



BENEFICE BULLETIN

Church News for

Bedale, Burrill, Leeming and Thornton Watlass

Sunday 7th April 2024

Second Sunday of Easter

OUR PRAYERS ARE ASKED FOR

Gaynor, Bel Newman, Mark Newman, Lesley Hall, Delma Bode, John Hall, Donna Bradley, George, Olive Robinson, Harry Scorer, Terry Gregory, Kath Finkill, Amanda, David, Chris, Liz, Tracey, Sue, Pam Kenyon, Arthur Lightfoot, Alison, Robin, Kath Moore, Tim, Dan, and John Pickard.

RIP

Stuart Smyth and Pauline Pearson
May they rest in peace and rise in glory

Praying for Edwin in Bolivia

Dear Lord Jesus. Thank you so much for all the precious children in this world. We know they mean so much to you. We pray you would help us do all we can to protect and give them the start in life they deserve. Lord we bring to you all of the wonderful work being done to release children from poverty, and we pray that you would bless every pair of hands that works for you. Increase and bless their efforts in Jesus' name, Amen.

Collect

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, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

First Reading: Acts 4:32-35

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

Second Reading: 1 John 1:1-2:2

We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us— we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our

fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Gospel Reading: John 20:19 - end

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.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So 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.' 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.' Then 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.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.' Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But 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.

Post Communion Prayer

Lord God our Father, through our Saviour Jesus Christ you have assured your children of eternal life and in baptism have made us one with him: deliver us from the death of sin and raise us to new life in your love, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Links Between the Lectionary Readings

The link is the joy that stems from the resurrection, and also its theological and ethical consequences. The Epistle reading, from 1 John, recognises the fact of sin and presents Jesus as the provider of atonement. In the Gospel, John movingly describes the story of doubting Thomas, subtly making the point that we do not need to see the risen Jesus as

such but can meet him through faith because he is a heavenly being.

Acts 4.32-35

This interesting passage describes the holding of goods in common among the early Christians. Some scholars suggest that the Christians learned this habit from the Essenes. In any event, and at the risk of being over-reductionist, the passage shows the change provoked among the Christians by the resurrection of Jesus. There is no suggestion that the Christians gave up their own homes and lived together. Perhaps Luke is overstating the situation when he states that they share everything. It seems as though it was only surplus things that were disposed of in order to provide for the needy.

It is important to remember that any Christian understanding of the resurrection has ethical consequences. In seeking to apply the doctrine today we should ask both how we react to the doctrine of the resurrection and what changes it should, and does, provoke in us. The resurrection certainly demands a response because of its status as the supreme divine act in the human world following the event of creation.

1 John 1.1–2.2

The story of first-century Christianity is of a messianic sect discovering a history as a religion distinct from Judaism. One of the things that happens when this takes place is that it becomes necessary to introduce religious and ethical systems to deal with recurrent problems such as transgressions and disputes in communities. This is what we find in 1 John. The author makes it clear that resurrection belief impinges on prevailing ethical standards and transforms them. Nothing can be the same in the light of the resurrection. In John's case, it seems the secession had troubled the communities in Asia Minor. This may have a doctrinal basis in terms of the heresy known as docetism, which appeared in various forms and denied the connection

between the heavenly Christ and the earthly Jesus. The term derives from the Greek verb meaning 'to seem'. Docetism was the belief that Jesus only seemed to have a physical body and suffer and die, but was in fact an immortal heavenly being. In effect this would mean that his suffering was not real. Clearly the question which doubting Thomas would ask specifically addresses the issue and is given the clear reply that, with the marks of the crucifixion in his body, the suffering was genuine. Here John deals with the problem in a different way. He begins with a call back to basics and to relationality with God that the Jesus events established.

Continual confession of sin is made the key to harmonious relations in the community as it restores fractured relationships towards God and others. John in many ways offers a more realistic portrait than the idealism of Acts. We need to consider the relation of vision to reality in today's Church and our own personal circumstances.

John 20.19-31

The Gospel reading raises the question in another way of what it means to believe in the risen Jesus. Thomas needs to see to believe. This is not as unreasonable, perhaps, as critical

Christianity portrays the Doubter. Thomas was genuinely puzzled by talk of resurrection from the dead. He was not the only one. The Jews found it scandalous that a crucified person could be the Messiah and discounted reports of the resurrection. Someone hung on a tree was, in their understanding, cursed by God. By their definition he could not be the Messiah. We cannot see the risen Jesus. We have, instead, historical narratives of his resurrection appearances and the empty tomb. We need to translate these stories into our own sphere of understanding so that, like Thomas, we are genuinely touched by the resurrection. In attempting to do so,

consider the possible transformation of your own perspective, surprised not just by joy but by various forms of new insight. There is something of Thomas in all of us. In welcoming the Doubter, let's try to share his new perspective and let the resurrection transform us as we

ponder on it. May we come to exclaim with him 'My Lord and my God'.

Service Times and Venues

Thursdays 10:30am BCP communion at St Gregory's

	<i>Morning Services - St Gregory's, Bedale</i>	<i>Morning Services - St Mary's, St John's and Burrill</i>	<i>18:30 —Evensong</i>
7th April	8:00am St Gregory's #	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #	St Gregory's, Leeming
	9:15am St Gregory's #F	11am St John's, Leeming #	
14th April	10:30am—Benefice Service with confirmation, at St Mary's Thornton Watlass #		Burrill
21st April	9:15am St Gregory's #F	10:45 St Mary's Thornton Watlass #	St Mary's, Thornton Watlass
		11am St John's, Leeming #	

Communion F Facebook