

Prayer ~ Sunday 4th April 2021

No 1011

Lectionary readings: Isaiah 25: 6-9; Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24;
1 Corinthians 15: 1-11; John 20: 1-18 (Easter Day)

For reflection and prayer

Jesus is risen. Alleluia!

- **Isaiah 25:** Isaiah speaks of a wonderful feast spread before us - a feast of joy, love, peace, hope, life. This is the Good News of Easter Day and every day for us - for all people - that God has provided a feast of good things for us here and now. Let's picture the spiritual feast laid before us. Let's reflect on what our greatest need is as we survey all that God has made available for us. And let's feast on the gifts God has given us. Yes, we believe death has been conquered and we can look forward to a time when there will be no more tears. But God wants us to enjoy salvation - healing, wholeness - now.
- **Psalm 118:** We had this Psalm last week and so I remind you of v24: *'This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.'* This is indeed a day of thanksgiving and rejoicing. v1: *'We give thanks to you, O Beloved, for you are kind; your steadfast love endures forever.'* (Psalms for Praying) What would you like to give thanks for today? What cause have you for rejoicing today? Share that with God. And if you are struggling and find you can't give thanks, then share that with God too and let God enfold you in His loving arms.
- **1 Corinthians 15:** Paul outlines the Good News of Jesus' death and resurrection and how He appeared after

He rose from death to many hundreds of people, including Paul himself. Paul acknowledges God's grace and generosity to him, the one who had tried to stamp out the church. It was Paul's encounter with the risen Christ that stopped him in his tracks and turned his life around. We might like to reflect on an experience we have had of the divine presence touching our lives in a life-changing way.

- **John 20:** Be present with Mary, weighed down with grief, unable to recognise Jesus standing before her. Can you recall times when you were so overwhelmed with grief, or anger, or some other deep emotion that you failed to recognise God's presence with you? Then hear Jesus call Mary by name and notice how she changes. She knows Jesus is alive, that He is with her, that His love will never leave her. Imagine you are there at the tomb. Your heart is heavy, but you dare to look into the darkness of your fear or pain or disappointment. And you hear a voice saying, 'Why are you weeping? Why is your heart heavy today? Who or what is it you are looking for?' What answer do you give? Then hear Jesus say your name tenderly, lovingly. Feel the joy, the delight, the wonder, the amazement, the energy rising within you, as you know yourself loved, deeply loved, infinitely loved by God. Or is it too good to be true, do you think? Get in touch with your feelings and let your heart respond. The encounter becomes mission, for the Good News is always meant to be shared. And Mary is asked to go and share her experience with the disciples. And so Mary goes and says, 'I have seen the Lord.' This is our mission too. Reflect on the times when you can truthfully say, 'I have seen the Lord at work in my life in a wonderful, life-changing way.'