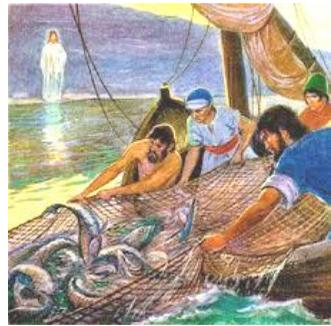


Sunday 17th February 2019

4th Sunday before Lent

Green



Collect

O God, you know us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright: grant to us such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers and carry us through all temptations; 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.**

1 Corinthians 15:1-11 English Standard Version (ESV)

The Resurrection of Christ

15¹ Now I would remind you, brothers,^[a] of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand,² and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures,⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas,⁶ then to the twelve. ⁷ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁸ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁹ Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ¹⁰ For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹¹ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. ¹² Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

Footnotes: a. or *brothers and sisters*; also verse 6.

COMMENT: Paul states what he had received from the apostles whom he met in Jerusalem when he returned there after his conversion. This may well have been circa two years after the resurrection. Certainly verses 3 to 5 are to be considered by most scholars as the earliest Christian creed. Other would add the following three verses. It summarises what the apostles were teaching in those first years after that momentous event; that Jesus Christ, who had been executed as a criminal, was very much alive. Death had not conquered him; he had conquered death, and was seen alive and was now with them in spirit. There were still many living in Paul's time who could testify to this experience. The reference to the appearance to five hundred Christian brothers is entirely plausible as Luke records in Acts 1:3 that the resurrection appearances occurred over forty days. Note too that Paul adds himself as “the least of the apostles.” The phrase “untimely born” is a sanitised version of the meaning of the Greek word which means miscarriage or abortion! What is not realised by many is that this passage is the very first documented account of Easter, and written at least ten years before the first Gospel.

Luke 5:1-11 English Standard Version (ESV)

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

5¹ On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret,² and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets.³ Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat.⁴ And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.”⁵ And Simon answered, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.”⁶ And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking.⁷ They signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.⁸ But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”⁹ For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken,¹⁰ and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.”^[a]¹¹ And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Footnotes: a. The Greek word *anthropoi* refers here to both men and women.

COMMENT: Luke tells this story of a miraculous catch of fish in connection with the calling of the first disciples. His version is much more elaborate than the brief accounts of Mark and Matthew. John tells it as one of Jesus' resurrection appearances (John 21). Behind the gospels as we now have them, there was a long tradition of stories about Jesus' teaching and miracles repeated by word of mouth before being put into written form. Assuming that all versions referred to the same event, which some commentators doubt, they speak to the future mission of the apostolic church. It appears to be a promise of ultimate success though not without long and difficult toil on the part of the disciple community. Luke's audience was two generations removed from the events he narrates and unfamiliar with the places in which those events occurred. So he did not have to be concerned about chronological order. His intent was primarily evangelical. For instance, he has Peter call Jesus first "Master," then "Lord." Those are titles which Luke reserves for disciples. Non-disciples used the term, "Teacher." The title "Lord" appears in Luke twenty-one times; twelve of them in passages peculiar to Luke. It can be argued that here Luke was thinking in post-resurrection terms when the apostles had fully realized that Jesus was the Messiah for whom such a title was appropriate. As has been pointed out many times, the original creed of the apostolic church was the simple statement, "Jesus is Lord." Peter's confession of sinfulness reiterates the gospel call to repentance as the antecedent to Christian discipleship. Luke had emphasized this as the message John the Baptist had preached (3:1-20) and which Peter had also proclaimed in his Pentecost sermon in Acts 2:38.

Psalm 138 *Confitebor tibi* Grail Psalter

℟ Your love, O Lord, is eternal: discard not the work of your hands.

¹ *Of David*

I thank you, Lord, with all my heart,
you have heard the words of my mouth.
In the presence of the angels I will bless you.

² I will adore before your holy temple. **℟**

I thank you for your faithfulness and love
which excel all we ever knew of you.

³ On the day I called, you answered;
you increased the strength of my soul. **℟**

⁴ All earth's kings shall thank you
when they hear the words of your mouth.

⁵ They shall sing of the Lord's ways:
"How great is the glory of the Lord!" **℟**

⁶ The Lord is high yet he looks on the lowly
and the haughty he knows from afar.

⁷ Though I walk in the midst of affliction
you give me life and frustrate my foes.

℟ Your love, O Lord, is eternal: discard not the work of your hands.

You stretch out your hand and save me,

⁸ your hand will do all things for me.

Your love, O Lord, is eternal,
discard not the work of your hands. **℟**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,**

**As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

COMMENT: This beautiful hymn of praise represents the finest of Hebrew poetry. Its parallel of ideas in each couplet of lines is typical of a refined form of verse. Though claimed to be a psalm of David, that designation is most unlikely. More probably, it dates from the priestly era of Israel's faith tradition when the temple had been rebuilt following the Babylonian exile (586-539 BC). A choir of Levitical priests might have sung this psalm as they approached the temple sanctuary

Post Communion

Go before us, Lord, in all we do with your most gracious favour, and guide us with your continual help, that in all our works begun, continued and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name, and finally by your mercy receive everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Blessing

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary, fill you with his grace to trust his promises and obey his will; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**