

Sunday 4th May 2025: Second Sunday of Easter

For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30 am or some other suitable time.

Theme for today is "Share the Good News!"

Opening words:

Christ is Risen!

He is risen indeed alleluia!

Hymn StF 302 He has risen!

Opening prayers:

Glory to you, O God: you raised Jesus from the grave, bringing us victory over death and giving us eternal life.

Glory to you, O Christ: for us and for our salvation you overcame death and opened the gate to everlasting life.

Glory to you, O Holy Spirit: you lead us into the truth and breathe new life into us.

Glory to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

If we have fallen into despair, **Lord, forgive us.**

If we have failed to hope in you, **Lord, forgive us.**

If we have been fearful of death, **Lord, forgive us.**

If we have forgotten the victory of Christ, **Lord, forgive us.**

Silence

May the living God raise us from despair, give us victory over sin and set us free in Christ. **Amen.**

Lord of all life and power, who through the mighty resurrection of your Son overcame the old order of sin and death to make all things new in him: grant that we, being dead to sin and alive to you in Jesus Christ, may reign with him in glory; to whom with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit be praise and honour, glory and might, now and in all eternity. **Amen.**

Hymn StF 306 Now the green blade rises from the buried grain

Bible readings: Psalm 30 Acts 9: 1-6 John 21: 1-19

Reflection

Our reflection for this Sunday is brought to us by Dee Moden our Local Preachers' Secretary

We read in Psalm 30, which is attributed to David, that cries for help were heard and they were lifted up out of despair. So, this Psalm is one of thanksgiving and praise for God's deliverance.

Then we have the Gospel reading from John how Jesus appeared to the disciples beside the lake, and how he took Peter aside and specifically asked him the question "Do you love me?" These disciples had been fishing all night to no avail and just as they were returning tired and disappointed, this man, who they didn't at first recognise, told them to cast their nets the other side. Why? what did he know? But despite all of this they did, and the result was an amazing catch which they struggled to haul into the boat, but then they realised it was the Lord, and suddenly it all made sense. Peter as impetuous as ever couldn't wait until the boat got to the shore, he had to get there first.

When they had finished breakfast Jesus took Peter aside to speak to him, this was a very important question Jesus was asking Peter. Even though it frustrated Peter to be asked 3 times, Jesus needed Peter to be sure and to understand what it meant, and the enormity of what Jesus was asking: "Do you love me? Then feed my sheep" This task was going to be greater than this massive haul. They were going out into the world to spread the Good News, they were to become "Fishers of Men"

We also have the reading from Acts where we hear of Saul's conversion. Such an amazing turnaround from persecution to utter devotion, from being notoriously famous for slaying Christians to becoming increasingly famous for being a Christian. He too was called, very spectacularly and most unexpectedly, to go out into the world to spread the Good News. Again, a personal invitation, a calling.



We are called in many different ways by God to do many different things enabling to spread the Good News. Some a gentle prodding, some a persistent nudging and some a dramatic change, and this can come at any point in our lives.

These two important readings from the N.T. are really stand-alone passages, because there is so much content to gain an insight into and unpick. The challenge for us all is to read these passages for ourselves, to explore personally what it means to us, also knowing too, that it won't be plain sailing!

We need to ask ourselves:

- Are we really listening, and recognising, God's call?
- Are we ready to take up that challenge?
- Are we willing to share the Good News?

Hymn: StF 662 Have you heard God's voice: has your heart been stirred?

Prayer written by Nick Fawcett from 'No Ordinary Man Book 2'

Gracious God,

You are under no illusions about us.

You do not imagine we are better than we really are, nor are you taken in by the mask we wear for the world.

You see us in all our shabbiness and shame, and you reach out in love.

But you are under no illusions either about our unworthiness.

You do not consider that we are worse than we really are, nor are you swayed by the way we can sometimes do ourselves down.

You see us in all our potential and all our weakness, and you find in our heart for both.

You see the bad and the good, the worst and the best, and you recognise not only what we are but what we might become through your grace.

Come to us now, as we come to you, and use us for your glory, In the name of Jesus Christ our

Prayers of Intercession:

In the power of the resurrection, we offer our prayers to God.

Let us pray.

Remember, O Lord, in your love the Church throughout the world . . . those recently baptized and confirmed . . . those who minister to others . . .

Silence

May your whole Church know your power and be a sign that Christ is risen.

Lord of life, **hear us in your love.**

Remember in your love the world you have made . . . those who seek a fair and proper use of the world's resources . . . those who strive for justice and peace among the nations . . .

Silence

May the whole earth be transformed by mercy and rejoice in hope.

Lord of life, **hear us in your love.**

Remember in your love those who suffer . . . the victims of violence and injustice . . . those who mourn . . .

Silence

May all in need find comfort, strength and freedom in the living Christ.

Lord of life, **hear us in your love.**

Remember in your love those who have died: those who have confessed the faith and those whose faith is known to you alone.

Silence

May all your children receive grace and light according to their needs and come at last to share with all the saints in life eternal.

Lord of life, **hear us in your love.**

Gracious God, we ask these prayers through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord and Saviour. **Amen.**

Offer to God your offertory for the week, and say the Lord's Prayer...

Hymn: StF 664 Lord, you call us to your service, each in our own way.

Closing blessing –

God the Father, by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead, strengthen us to walk with him in his risen life; and may almighty God bless us, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.