**24 May 2020 7 Easter White**

**Readings Acts 1.6-14** 1 Peter 4.12-14; 5.6-11 John 17.1-11

Come to us this day O Lord. **Come to us in light**

Speak to us this day O Lord. **Speak to us your truth**

Eternal God, giver of love and power, your Son Jesus Christ has sent us into all the world to preach the gospel of his kingdom: confirm us in this mission, and help us to live the good news we proclaim; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Collect of the Day**

O God the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: we beseech you, leave us not comfortless, but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

**First Reading Acts 1.6-14**

6When the apostles had come together, they asked Jesus, ‘Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?’ 7He replied, ‘It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. 8But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’ 9When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. 10While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. 11They said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.’

12Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day’s journey away. 13When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. 14All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

**Reflection**

I do feel sorry for the disciples. We know the beginning middle and the ending of the story of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection (well we know that Jesus returns to his Father) but for them everything was new, unexpected, and unpredictable. Of course, they would ask Jesus if the time for the Messiah to do what the Messiah ought to do is now! Remember that the Jewish people were waiting for the Messiah for centuries. And their patient waiting included working out what the Messiah was going to do, and how the world would look with the Messiah in charge. The restored kingdom! Hurrah, in the language of our younger folk ‘*bring it on Jesus!*’

As a child I was often told that things were none of my business, and no one likes being kept in the dark unless it is for a wonderful surprise party or gift. It would seem that Jesus is keeping the disciples in the dark! “*It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority.”* The disciples response is not a strop about being ignored or left unknowing, for then Jesus tells them what will happen next: *“ 8But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses*”

How remarkable that Jesus on the point of leaving them does not look back and praise and celebrate the shared life together, nor does he lament the failures. He gives them a gift – the power of the Holy Spirit, and he commends them to their future as witnesses, carriers of the good news of Jesus the Messiah. As he leaves them his last words are those of trust – YOU will be my witnesses.

The first things that the disciples then do is to be told by the ‘men in white’ that Jesus will return in the same way, so they leave for Jerusalem, and together they work out the priority for their work of witness, their priority for their lives. Prayer. They gather men and women to pray. This is what they are called to do, this is how their new calling is sustained and enfleshed, time in prayer with God as the highest calling.

In the days before Pentecost we are called to pray from people who as yet do not know of the love of God. In the Thy Kingdom Come initiative, we are asked to pray for five- five people who we would love to know the Lord. Who are you praying for?

**Discipleship Prayer**

**Good and Gracious God, Your Son, Jesus Christ, invites all people to follow him and become his disciples. Touch our hearts, enlighten our minds, and stir our spirit. Help us daily to take up our cross and follow him; by living his Word and proclaiming his Good News to those around us. May our faith in you increase, may our hunger for the Gospel intensify, and may our parishes be strengthened as we learn to love one another as he has loved us. For this we pray, Amen.**

**Prayers of Intercession from Rites on the Way**

In the power of the Spirit let us pray to the Father, through Jesus Christ who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. We pray for all who follow the Way of Christ and for the unity of all Christian people; break down that which separates us from one another and from you, that knowing your forgiveness we may share your love with a needy world. Lord, hear us.**Lord, graciously hear us.**

We pray for those who hold positions of responsibility and power
both internationally and in our local communities; may your Holy Spirit guide them in their decision-making, so that paths of truth and justice may be open to everyone. Lord, hear us.**Lord, graciously hear us.**

We give you thanks and pray for all who support and care for us as we follow the Way of Christ, our families and friends, and our fellow pilgrims along the way; nourish us all with the words of life and the bread of heaven, that we may worship you joyfully, listen to you willingly and serve you gladly. Lord, hear us.**Lord, graciously hear us.**

We pray for those who, through sickness, misfortune or abuse, feel that their lives are without meaning or direction; surround them with your love, and give wisdom and patience to all who support and guide them. Lord, hear us.**Lord, graciously hear us.**

We thank you for the fullness of life you give us in Jesus Christ, and for all whose lives have been an example of your truth and life for us; may our communion with them, and with all the saints, nourish and support us on our earthly pilgrimage. Lord, hear us.**Lord, graciously hear us.**

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**Generous Creator, loving Saviour, divine Helper: We thank you that no person anywhere in this world is a “nobody” in your sight; there never has been and never will be an insignificant person. When you bring a human soul into being, you reach deep into your own nature, shaping us in your own likeness and giving us your own breath.**

**By your Spirit you adopt us into your true family. You know our thoughts and number the hairs on our head. Through Christ you plant eternal words into our minds; You have shared our blood, experienced our sufferings, and have lain in a cold tomb.**

**Awesome Creator and Redeemer, Yours is the inclusive kingdom, the gracious, embracing power, and love’s purest glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

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