**Week 3**

**A Walk (or imagined Walk) for the Week**

3rd May

**May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart
    be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.**

Before you leave your front door. Stop. Shut your eyes.

* Do you know everything in front of you?
* Do you know the colour of your neighbour’s door?
* Do you know how many steps you need to take before you stand on the path?

Take a moment to think of the things that you know about around you and as you walk, find out if you were right!

**Read John 20:24-29**

**24**But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. **25**So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

**26**A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” **27**Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” **28**Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” **29**Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

A week after the disciples discovered Jesus’ tomb was empty and a number of the disciples had had encounters with the risen Jesus, we have another encounter with Jesus. We are told that not everyone was able to gather together that previous week, yet it didn’t stop them spreading the news amongst themselves that they had seen Jesus. Thomas, the disciple who wasn’t there, doesn’t believe them. It can be difficult to believe someone, especially if you are in a place of fear yourself. So, Thomas’ reaction seems natural- prove it! And as if right on cue, Jesus does!

* Can you identify a time when you doubted something?
* I wonder, what do you feel about doubting?
* I wonder, what proof do you need and what does it do for your faith?

As you continue walking think of those things you need to see and those you don’t, to know that God’s love surrounds you. Thank God for the reminders and those moments that our faith is enough.

**A Service for Sunday (or any other day)**

**3rd May The Way of Light Week 3**

As I wake this day you are: **My Lord and my God!**

In my busyness you are: **My Lord and my God!**

In my quietness you are: **My Lord and my God!**

At the end of this day you are: **My Lord and my God!**

Be in every aspect of my living: **My Lord and my God! Amen**

This joyful Eastertide, what need is there for grieving?
Cast all your cares aside and be not unbelieving:

*Come, share our Easter joy that death could not imprison, nor any power destroy, our Christ, who is arisen!*

No work for him is vain,
no faith in him mistaken,
for Easter makes it plain
his kingdom is not shaken:

*Come, share our Easter joy that death could not imprison, nor any power destroy, our Christ, who is arisen!*

Then put your trust in Christ, in waking and in sleeping.

His grace on earth sufficed;he'll never quit his keeping:

*Come, share our Easter joy that death could not imprison, nor any power destroy, our Christ, who is arisen!*

Fred Pratt Green (1903–2000)

Father in heaven,
You call your children to walk in the light of Christ.
Free us from darkness and keep us in the radiance of Your truth.
We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Read John 20:24-29**

**Reflection**

A week after the disciples discovered Jesus’ tomb was empty and a number of the disciples had had encounters with the risen Jesus, we have another encounter with Jesus. We are told that not everyone was able to gather that previous week, yet it didn’t stop them spreading the news amongst themselves that they had seen Jesus. Thomas, the disciple who wasn’t there, doesn’t believe the stories. He wants proof. Something in his hand, something tangible.

For a number of us, we might be of a similar mindset. How many of us like to read a newspaper or book, even though we can get it online? Or write things with a pen and paper, rather than type it out? Just to be clear, I’m not criticizing either of these, for some of us this is part of the process of learning and understanding.

As we have considered before, Thomas, along with the other disciples, is living in a very emotional time. The others having seen Jesus are probably looking over their shoulders, just in case Jesus does it again. Whilst Thomas, is probably hurting from not being a part of the other encounters and also reliving the events of the previous week. The betrayal, the crucifixion and all those ‘what if’s’. It can be difficult to believe in the truth, when overcome with emotion. Yet with so many of the disciples saying the same thing, it must be going through our stubborn Thomas’ mind, as a possibility.

As if hearing their conversation, Jesus appears. Again, he begins by giving them peace. They still need it. There must be some frustration amongst them, that Thomas is not willing to trust them. We can often get upset with those who don’t share our understanding and it’s into that, Jesus breathes peace. Jesus doesn’t say to Thomas that he is not one of his disciples anymore, just because he struggled to believe. Jesus allows him to have that touching moment. That moment where he declares: ‘My Lord and my God.’

But Jesus also gives Thomas a challenge. Jesus knew then that he had to ascend into Heaven, meaning that this type of contact was not going to be able to happen after that. It is a challenge that we live with today, how we keep ourselves believing the witness of others, when it is not our own experience and trust in God’s care for us when the proof is hidden from us.

**Let us pray**Within our darkest night, **Let your light shine.**

God of all creation, you hold the depths of the earth in your hands. You are closer to us than the air we breathe. Fill our souls with your light and give us strength and courage to reflect your light in the world. Hear us today as we pray for a world too often darkened by hatred, evil, power and greed. Within our darkest night, **Let your light shine**.

God of power and might, breathe into your broken world so that it may not be dominated by the darkness of war, fear, and pain. We pray for those on-going conflicts that have been eclipsed by the current crisis and those that have been brought into sharper focus. May all who live in these places see your light, feel your strength and power and know the truth of your promise that light overcomes darkness. Within our darkest night, **Let your light shine.**

God of compassion and grace, we pray for our friends and loved ones, in their different experiences of homelife. We remember those who are enduring pain and illness and name them now. We remember those who are grieving and ask that you embrace them with your love. Within our darkest night, **Let your light shine.**

God of love and hope may our words, actions and lives be living examples of your forgiving, healing, life-giving love. Amen.

**Lord’s Prayer**

**Blessing**

May the God of touching moments bless you with a peace that strengthens you in times of doubt. The blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you and remain with you, now and forever. Amen

**Activity**

**The Doubting Thomas:**

Think of a story in your life that may be hard to believe and try and write it down, to tell someone else. Try not to embellish the story or use words such as ‘incredible’ or ‘can you believe it? Or ‘You’ll never believe this.’ Either send your story to someone or tell someone the story. Ask them what they think of your story. Did they think it was true?