

## TWENTY FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST C 07

“I danced on a Friday when the sky turned black; it's hard to dance with the devil on your back. They buried my body and they thought I'd gone”.....

The opponents of Jesus thought that they had got rid of him, but no, it was not the end of the story:

“but I am the dance and I still go on”:

Today's readings all speak of the great hope we have as Christian people:

Haggai 2:9 (NRSV)

<sup>9</sup> The latter splendor of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts; and in this place I will give prosperity, says the LORD of hosts.

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 (NRSV)

<sup>16</sup> Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, <sup>17</sup> comfort your hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word.

Luke 20:37-38 (NRSV)

<sup>37</sup> **And the fact that the dead are raised Moses himself showed, in the story about the bush, where he speaks of the Lord as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. <sup>38</sup> Now he is God not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all of them are alive.”**

In Jesus' day, there was great controversy about the resurrection of the dead.

And that controversy is reflected in the Gospels and NT as a whole.

**But**, as the story unfolds in the four Gospels and in the writings of St Paul, the confusion gives way to certainty.

Jesus appeared to his disciples and continued to teach them as well as charge them with the care of and mission of the church.

In these appearances He was bodily present, he was no ghost or some strange spiritual being of one sort or another. He was Jesus - but in his resurrection body.

And at the heart of the Easter message is the truth that we too, can look forward to “putting on” our resurrection body on the Last day when the dead will be raised and our perishable body will be raised imperishable.

But what happens between my death and the resurrection on the last day? Where will I be?

Jesus gives us two very important clues:

Remember how he said to the dying thief: "Today you will be with me in paradise"

And how in John 14 he tells his disciples: "Let not your hearts be troubled.....in my Father's house are many dwelling places.....and I will prepare a place for you...so that where I am, there you may be also.."

After our earthly death we will be with the Lord, in the place he has prepared for us, a place where – outside of time and space – we await our resurrection on the last day when God will bring in the new heaven and the new earth – when we will experience the kingdom of God in all its glory.

Easter means that we can look forward with confidence to the time when God's reign will come in all its glory.

Easter means that there will be an end to all the pain and suffering that currently blights our existence.

Easter means that there will be an end to all tyranny and oppression and there will be the time when justice and peace will be the reality for the whole of creation.

Easter means that we can live with both a sense of optimism and hope.

So in this current climate of interest rate rises, global warming, tensions in the ME, and all the various social evils that confront our society we can live with hope – because we know that in Christ Jesus and through the power of his resurrection all will be well.

And this is not pie in the sky stuff,

It is based on the facts of Good Friday and Easter day!