

Lectionary readings: Acts 3: 12-19; Psalm 4; 1 John 3: 1-7; Luke 24: 36b-48

For reflection and prayer

- **Acts 3:** A healing had just taken place and the people who witnessed it were filled with wonder and amazement. Peter assured the people that it was through the power of the risen Christ that the man had been healed. He goes on to say that they too can know the healing power of Christ by being forgiven and being set free to live a changed life. The presence of the risen Christ is in our midst, in our hearts. He wants to set us free from guilt and from everything else that keeps us bound. He wants to make us whole. So let's open ourselves to His healing grace this week so that we, too, might be changed. And let's respond with a sense of wonder and amazement as we live our lives this week and see signs of God's living presence in others around us and in our circumstances.
- **Psalm 4:** Here are some verses from 'Psalms for Praying' which we might like to reflect on this week.
v1: *'Answer me when I call, O Beloved of my heart. You enveloped me in love when I was in distress. Be gracious to me now; hear my prayer.'* v3: *'You know that the Beloved dwells with those who are filled with love; and hears when our hearts cry out.'* v4: *'Though you may feel angry, do not give in to fear; commune with the Heart of your heart as you rest, and be in silence ...'* v8: *'In peace will I spend my days and sleep at night; for You alone, my Beloved, take away my fears.'*

- **1 John 3:** We are God's children, God's beloved. That's our true identity, our true self. And if we live out of our beloved-child-of-God self, we will become more and more like Jesus. *'No one who lives deeply in Christ makes a practice of sin.'* (v6 The Message) And that's because we know when we have done wrong and failed to love and forgive like Jesus. So we will come to God in repentance seeking forgiveness. So let's live *'deeply in Christ'* this week, ever mindful of God's extravagant love for us.
- **Luke 24:** *'Peace be with you Don't be upset, and don't let all these doubting questions take over.'* (v36-37 The Message) Jesus appeals to their senses of touch and sight and taste and hearing to show that He is truly who He says He is. The risen Christ is still in our midst offering us peace. He will be revealed to people around us to the extent that we *'live deeply'* in Him and allow Him to be at the centre of who we are. Let's open ourselves to Christ, to His risen presence and His healing grace. That means taking time to be still, open, waiting in silence and being honest about where we are, sharing our doubts and questions, as Thomas did, thus giving God a chance to meet us where we are and change us.

A prayer

Risen Lord, God of amazing surprises, I praise You for Your mercy and love in coming to me in my doubts and unbelief, with no words of condemnation, but a loving invitation to find You present right where I am, in the midst of my life. Open my eyes, Lord, that I may see You in the ordinary, everyday experiences of my life this week, and know that there are no dead ends in life, no dead ends to growing, only glorious new beginnings. May I say yes to You this week and find Your gracious, loving presence with me, making all things new.