

Liberation Sunday

Prayers, Readings, Reflection.

“Welcome to a short act of worship for the Parish Church of St Martin, as we remember and celebrate the Liberation of our Islands 76 years ago. I have included a reflection from Rev Mike Keirle, Dean of Jersey, which he wrote last year, but which retains its deep significance even one year on. For those who are able to follow it as written or listen in, I hope it offers some comfort, encouragement and a sense of being together despite the distance between us.” Rev Jonny



Be still, and draw yourself closer to the God who rests beside you, before you and within you.

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

In the name of Christ and in his peace I welcome you.

Today, those who survived the war and we who are too young to remember, join together in giving praise and thanks to God for what was achieved in 1945, but whilst remembering, we also look forward and commit ourselves to the ongoing work of reconciliation.

Our proclamation today is that we have a message of hope and reconciliation for the whole world. That we must love our neighbours as ourselves.

O Lord, open our lips.

All: And our mouths shall show forth Thy praise.

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND REMEMBRANCE

Let us offer our thanksgivings to Almighty God,
who made us and all creation,
who in Christ has triumphed over evil and death,
and whose Spirit abides with us to guide and to inspire.

For the victory achieved on land, at sea, and in the air,
and for the liberation of so many from the cruelty
of occupation and oppression

Pause for silence....

Let us bless the Lord: **Thanks be to God.**

For those who endured captivity, torture, or death,
that others might be free.

Pause for silence....

Let us bless the Lord: **Thanks be to God.**

For the heroism and courage of those who served in the
armed services;
who worked on the home front in civil defence,
hospitals and relief agencies; in factories, shops and farms.

Pause for silence....

Let us bless the Lord: **Thanks be to God.**

For the patient suffering and dedication of those who kept
alight the lamp
of freedom and sustained hope and resistance in the hearts
of others.

Pause for silence....

Let us bless the Lord: **Thanks be to God.**

For the steadfastness and endurance of the inhabitants of
cities
and countryside during the dark years of war.

Pause for silence....

Let us bless the Lord: **Thanks be to God.**

For the reconstruction of communities
and for the reconciliation seen over the past 76 years.

Pause for silence....

Let us bless the Lord: **Thanks be to God.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading, Acts 1:3-8

After his suffering Jesus presented himself alive to them by many convincing proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father. "This," he said, "is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" He replied, "It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Second Reading, Galatians 5: 1 & 13-15

For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

Reflection by Rev Mike Keirle, Dean of Jersey (written in May 2020)

I was sent an excellent Liberation article this week by the Constable of St. Martin's, which her daughter Anastasia had researched and written and is being delivered to every household in the parish. And in it, she describes how her grandfather had been in the Island during the occupation. Tragically, two of his siblings died from TB and malnutrition in 1942 and 1943 and their father was imprisoned for owning a crystal set. But the thing that really struck me as I read the story was a small comment at the end of the article which said: The family didn't go down to Town to celebrate Liberation Day – they were so worn down and weary.

And that really struck a chord with me because in my imagination, I couldn't envisage anyone not wanting to be part of the celebrations. And now on further reflection, it is obvious that there would have been thousands who would not have been able to attend Liberation because of lack of transport. But I couldn't envisage anyone feeling anything other than euphoria. It just hadn't occurred to me that people in the Island would have such mixed emotions on Liberation Day and that some would simply have heaved a huge sigh of exhausted relief and began to mourn loved ones and to wonder what on earth the future would bring for the Island.

You see, we have the gift of hindsight. We know now how the Island eventually flourished after the war but I guess everyone must have looked at the landscape around them - the scars of occupation, with concrete fortifications and minefields, beach obstacles and barbed wire, camps and Nazi signposts, the restrictions under which they had all lived and they must have wondered: What on earth is going to happen to us now?

And of course, there were also those whose loved ones had served in the forces, those who were evacuated or exiled to the mainland, who hadn't yet returned, family they hadn't seen in five long years. There were those who had been deported and about which there was little news. And of course, there were those who never returned or who did not live to see Liberation. So many mixed emotions, so much was uprooted and people

must have thought: How will we ever recover from this? Nothing will never be the same again.

Family relationships had to be rebuilt, conflicts arising from the occupation resolved, the Island, in parts reconstructed. People had to work together, not least to rebuild community. Many were out of work and there was economic chaos. People had to learn to drive on the left again..... although, 75 years later, I have discovered that some still haven't quite grasped that yet. But in time, signs of hope emerged and there was a new normal.

All these conflicting emotions weren't that different to those experienced by the disciples in our reading from Acts 1. They had also come through a traumatic experience – the crucifixion of Jesus – although I do wonder sometimes, whether the resurrection wasn't just as traumatic for them, as they tried to process what has happened, with their lives utterly uprooted. And just as there was initial euphoria, you can hear the anxiety in their question, when they ask: Are you at this time going to restore the kingdom of Israel? What is going to happen now? What do we do? Are we going back to how things always were?

Once again, we have the advantage of hindsight; we know that something new emerged, as the disciples experienced God's presence and power in a new and dynamic way at Pentecost and a new community emerged.

And here we are today in that same Island, beginning to emerge from lockdown in this pandemic, uprooted economically, socially, physically, spiritually. What is the landscape going to look like? How will we do Church and be Church as we move into a new normal? What, as an Island community, will Liberation look like for us?

There are so many questions and so many mixed emotions. Some will have had the terrible experience of losing a loved one and the further pain of not being able to say goodbye surrounded by family and friends. Others will have lost their livelihoods or suffered mental health issues or had their weddings cancelled and still others have had the significant challenge of trying to work from home, confined to a small area and home school their children at the same time.

Perhaps all of that gives us a new appreciation of what our families and predecessors faced the day after Liberation and the extraordinary spirit and resilience they showed in transforming the Island to be the place that we know and love today.

So Liberation 1945 speaks very clearly into Liberation 2020. It serves as a reminder that we need to be mindful that everyone's experience of this pandemic has been different. We need to treat each other with care and, in turn, to be kind to ourselves. It reminds us that we need to learn to work together, both as a wider community but also more closely as a Christian community and that community needs to be transformative and open to new ways of expressing itself, as it was for those early disciples when they experienced Pentecost, something we shall be celebrating in three weeks' time.

And that new community, that Church that emerged as the new normal was liberated for a purpose, as we heard in that short reading from Galatians Chapter 5. 'Do not use your freedom to indulge the selfish nature, rather, serve one another in love.

My prayer for this Island, my challenge to our respective Christian communities, is this; First of all, we need to learn afresh what liberation means. It is about a fresh start. It is about forgiveness, reconciliation, new purpose and new growth, new ways of being community. Learning to be a newly liberated community is going to be important.

As we begin to emerge from lockdown and look ahead to this pandemic ending, let us be freed in order that we may serve one another. Jesus himself said: The son of man did not come to be served but to serve. I don't know how that will work itself out for each of us but it needs to be at the forefront of our minds as a Christian community, so that we become beacons of hope as we emerge in this Island of Jersey. So may God bless you at this time of Liberation.

PRAYERS OF HOPE

Let us pray with hope for the future of the world
and for the needs of all people.

For peace and justice in our world,
for an end to war and conflict,
for the leaders of all nations and peoples,
and for those who make peace and foster reconciliation.

pause for silence....

Lord, in Your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

For the unity of all Christian people,
For the Church of God in every land,
For all who seek God and the truth,
And for all who follow the way of conscience with integrity.

Pause for silence....

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

For the healing of memories,
For all those who suffer as a result of war,
For all who find it hard to forgive,
For communities where past wrongs and violence persist,
For all in pain or distress
and those who care for them.

Pause for silence....

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

For friendship and trust amongst all,
For an appreciation of our interdependence,
For the ongoing building of a new Europe,
And for a world that is in harmony with itself.

Pause for silence....

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

And we pray for the coming of God's Kingdom on earth as in heaven and pray together the words our Lord gave us:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us,
and lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen**

Hymn

This hymn was written by The Revd F. W. Killer, Vicar of St Mark's and printed during the Occupation of Jersey for use on the Day of Liberation.

**The sword is sheathed – the battle done,
The conflict past – the peace is won;
Alleluia, alleluia;
Raise high your songs of Victory,
Shout: for the Lord hath made us free,
Alleluia, alleluia;
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**Fair Islands of the Channel Sea
Greet well this dawn of Liberty;
Alleluia, alleluia;
Peal forth sweet bells that all may hear
Your joyful message ringing clear.
Alleluia, alleluia;
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**Gone is the foeman's hatred rife,
Gone those dark days of mental strife,
Alleluia, alleluia;
This is our day of glad release,
And restoration to full peace.
Alleluia, alleluia;
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

**For hands unfettered we rejoice,
In freedom's speech we raise our voice,
Alleluia, alleluia;
Let Jersey's hills and valleys ring
With songs of peace re-echoing.
Alleluia, alleluia,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.**

PRAYER FOR LIBERATION

Lord Jesus Christ
you have set us free from all that is evil.
We give you thanks for the end of warfare which
Brought liberation to this Island –
For the service and sacrifice of all who made the Liberation
possible,
For the companionship of friends and family
Which sustained us through the Occupation,
For the years of peace,

And for the years of growing reconciliation between nations
Which once were enemies.

Very thankful for all that is good in life,
We pray for those now held captive by political or spiritual
powers.

That all people may know
The glorious liberty of the children of God:
For you were born and died to save us,
And now live and reign with the Father,
And the Holy Spirit, one God,
World without end. Amen

PRAYERS OF RECONCILIATION

Remembering that peace is not universal and wars
continue,
let us commit ourselves to work together for reconciliation
and peace throughout the world according to God's will

God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself:
**He has entrusted us with the message of
reconciliation.**

When anyone is united to Christ there is a new creation:
**The old order has gone; a new order has already
begun.**

He has entrusted us with the message of reconciliation:
In Christ's name be reconciled to God.

(from St Paul's 2nd letter to the church at Corinth, 5:17-20)

BLESSING

Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good; render to no-one evil for evil;
strengthen the faint-hearted; support the weak;
help the afflicted; honour all people;
love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy
Spirit.

And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy
Spirit

be among us and remain with us always.

Amen.