

## Reflections for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter

### Peace be with you

In chapter 20 of John's gospel we read that, on that first Easter Day, even though stories were beginning to circulate about encounters with the risen Jesus, the disciples were in 'lockdown' – fearful, and gathered in a locked room. Then Jesus came and stood among them, and said, 'Peace be with you!'

So what is this 'peace' that Jesus offered to his fearful disciples? When people think about 'peace' they commonly associate it with quiet, tranquillity, freedom from disturbance and trouble, and the absence of conflict and war.

But, when Jesus spoke these words to his friends, they were in a situation that was anything but 'peaceful' in that sense. Looking back, they had shared years of following Jesus, being on the move, and experiencing a 'rollercoaster ride' of excitement, challenge and danger. And in the last few days they had moved from the clamour and adulation of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, to the shock of his arrest, questioning, torture and execution.

Looking ahead, although they didn't know it as yet, they were about to start a movement that would transform the world, but in the course of doing that they would be tested to the limit, and many of them would risk or lose their lives.

But – in the midst of all that – Jesus appeared alongside them with his promise and assurance, 'Peace be with you.' This cannot be a promise about escaping from outward events and circumstances, and being free from all conflict and disturbance, so what kind of 'peace' is Jesus offering to them, and to us in all the challenges we are facing?

The promise of Jesus is about an inner stillness, an inner security, that we find in the presence of God, which is not a way to escape from the world, but is where we can find the strength to live in the world, and face the challenges before us.

Revd John Waller

Living God,  
for whom no doors are locked, no entrance barred;  
open the doors of our hearts to hear your word anew,  
and to receive your gift of peace,  
through Jesus Christ our risen Lord. Amen.