

A Devotion for the week after Easter Day

This service is written for Stretton Park in Maffra and Laurina Lodge in Heyfield, but with the intention of being available for use in other retirement villages and nursing homes. This service can be used as a script or distributed to those who are interested for their private use.

INTRODUCTION

Here are some verses from the Psalm for the day, Psalm 16

Protect me O God, for in you I take refuge. I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night my heart instructs me. I keep the Lord always before me. With the Lord at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad and my soul rejoices. My body rests secure.

HYMN No. 28 - How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

You can read the words to yourself, or out loud. If you remember the tune well enough you can sing it yourself. You can, of course sing just the first, or the first and last verses.

PRAYER

Thank you God that you love us and protect us. Protect us from the dark times, we pray, from our fears and our worries. May we worry only about those things we can do, or change, and help us to accept with grace those things we cannot change. So, good Lord, we bring before you those things from the past, that cause us grief, and that we cannot change; Those things in the past that we did or did not do. Turn our hearts towards you and let us know your forgiveness and peace we pray, in Jesus name, Amen

HYMN No. 9 - Praise my soul the King of heaven

BIBLE READING

Our Bible reading for the first week after Easter is John 20 : 19 - 31. Here is a shortened version:

On the Sunday evening after Jesus was killed, his disciples were meeting behind locked doors. Jesus came to them and said “peace be with you, as the Father sent me, so I send you”, and showed them his wounds. He then said “receive the Holy Spirit” and he told them they now had the authority to forgive sins. The disciple Thomas was not there and did not believe what the other disciples told him. A week later, Jesus came to them again and showed himself to Thomas who responded “My Lord and my God”. Then Jesus said “Blessed are those who believe me without seeing me”.

REFLECTION

This meeting of the disciples gives us a model for the gatherings of the disciples before the Church had a formal structure. The believers are there, Jesus is there and the Holy Spirit is there too. The room is just a lounge room or a dining room, there may not have really been a difference anyway, in those days. Today, Jesus meets us wherever we are gathered, as He did then. He says we are blessed if we believe in Him without seeing Him as Thomas and the other disciples did, so that makes us special. To those disciples, he gave the authority to forgive sins, as we are forgiven in prayer these days. Even if we can't go out as Jesus was sent out, we are still called to lead a Christian life, no matter where or when we live. In that way we are doing the best we can to follow the call of God.

HYMN No.26 - I need Thee every hour

PRAYER

God our Father, we pray for all those who work to keep us safe. We pray for wisdom for the medical officers and politicians who make the decisions about how to keep us safe at this time. We pray too for those who work here to help us, for the nurses, those who clean, who make and serve the food and for those who help to keep us happy and occupied. We pray for our families and friends, those that we don't see as often as we would like, and we pray that they may be safe and happy too. Help us, O God to take comfort strength from your love and presence which is always with us.

And we pray together,

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,

and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,

For ever and ever, AMEN

HYMN No 18 - Trust and obey

The BLESSING

May the presence of the risen Lord Jesus comfort you, guide you and strengthen you.

And may the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be upon you and remain with you always, Amen