

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) O sing a new song to the Lord, for he has worked wonders; in the sight of the nations he has shown his deliverance, alleluia.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM** (Ps 144)

**ANTIPHON:** O sing a new song to the Lord, for he has worked wonders; in the sight of the nations he has shown his deliverance, alleluia.

**RESPONSE:** I will praise your name for ever, my king and my God.

Or **Alleluia!**

**LECTOR:** The Lord is kind and full of compassion, slow to anger, abounding in love. How good is the Lord to all, compassionate to all his creatures. **R.**

**LECTOR:** All your creatures shall thank you, O Lord, and your friends shall repeat their blessing. They shall speak of the glory of your reign and declare your might, O God, to make known to men your mighty deeds and the glorious splendour of your reign. **R.**

**LECTOR:** Yours is an everlasting kingdom; your rule lasts from age to age. **R.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** Alleluia, alleluia! I give you a new commandment: love one another as I have loved you. Alleluia!

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON** (or a hymn) I am the true vine and you are the branches, says the Lord. Whoever remains in me, and I in him, bears fruit in plenty, alleluia!

**TODAY'S READINGS** Acts 14:21-27; Rev 21:1-5; John 13:31-35

**NEXT WEEK** (6th Sunday of Easter, Yr C) Acts 15:1-2, 22-29; Psalm 66; Rev 21:10-14, 22-23;

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## A life beyond death



**18 May 2025 5th Sunday Easter Year C**

John's vision of a new heaven and a new earth speaks of a time when sorrow, death and suffering will be no more. Some two thousand years later we might think that John's utopian vision is little more than wishful thinking. Moreover, if we take the words of Jesus in this week's Gospel – "You must love one another as I have loved you" – we can also recognise that Christians honour this commandment more in the breach than in reality.

In the words of the English playwriter, G K Chesterton: "The Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult; and left untried".

However, looking at the gospel, we see the new vision of creation and the new commandment of love emerge in a world of sinfulness and evil. This is demonstrated in Judas' act of betrayal culminating in Jesus' execution on the Cross. Knowing his life was coming to such a brutal and violent end, Jesus says he is entering into God's glory. In other words, even the most barbaric human activity is ever open to the mystery of the Father's forgiveness and love being poured out over the whole of God's creation.

Elsewhere, John tells us "no one can see God" (Jn 1:18). And yet the divine glory is manifest throughout the whole of creation – even or especially when humans are too blind to see. Czech theologian, Tomas Halik, says we fail to see God, not because God is too distant, but because God is too close. God is the light by

which we see everything, but we do not see the light, only that which the light reveals.

In the Old Testament we are told God's glory is manifest to Moses in a pillar of cloud and in a burning bush. God appears to Elijah in the still, small, gentle breeze. Yet God's glory is also manifest throughout all creation as in every human experience not excluding the reality of the vilest forms of human evil – such as wars, death camps, genocides, and ecological destruction. If God's glory is present in the death of Jesus, how could it be absent from anything in our entire world?

This week's readings about the "new creation" are also signals of life beyond death where we are invited to share in the Resurrection of Jesus. Such "good news" is something we should want to let the whole world know. This is the story of Paul and Barnabas in the first reading. However, if we are to be real missionary disciples, our first task is to be evangelised ourselves in order to witness to the divine Creator by "loving one another as Jesus loves us".

Yes, this is a profound challenge. Equally what a wonderful privilege, called to be instruments of the "new creation" through our attempts and failures to be faithful disciples of Jesus. As Pope Francis says: "whoever is in Christ is a new creation". And in the words of St Paul: "nothing can separate us from the love of God" (Rom. 8:31).

Gerard Hall SM

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