

## **A Service for the week leading up to the 17th of May 2020 (Easter 6)**

*This service is written for Stretton Park and McDonald Wing in Maffra, Laurina Lodge in Heyfield and Royal Freemason's in Sale. It is also made available for use in other retirement villages and nursing homes and for those who are interested, for their private use.*

### INTRODUCTION

From Psalm 66:8&9

Bless God, all people. May the sound of our praise of God be heard, for God has kept us among the living.

HYMN No. 1 - All people that on earth do dwell

*You may 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. Jesus said: "If you love me you will obey my commandments"

We thank you O Lord for your creative power. We praise you for your caring oversight of us, all through the years of our lives. In good times and in times of trial you have been there to support us. You have never forgotten us. O Lord, for those times when we have forgotten you, for those times when we did not love you with our whole heart, soul, mind and strength, and for those times when we have not loved our neighbour as ourselves, we ask for your forgiveness. Turn our hearts towards you, we pray. Grant us the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, as you promised your followers, so we may have the guidance and strength we need to enable us to live the lives you call us to, living to your glory. This we ask in the name of Jesus, Amen

HYMN No. 26 - I need Thee every hour

BIBLE READINGS - This week's reflection follows the readings Acts 17:22-31 and I Peter 3:13-22

### REFLECTION

The New Testament book of Acts tells the story of the early Christian Church. The later part of chapter 17 tells us of St Paul's visit to the city of Athens in Greece. The Greek philosophers loved to discuss all sorts of ideas, including ideas about God. The Greek myths had many gods, and the people had even made a place to worship "The Unknown God". St Paul used their idea of the unknown God to explain to them about the creator of heaven and earth, the one God, who is so different to us but so close to us. This God calls us offspring and sent a man to judge the world, a man whom God raised from death. Some of the people of Athens scoffed at St Paul, but some believed and others wanted to know more.

These days, our society has all sorts of ideas about the meaning of life and the nature of God, rather like Athens, 2,000 odd years ago. Most people think that their ideas are right, if they thought their ideas were wrong, they would change those ideas.

In his letter, St Peter said to always do what is right and good. If anyone asks you why you do good, and why you are positive and hopeful, tell them the reason, doing so with gentleness and respect.

There we have the basic pattern for telling others about our faith. We should not tell others out of our own fear, or by using threats of hell. St Paul explained his faith to others by starting from what they believed already and building on that. St Peter encouraged a life of good works, with a positive, hope-filled attitude that would allow a gentle and respectful explanation. As Jesus said in the sermon on the mount, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works and praise the Father in Heaven. This does not command us to go to the other end of the world and condemn the sinners there, it is a call to live a good, positive life where we are, doing the best we can. It does not matter where we are or what our capabilities are, if we can at the least, be hopeful, then that is enough. God, in His love, calls us to do what is good for us, and through that, to encourage and help others.

HYMN No.18 - When we walk with the Lord - Trust and obey

#### PRAYER

God our Father, we pray for our friends, our families and ourselves. Keep us all safe, we pray. Thank you for the way our country has survived sickness. We pray now for those who are out of work, and those who do not have the money for their daily needs. We pray too for the children whose education has been interrupted and for the teachers who are trying to help them. We pray in thanks for all those who have worked through this time, for health workers, cleaners, food staff and helpers. Prompt us to thank them, and make their days better, as they make our days better.

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 31 - Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so.

THE BENEDICTION, from Psalm 66:19 & 20

Truly, God has listened, and had heard the words of our prayers. Blessed be God because our prayers are not rejected. God's love for us remains steadfast.

#### THE BLESSING

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