

# St. Mary's, Stoke D'Abernon

## Third Sunday of Easter



**HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh**  
**1921 – 2021**

“May he rest in peace, and rise in glory”

**April 18th 2021**

# A Message from Godfrey

Food plays a major part in the Easter story. First, we have the disciples making their way upstairs to the Upper Room to share what was to be their Last Supper with Jesus where all the disciples were gathered together. Then Cleopas and his companion were joined on the road to Emmaus by a stranger who was able to explain all that had happened in Jerusalem over the past weeks. They had invited him to have supper with them and it was in the breaking of the bread that they realised that the stranger was in fact Jesus. The disciples were talking about this event when he appeared again and sat amongst them.

“they were startled and terrified, and thought they were seeing a ghost”, Luke tells. After showing them his hands and his feet he asked them;

“Have you anything here to eat? They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence.”

I mean, after all...broiled fish? Easter time, all that talk about Jesus' glorious resurrection, and we're talking a little halibut. This actually brings it back down to earth. Close your eyes for a moment.

Can you smell the rich salty aroma of the fish? Maybe a little rice, some pita bread, a cup of wine...Jesus fed the 5000 with some bread and some fish and now here he is, asking for a bit of what he offered back in the early days of his ministry.

And that's the whole point of this gospel passage. Jesus wants to bring it back down to earth, to prove that he is back down to earth. And how does he do it? With some broiled fish cooked very simply. There was no thought about the fish being cooked so that it fell apart at the touch of a fork. No concern about the skin being crisp- this was not a smoked salmon moment or sardines cooking on an open fire on the beach at San Sebastian! It was basic, down to earth broiled fish!

Luke tells us that the apostles already knew that Jesus had risen from the dead – they were talking about it among themselves when Jesus showed up – but even though they knew that Jesus had risen, when he showed up, they were frightened. They didn't fully understand that he was real so he invited them to touch him, to see that he was real, to see his hands and his feet (because in that culture, ghosts were not supposed to have hands or feet). Shades of Thomas from last week's Gospel all over again. Before he addressed their fear and confusion, reminding them of the prophecies fulfilled in him, before he opened their minds to the scriptures, before he called on them to act as witnesses to the repentance and forgiveness of sins that his passion and death brought...before he did any of these things, he let them touch him, and he sat down and ate with them. Food is so important in the Easter story.

Flesh and bones, hands and feet, and broiled fish are the things of creation, the natural order. Mary, a woman created by God, gave Jesus his flesh and bones and his hands and feet. She also gave him the stomach that would eat the fish God created. The very same flesh and bones, the very same hands and feet, appeared to Cleopas and his companion on the road to Emmaus and then "vanished from their sight" (Luke 24:31), and now show up unannounced and unexpected in the midst of their conversation with others. In last week's gospel Jesus' hands and feet, his flesh and bones, passed through walls and locked doors.

The resurrected life of Christ, it seems, is revealed in and through the created order. The degree to which we have allowed ourselves to be bound by the created order is the degree to which we are unable to see resurrected life and holiness in this world. We bind ourselves through our fears, our sorrows and losses, our runaway thoughts and distractions, our attachments and addictions to things, people, and even beliefs and whims. Sometimes it's our unwillingness to allow or trust God to grow and change us, in binding ourselves to the created order we lose recognition of and the ability to live in the sacred. That's the very opposite of resurrected life.

The resurrected life of Christ reveals that all creation and every one of us are filled with God. Nothing can bind or supersede the grace that is given us through resurrection, that unconditional love, unconditional forgiveness, unconditional life. That is, I think, one of the most difficult things for us to see, believe, and live by. It is, however, the divine reality into which we are invited, not at some future time and place but here and now.

Christ our God longs and desires to open our minds to understand the scriptures, to understand all that has been written, spoken, and revealed about him in whatever form that happens and has happened. That's what Jesus did for the disciples and it's what he does for us. This is not an academic or intellectual understanding. That the disciples are witnesses does not mean they now have all the answers. It means they now have the life Jesus wants to give them. They are witnesses based not on what they know, but on who they are, how they live, and their relationship with the risen Christ.

In a few minutes, we will share God's peace with one another. We may not be 100% comfortable about it but we do it to remind us that we are a church together and not just a group of disparate individuals and a few minutes after that, we will share in the bread and wine. We will commune with each other and with God in the sacrament of his body and blood. Real bread, real wine, real presence. The heavenly banquet, if you like where earth and heaven come together. As you gaze at the piece of bread I will place in the palm of your hand I hope you will be reminded of the real presence, not as a piece of sacramental theology, but more as your close relationship with Christ, which is sustained by regularly receiving Holy Communion because we are remembering the words of Jesus; "Do this in remembrance of me."

We are not at a memorial service – we are at a celebration of what Easter and new life is all about. This Risen Lord is a full-body experience. We cannot try to limit our relationship with God to a mere intellectual exercise and that is why, as we end this Eucharistic meal together today, we are sent out with the dismissal having received the gift of spiritual nourishment at his meal, as his chosen guests because we have chosen him, we can then face the world, to witness to the living Christ just as Jesus told us to in the Gospel. We do that with our voices when we share the word, with our hands when we help others, with our feet when we walk to help others....

May we rejoice in that, as we approach his altar, as we accept his invitation to share in the eternal meal.

Thoughts and prayers

Godfrey



## Bible References 18<sup>th</sup> – 24th April 2021

Year B	Psalm	First reading	Second reading
<b>Third Sunday of Easter</b> April 18 <sup>th</sup>	Psalm 121	Lamentations 3 : 22-26, 31-33)	Cor 4 : 16 – 5:4
<b>Monday</b> April 19 <sup>th</sup>	Psalm 119 : 17 - 24	Acts 6 : 8 - 15	John 6 : 22 - 29
<b>Tuesday</b> April 20 <sup>th</sup>	Psalm 31 : 1-5, 16	Acts 7 : 51 – 8 : 1	John 6 : 30 - 35
<b>Wednesday</b> April 21 <sup>th</sup>	Psalm 66 : 1-6	Acts 8 : 1 - 8	John 6 : 35 - 40
<b>Thursday</b> April 22 <sup>th</sup>	Psalm 66 : 7-8, 14 - end	Acts 8 : 26 - end	John 6 : 44 - 51
<b>Friday</b> April 23 <sup>th</sup>	Psalm 126	2 Tim 2 : 3-13	John 15 : 18 - 21
<b>Saturday</b> April 24 <sup>th</sup>	Psalm 116 : 10 - 15	Acts 9 : 31 - 42	John 6 : 60 - 69

**Hyperlinks to Guildford Cathedral Services :**

<https://www.guildford-cathedral.org/worship/services>

St Mary's, Thorpe website :

<https://www.stmaryschurchthorpe.co.uk/>

## Collect 18<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Almighty Father, who in your great mercy gladdened the disciples with the sight of the risen Lord: give us such knowledge of his presence with us, that we may be strengthened and sustained by his risen life and serve you continually in righteousness and truth; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever

**Amen**



# Parish Notices

## Sunday Services at St. Mary's

We are delighted to announce the resumption of services of communal worship at St. Mary's starting on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> April. Services will take a similar form to those practiced before the latest lockdown.

A single Said Communion service will be held on Sunday mornings starting at 10:00am. Communion will be in one kind and offered at the Chancel steps. Initially, the services will be without musical accompaniment or hymn singing. This situation will be reviewed in line with Government regulations and Diocesan guidance. Strict social distancing measures will continue to be observed. The maximum number of worshippers admitted will depend on family groupings but is expected to be of the order of 35-40. Duty Wardens and Sidesmen will be on hand to assist with seating arrangements.

**In support of the Government's Test and Trace programme, worshippers will again be required to pre-register their attendance and give a contact telephone number to a Duty Warden on arrival.** Service attendance records will be retained for 21 days and then be destroyed.

In order to assist us in observing social distancing guidelines and avoid the potential disappointment of being refused entry we ask all worshippers who wish to attend on successive Sundays to notify the Parish office **each week**, either by telephone on 01932 866005 or by email at:

[admin@stmarysstokedabernon.org.uk](mailto:admin@stmarysstokedabernon.org.uk)

## Revision to opening Hours for Private Prayer

With the re start of communal worship, St. Mary's will remain open until 2pm on Sundays for private prayer. The church will no longer be opened on Thursdays. Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> April will be the last weekday that the church is opened for private prayer.

## **Hall Opening**

We are again taking provisional hall bookings for events, consistent with Government guidelines, from 17<sup>th</sup> May. Please contact Polly with your enquiries about hall availability for private or group functions admin@stmarysstokedabernon.org.uk or Tel. 01932 866005

## **Parish Communications**

The weekly Parish leaflet will continue and be issued on regular email distribution to those on the electoral role and others who have specifically requested it. Similarly, the St Mary's website will be updated as appropriate to advise of any changes to services or other significant news.

The St Mary's Chat WhatsApp Group will continue to allow people to share their prayers and thoughts and for Godfrey to post his personal messages.

## **APCM**

This year's APCM will again be held via zoom on Sunday 18th April at 11.30am. (following the Sunday service).

Zoom details:

Topic: St Mary's Church Stoke d'Abernon APCM 2021 Time: Apr 18, 2021 11:30 AM

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82737902255?pwd=TG1aWFNRC25YbEFFRitxTlZlc05hdz09>

Meeting ID: 827 3790 2255 Passcode: 486475



If you are struggling with loneliness and need someone to talk to, or would like help with groceries or anything else, please don't hesitate to call Polly in the Parish Office on 01932 866005 in the first instance.

## **Chair Yoga will continue on zoom**

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZckcO-trzljEtGrmiE7-BsHIGkmVpnJCXR>

(If you cut and paste this into your browser it will automatically link you)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Meeting ID; 858 5729 6019      Passcode: 35 44 47

# Hey! Don't forget the ...

Here is the list of items most needed for our Foodbank. Please can you help us by buying an item and putting it in one of our collecting bins? Thank you for your help.

## **URGENTLY NEEDED ITEMS**

- **Sponge puddings**
- **Toilet rolls**
- **Tinned vegetables (not sweetcorn, tomatoes or pulses please)**
- **Tomato ketchup**
- **Male deodorant**
- **Pasta sauce**

