

Sunday 12 April 2026
The Second Sunday of Easter

Liverpool Parish Church

NT: Acts 2: 14a, 22-32

NT: I Peter 1: 3-9

Gp: John 20: 19-31

Fake news. Who to believe? How do we discern the truth? Look at one newspaper's headlines and it will tell you one version of a story. Pick up another and you are given the exact opposite.

We are currently witnessing a meaningless war between two autocratic powers. One of whom has for many years held a tight control on public information, the other is led by someone who appears to tell us whatever has just wondered into his distracted mind on that occasion. Who to believe? Perhaps in the case neither? We can be daily bombarded by a flood of information via social media and now AI with the truth feeling increasingly like an ignored casualty if it does not suit the message being conveyed.

Just back on Good Friday when we read the John's Passion Gospel, there was Pilate, weak and floundering, anxious to be on the side of the winner but caught between a demanding crowd and the obvious charisma of the prisoner before him. When Jesus tells him that: *I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.* Pilate asked him, *'What is truth?'* And he failed to see the truth that was before him and bowed to the pressure of the crowd, to the fake news that Jesus was no more than a political rebel and a blasphemer.

Earlier in John's gospel, *Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.'* And later he described himself as *The Way, The Truth and the Life.*

This was in response to Thomas who asked Jesus about the way he was going. And so we come to today's gospel reading when this same Thomas demands proof that Jesus is truly risen from the dead. It's hardly surprising as even the Jewish authorities had demanded a guard be set over the tomb in case someone came and took the body and claimed that Jesus had risen. More fake news.

So Thomas, who always appears as a practical man, was not willing to accept the word even of his close friends and fellow disciples. When Jesus returns to the upper room, there is the scene with which we are so familiar. His challenge to Thomas to touch the wounds of the crucifixion and believe without question in the truth of the Resurrection. Thomas, there acting on behalf of all of us, so that we too may believe without any shadow of doubt. And so we can echo the prayer of Thomas, My Lord and my God. And Jesus has a word of reassurance for us all: *Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.*

Peter echoes these words in his first letter: *Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

This is the truth that we hold to, that guides us through all the clamour of this world: that the Father loves us unconditionally and that he created us in his image and likeness, that Jesus came as fully human and fully God to rescue us from the pit of our own making, from the power of sin that we might be free to live this life to the full in the power of the Holy Spirit and in the knowledge that we are so loved and called to eternity to abide in the glory of God.

And holding to that truth, we are called to respond, not for our own benefit but that we might bring this good news to others. Not just in word but in actions too. Open to the Holy Spirit through prayer, we might discern how we can shine God's light in what can be a dark place of despair for so many. We have been given a precious gift and like those who received the talents we are called not bury this gift but to share it so that it grows and multiplies for the good of many.

It can be easy sometimes to be like Pilate and bow to the power of the many, to go with the fake news but by the grace of God may we hold fast to his truth, not questioning but living lives of faith, set free by the truth.

Alleluia Christ is risen!

Revd Michelle Montrose