Christ, and live to share his risen life. And so we can see the world differently – with compassion, patience, love and hope; for in Christ the present struggles can never be the whole story. Even as divided Christians, we know that the baptism that unites us is a bearing of the Cross in the light of the Resurrection through the Holy Spirit poured into our hearts (Romans 5:5)".

For the Christian Gospel this resurrection life is not some mere concept or helpful idea; it is rooted in a vivid event in time and space. It is this event we hear recounted in the Gospel reading with great humanity and drama. From Jerusalem the Risen Lord sends greetings to His disciples across the ages, calling us to follow Him without fear. He goes ahead of us.

For Reflection/Discussion

- What images of resurrection does our Australian context offer us? Of baptism?
- What experiences of transformation have you had in your life?
- What is your attitude towards fellow Christians baptised in other traditions? How does baptism unite us?
- At present, plant and animal species on our planet are becoming endangered and extinct at an alarming and tragic rate. We in the developed world in particular are party to and complicit in a massive act of 'uncreation'. Is it possible/responsible to preach a resurrection faith into this reality?

Prayer

God, Protector of the widow, the orphan and the stranger – in a world where many know despair, you raised your Son Jesus to give hope for humanity and renewal to the earth. Continue to strengthen and unify your Church in its struggles against the forces of death in the world, where violence against creation and humanity obscures the hope of the new life you offer. We pray in the name of Christ, who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God, across all the ages. Amen.



National Council of
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