

The 7th Sunday of Easter

This weekend is Saturday 23 & Sun 24 May, beginning the 7th week of Easter.

The monks of Pluscarden Abbey sing Laetetur cor quaerentium:

Let the heart of those who seek the Lord rejoice; seek the Lord and be strengthened, seek his face always. Entering into prayer today, I too am seeking the Lord, seeking his face, looking for the signs of his presence in my life, gently guiding me in truth and peace and love.

This weekend's reading is from the first letter of Peter.

1 Peter 4:13-16

But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory, which is the Spirit of God, is resting on you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, a criminal, or even as a mischief maker. Yet if any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace, but glorify God because you bear this name.

The author of this letter encourages his hearers to rejoice in sharing in Christ's sufferings. Most of us don't rejoice when we suffer. Times of suffering often test our faith, rather than strengthening it. But we're told here that God's Spirit rests on us, and it's a spirit of glory. An early Christian writer says that the glory of God is a human being fully alive. How alive do I feel right now?

It may be difficult to feel fully alive in these days of restricted movement. But perhaps the quieter pace of life brings me a sense of nature alive all around me, or of the spiritual life re-kindling within me. What feels alive in me right now?

As we hear the reading again, perhaps we'll be reminded of past sufferings, or anxiety about possible suffering in the future.

Jesus is alive within me and within the world. What do I want to say to Jesus about suffering with him? Is there something I want to share with him about anything I or those I love are suffering? Do I dare to ask him to share his joy with me?

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.