

Easter 1 / Easter 2 2020

Traditionally, we count Sundays after Easter, today then being Easter 1. The more modern idea is to count Sundays of Easter, which makes Easter Day Easter 1 & today Easter 2.

19 th April Easter 1	8.00 Holy Communion	I John 5 vv 4-12 John 20 vv 19-23	
19 th April Easter 2	9.30 Holy Communion – what we would have done at Cuxton without the lockdown.	Exodus 14 vv 10-31 p71 Exodus 15 vv 20&21 p73 Acts 2 vv 14-32 I Peter 1 vv 3-9 p1217 John 20 vv 19-31 p1089	SoF 61 Christ the Lord is Risen <i>Gloria in Excelsis Deo</i> 378 (between Exodus 14&15) Low in the Grave Psalm 16 285 Jesus Christ is Risen Today 515 Spirit of the Living God 303 Jesus Stand Among Us 480 Rejoice
19 th April Easter 2	11.00 Holy Communion what we would have done at Halling without the lockdown.	Exodus 14 vv 10-31 p71 Hymn5 sung Exodus 15 vv 20&21 p73 Acts 2 vv 14-32 I Peter 1 vv 3-9 p1217 John 20 vv 19-31 p1089	MP 192 Praise to the Lord <i>Gloria in Excelsis Deo</i> 5 All Hail the Power Psalm 16 9 Alleluia! Alleluia! 94 He Lives 119 Jesus is Lord 242 Thou Art Worthy

Last Sunday was Easter Day and a beautiful day weather wise. Spring had truly sprung. There are signs of life everywhere in God's Creation. We are surrounded by the evidence of His love. It was an unusual day for worship, but then surely the point of worship is that we seek to worship God in spirit and in truth no matter what the circumstances of our lives. S Paul says (I Thessalonians 5) ¹⁵ *See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.* ¹⁶ *Rejoice evermore.* ¹⁷ *Pray without ceasing.* ¹⁸ *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.* ¹⁹ *Quench not the Spirit.* ²⁰ *Despise not prophesyings.* ²¹ *Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.* ²² *Abstain from all appearance of evil.* ²³ *And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* ²⁴ *Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.* We can trust God for this mortal life and for our eternal life.

I began by singing some Easter hymns in the garden in the sunshine. I thought Tommy looked a bit surprised when, having finished one hymn, I started another and kept on doing so. Then we went indoors and I celebrated Holy Communion alone physically at my kitchen table, except that I went outside to proclaim the Gospel – if only, like S Francis, to the birds and the animals.

It was actually rather a wonderful experience. I thought of you all. I thought of all my Christian family and friends, living and departed, at one in the Holy Spirit, united in the praise of God our heavenly Father and of His Son, our friend and brother, Jesus Christ our Lord, and indeed of the same Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, Who teaches us to know God as our Father & Jesus as our Lord, *Three in One, and One in Three*, we caught up by love into the unity of the Trinity. How was Sunday for you? (I do like to hear how you are all getting on at these times.)

Holy Communion was a truly spiritual experience for me last Sunday, but I did wonder if I had consecrated my kitchen table? But what, if I had? There is a sacredness about all meals, I think. Our nutritional needs are met and more than met by the food God gives us to eat. When we eat with other people, there is the fellowship of the table. It is good to eat together as families or as friends. We may toast absent friends. Especially on occasions such as Christmas & Easter, we may remember our own loved ones among *those who*, in the words of the Christmas Nine Lessons & Carols service, *rejoice with us, but upon another shore and in a greater light, that multitude which no man can number, whose hope was in the Word made flesh, and with whom we for evermore are one*. We remember Jesus present with us at the table. Some people even leave an empty place for the unseen guest. Such thoughts motivate us to share our food and fellowship with those who do not enjoy enough of either.

In today's Gospel reading, the Risen Christ meets His disciples on two occasions, the Sunday on which He rose from the dead and the Sunday following. We know that the first occasion was a meal because S Luke tells us so. The second was surely a supper too. Christ is present with His people. No locked doors, nothing on earth or in heaven, can keep Him out. He makes Himself known to us in so many ways. On the road to Emmaus (before this late supper on the first Easter Day), He made Himself known to Cleopas and His companion in their fellowship (where two or three were gathered together), in the Scriptures and in the Breaking of Bread. He shows His precious wounds. What He accomplished by His suffering and dying on the Cross (our redemption, the redemption of the whole created order) is permanent, eternal. Nothing can take that away from us – not even the corona virus or the lockdown which, for now, denies us some of the means of grace. We may long to be together again and to share in Holy Communion once more. The New Testament teaches us that this is God's Will for us, our Eucharistic fellowship around the Lord's Table at the Supper He Himself told us to hold in remembrance of Him. God's love and power are, however, infinite. He finds a way to make Himself known to us, to reveal His love to us, to manifest our fellowship with Him and with all other Christians everywhere on earth and in heaven. S Paul again: Romans 8 ³⁸ *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,*³⁹ *Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

At supper (at the Last Supper in John 17 and at this Easter supper in John 20), Jesus commissions His apostles to continue to do His work in the world. Dare I say, *to complete His work*? He endues and inspires them with the Holy Spirit in order to enable them to do this. He bestows on them the power which God the Father bestows on Him. He bears with Thomas. Thomas acknowledges Him as Who He is, *my Lord and my God*. Every Christian may say the same, *my Lord and my God*. It is perfectly clear from these passages that Christ not only commissions and empowers the apostles to continue His work. What He says to them, He says to us all – to *them also which shall believe on me through their word* (John 17²⁰) – the many, many millions of us who are blessed because, although we have not seen, we yet have believed. We believe and believing have life through His Name. This is the Bread of Life, the Bread which nourishes us to eternal life, the Bread which we have to share with the world.