

Second Sunday of Easter Sunday, April 08, 2018

The Collect: Almighty and everlasting God, who in the Paschal mystery established the new covenant of reconciliation: Grant that all who have been reborn into the fellowship of Christ's Body may show forth in their lives what they profess by their faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

First Lesson: Acts 4:32-35 read from the New Revised Standard Version Bible

Anglicised

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm 133 read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

- 1 Oh, how good and pleasant it is, * when brethren live together in unity!
- 2 It is like fine oil upon the head * that runs down upon the beard,
- 3 Upon the beard of Aaron, * and runs down upon the collar of his robe.
- 4 It is like the dew of Hermon * that falls upon the hills of Zion.
- 5 For there the Lord has ordained the blessing: * life for evermore.

Epistle: 1 John 1:1-2:2 read from the the Revised Standard Version Bible

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we saw it, and testify to it, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—that which we have seen and heard we

proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing this that our joy may be complete.

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not live according to the truth; but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

My little children, I am writing this to you so that you may not sin; but if any one does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel: John 20:19-31 read from the God's Word Bible

That Sunday evening, the disciples were together behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jews. Jesus stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you!" When he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were glad to see the Lord.

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." After he had said this, he breathed on the disciples and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whenever you forgive sins, they are forgiven. Whenever you don't forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Thomas, one of the twelve apostles, who was called Didymus, wasn't with them when Jesus came. The other disciples told him, "We've seen the Lord."

Thomas told them, "I refuse to believe this unless I see the nail marks in his hands, put my fingers into them, and put my hand into his side."

A week later Jesus' disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were locked, Jesus stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then Jesus said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Take your hand, and put it into my side. Stop doubting, and believe."

Thomas responded to Jesus, "My Lord and my God!"

Jesus said to Thomas, "You believe because you've seen me. Blessed are those who haven't seen me but believe."

Jesus performed many other miracles that his disciples saw. Those miracles are not written in this book. But these miracles have been written so that you will believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and so that you will have life by believing in him.

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: On April 10th we remember Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Scientist and military chaplain. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was a ground-breaking paleontologist and Christian mystic whose vision encompassed the evolution of all matter toward a final goal in which material and spiritual shall coincide and God shall be all in all.

Teilhard was born in 1881. In 1899, he entered the Jesuit novitiate, moving to England in 1902, when French law nationalized the properties of religious orders. After taking a degree in literature in 1902, he went to Egypt to teach chemistry in the Jesuit College in Cairo. There he fell in love with the east. Teilhard moved back to England in 1908 and began to synthesize his already vast knowledge of evolution, philosophy, and theology. He was ordained priest in 1911.

Teilhard did research at the Natural History Museum in Paris, leading to the Sorbonne, where he completed his doctorate in paleontology. He went to China where, with other researchers,

he made public the famous “Peking Man” in 1926. Teilhard developed a vision of creation which held that evolution was the process by which matter inexorably arranges itself toward greater complexity until recognizable consciousness emerges. For Teilhard, this described a continuing process of human evolution that moves toward a new level of consciousness in which the universe will come to perfect unity and find itself one with God. God, then, is the highest point of pure consciousness, always “pulling” the evolution process towards its promised destiny, which he called the “Omega Point.”

Teilhard struggled with the Roman Church that was suspicious of his seemingly radical and heterodox writings. He was forbidden to teach and had to defend himself against charges of heresy. Teilhard remained loyal. After his death, many came to recognize his vision as a deeply Christian one that sought to reconcile the biblical vision of God's final triumph over sin and disunity with the undeniable discoveries of evolutionary science.

Shortly before he died, he prayed: “O God, if in my life I have not been wrong, allow me to die on Easter Sunday.” He died on April 10th, 1955: Easter Sunday.

Let us pray: Eternal God, the whole cosmos sings of your glory, from the dividing of a single cell to the vast expanse of interstellar space: We bless you for your theologian and scientist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, who perceived the divine in the evolving creation. Enable us to become faithful stewards of your divine works and heirs of your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ, the firstborn of all creation, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**