

## **THE OCTAVE DAY OF EASTER** **Being the Sunday after Easter Day**

Throughout this week the Old Testament Lessons at Morning and Evening Prayer have all in one way or another have been related to our Lord's resurrection. Our Lord made it very clear over and over again that his life was the fulfillment of Prophecy in the Law, the Psalms and the Prophets themselves. By way of example, the Exodus of the Children of Israel out of Egypt was seen by the early Church as our deliverance from sin and death. The Services that grew up around the Feast of the Resurrection were and are used to make that point over and over again. In particular the Services of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday lead us through in a symbolic way the events that our Lord experienced. We join the followers that witnessed the actual events and stand with those who stood by and or took part in the events that are the events of our salvation history. All of this is done in order that we never forget that the Christian Faith is a living thing, it is not simple a matter of remembering, it is a matter of living these events in our daily lives.

There was a lady who lived up the street from All Saints Church in Marysville. For one reason or another she appeared in Church one Sunday. We spoke before the Service and she said that she had heard about *this place* as she put it and she had come just to observe. I told her that she was welcome, but she needed to be careful because the Eucharist had a way of drawing in even those who just observed. She was drawn in and became a faithful Communicant after taking instruction and Confirmation. The Church is the Body of Christ and as Saint Paul tells us, each of us are members of it. Our lives and the gifts that we have may not have any significance as far as the world is concerned, but as far as God is concerned they have eternal and universal significance. In our Baptism we are born again, we are regenerate and are made instruments of God's Love in the world. We are the Body of Christ, some have said that to call us the Social Incarnation is one way of expressing this great mystery. What all this means is that the Christian Religion is not an individual matter to the exclusion of others, but a social matter to the inclusion of all parts and members of the Body. That part of the Epistle to the Hebrews that is read on Good Friday ends with the urging that we faithfully continue to meet together and not stay away as some do. Would that all who are Baptized follow the writer's urging. The point is that God has never broken faith with us, why then do we continually break faith with him?

The Gospel of this day picks up the theme of the Emmaus Story. Our Lord, St John relates, appears in the Upper Room and shows the disciples his hands and his side in order to convince them that it is truly he. Remember that St Luke tells us that they give him a piece of fish to eat after he asked for it. He does this in order that they might understand that he is alive and not a ghost for ghosts do not eat. St John goes on to tell us that it is at this point that the disciples receive the Divine Commission to go the world with his authority. He then breathes on them and gives them the power to forgive or not forgive sins.

Throughout Eastertide the Easter Anthems (Prayer Book Page 182) are said between the Old Testament Lesson and the Epistle. The verses taken from the Epistles of St Paul proclaim the Easter message. Christ is our Passover Lamb sacrificed for us and his sacrifice destroys the power of sin and death. This Sacrifice enables the faithful to have a Feast with one another and with God, not a feast of bitterness and hate, but a Feast of truth and joyful hope. He has risen from the dead and as a result he has destroyed the power of sin and death. He is the Victor and we the Baptized faithful share in his victory. This message is worth repeating through all of Eastertide and frames the hope that the Church proclaims through out the whole year.

**CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED!**