

"Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered, and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him." (Heb.5:8,9)

The Epistle to the Hebrews, from which this text and the second Reading is taken, is quite a difficult book of the Bible to understand and relate to. I wonder whether it cuts much ice with most of us as we hear an extract from time to time. Not that its argument is untrue. Nor because the purpose of the writer is not thoroughly sound and proper. But because it was directed to a people whose background, upbringing, and way of life was so very different from our own: the Jewish Christians who had grown up with the worship of God being expressed in terms of tabernacles; sacrifices of goats, sheep, calves, and doves; covenants; and by a people who constantly looked back to the glorious days when their forefathers knew God in a very humanistic and literal way.

Whoever wrote this Epistle, and its authorship is unknown, was writing to Christians who had grown up as Jews and who would clearly understand his comparisons drawn between the Old Testament ministry and Christ's. He does not rubbish the old practices - he outlines the traditional understanding, and then goes on to show how in so many ways it had its fulfillment in the actions of Jesus, particularly with respect to His voluntary self-giving and death.

While a knowledge of Old Testament sacrificial worship might be of only superficial interest to us, and references to it in the New Testament confusing, yet nevertheless the message which comes through in spite of our limited appreciation of all the symbolism, is loud and clear. "Being made perfect, He (that is Jesus) became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him." The various elements in the old ceremonial regulations and practices were foreshadowing the work and the character of Jesus, who fulfilled and brought to perfection the old way of Jewish Law and Covenant.

An example may be seen in the office of High Priest. He was the religious head of the people, and often their national head also. His authority had come down from Moses and Aaron, who had been appointed by God to deliver the people from slavery in Egypt, to lead them to the Promised Land, and most important of all, to introduce the people to the worship and service of the One True God. On the Day of Atonement, once a year, the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies alone, and there he sprinkled the altar with the blood of the sacrificed animals - a bull and a goat - as an expression of the desire of the people to have God forgive their sins. Sin - that is, disobedience to God - has never been taken lightly in religious understanding, and this sacrificial system was believed to have been laid down directly by God to be a means of dealing with the guilt caused by sin. Read the Book Leviticus, chapter 16 for a full description of some of the old requirements.

The sacrifices offered by the High Priest did have a certain effectiveness. Of course we cannot tell how God felt about them, abhorrent to us as they are. But they enabled the holiness of God, and the sinfulness of mankind to be recognised. They made possible the return to God of a person who through sin had cut himself off from God, by providing recognition of the sin and penance through the offering of costly gifts.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews points out that these remedies could not provide a permanent cure for human sinfulness, otherwise they would not have to be so frequently repeated. He wrote in effect: If the offering of mere animals could have an effect, even so limited, it must be obvious that the sinless Christ's voluntary self-sacrifice - the perfect High Priest offering not an animal but himself - such a sacrifice must have a universal and perfect effectiveness.

People who accepted Christ's offering on their behalf did find themselves caught up into a situation of eternal significance. It was like being born all over again: a new beginning; a new outlook on life. The ministry of Jesus - His life, death, and resurrection, reveals to us God as no-one else ever could. He shows us God in a way we can grasp and understand.

But also, Jesus can fully and uniquely represent us to the Father. True humanity is found in Him because He was truly Man. When Jesus became a man He had to become obedient to the Laws of God, and He did that perfectly. And He resisted the attacks, the temptations of Satan successfully. But when Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God, entered our race, He not only had to be obedient to God's Law, but He also had to be obedient to God's way of achieving salvation for mankind. That was by having the sins of mankind paid for through the suffering Son of God.

The Epistle to the Hebrews says: "In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering." (2:10). The only way mankind could be saved is through a Saviour who had become a perfect Saviour through suffering. As the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, Jesus was perfect, but He was not able as such to be the Saviour. The perfect Saviour is the only-begotten Son of God who who, in our world, to become one of us, was entirely obedient to the will of the Father. This means that when we look at the crucified Saviour, we are looking at the most intense and absolute expression of obedience ever to occur in the history of the world. Jesus' suffering was the most intense anyone has ever gone through, not only in terms of physical suffering - that has undoubtedly been matched but with it was mental and spiritual agony as He felt deprived even of the support of the Father: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt.27:46)

If suffering was necessary so that Jesus could become the perfect Saviour, then we must acknowledge the reality and the depth of His suffering. As we observe the perfectly obedient Saviour give Himself totally for the sins of mankind, so we are called to obedience ourselves. The Letter to the Hebrews says that when Jesus became the perfect Saviour, He became the source of salvation for all those who obey Him. Jesus, the obedient Son of the Father, calls us to obedience.

What does this mean? It means that we must believe in Jesus Christ, and we must do His will. We heard Jesus saying in today's Gospel Reading: "Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour." At the centre of the Christian faith there is the Man who was perfectly obedient. Those who obey Him discover that their lives are made complete by His re-creating power.

As we come to the beginning of the final fortnight of our Lord and Saviour's earthly life, let us look more closely at our obedience and our following of Christ, seeking the enabling power of the Holy Spirit.

AMEN

Sunday 9th April, 2006

PALM SUNDAY : LENT VI _____ **Responsibility: Canon Barlow**

I do not preach a sermon on Palm Sunday. Instead I read the account of our Lord's Passion from the appropriate Gospel, viz. this year St.Mark 14:12 to 15:47. I find this very effective if read carefully and distinctly - and certainly more effective than anything I could write for the occasion.

In place of the appointed Gospel, which is very long and too long for people to stand through, I read the story of the Triumphal Entry which otherwise might not be heard on Palm Sunday: this year Mark 11: 1-11.

SUGGESTED ORDER OF SERVICE FOR GOOD FRIDAY		APBA
Welcome, Greeting, and Introductory Sentence		119
HYMN 266 ("There is a green hill")		
Prayer of Preparation		119
The Ten Commandments		101
Confession; Kyries; Trisagion		120/121
Collects for Good Friday (3)		498
Old Testament Reading		
Psalm		
New Testament Reading		
HYMN 265 ("In the cross of Christ")		
Gospel Reading (Invite people to sit if the reading is too long for them)		
Sermon		
Creed		

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HYMN 258 ("When I survey") The collection may be taken here

The Great Litany (If insufficient books give the response at the start of each section}

HYMN 271 ("Lift high the Cross
The Grace or other suitable Dismissal Prayer

Note : Crosses in the Church should be veiled today

GOOD FRIDAY, Year B Responsibility: Canon Barlow 14th April

Today we gather as a family, coming together to mourn in sorrow for the death of a beloved member of the family. More than that, we recognise that it was the typical sinfulness of mankind which caused the death of our beloved brother. More than that again, we know that He who was crucified came into this world to save mankind from the just deserts our sinfulness merits.

In an attempt to express and display our remorse, our churches are stripped bare of decoration; our hymns are in a minor key; the very style of our service today is sad and mournful. Today is the one day in the year when we feel it inappropriate to have a service the Holy Eucharist - for that is a service of light and life. Today we commemorate the sad fact that men extinguished the light and the life of the one who gave us that service

Of course we really know that was not the end of the story. We can only pretend that it was, if we are truly to enter into the mood of the day. As we see through the veils over the crosses in the church that there is no tortured figure on them, so we know that Jesus' death and burial was by no means the end. It appeared to be defeat - in fact it was victory! Jesus' final cry "It is finished!" does not mean "It's all over and I'm done for." It means "All that I have set out to achieve for the salvation of mankind has been completed!"

We will celebrate on Sunday and for some weeks after, the triumphant vindication and proof of our Saviour's achievement. But for now, we mourn, not merely the unjust death of a good, kind, loving teacher - sadly that happens all too often - but rather those things which made the cost of salvation so high, and which today we acknowledge and grieve over, and seek forgiveness for. For we too, long removed in terms of years, must share the blame, and do what we can to atone for it.

As we heard again that familiar reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah, we were listening to one of the ancient songs about the suffering Servant of God. Handel in his great oratorio "Messiah" set many of them to wonderful music and has made the passage memorable. "He was despised, and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows"

The author was writing near the end of the exile in Babylon about the middle of the 6th century before Christ, proclaiming a message of hope to a sorely distressed and discouraged people. He told them that their exile was coming to an end, and encouraged them to return home, to rebuild ruined Jerusalem, and to re-create their nation's life. When he speaks about the servant who had neither beauty nor comeliness, who was despised and rejected by men, he probably meant Israel itself. Possibly he had in mind the righteous remnant of the people who in their exile had continued faithful to the God of their forefathers. He was assuring them that though they were poor, oppressed, misused, and despised, God had chosen them, and that He still loved

them. He would use even their sufferings for His purpose. They were destined to bring God's truth to all nations, indeed to the very ends of the earth.

Although the prophet was thinking of his own people in his own time, his hopes and expectations were fulfilled, in a way and a wonder he could never have imagined, in the Passion of Jesus Christ. Imagine yourself with Mary, John, and the others, standing near the Cross, with Isaiah's words running through your mind: "He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not."

It is comforting to know that this is the man whom God sent, and through whom God acted. It is reassuring to recall that this was the way God chose to come into human life. He did not come as the strongest man, or the cleverest man, or the most popular man. If He had come as any of these, we might imagine that to be a Christian is to emulate a superman, rather than to receive new life, new strength, grace, from the Son of God. We think of Jesus as a healer, remembering how people came to Him to be cured of their diseases and their disorders. But we are never given the impression of a zestful, hearty, healthy healer who is never sick himself and who by his example shows others how to be strong and healthy. We tend to overlook how often there was a cost to Himself. He was moved with compassion; He was stirred with indignation at times; He was on occasion amazed and distressed by lack of faith; He wept at the grave of Lazarus. On the cross His strength ebbed far more quickly than usual in such executions. He who healed others was crucified in weakness. He is the healer and the comforter of those who must endure pain, as well as those whose pain is taken away. He is the companion of those who must live bravely with weakness as well as those to whom He can say "Arise and walk". He is the healer of those whose full cure comes only at the moment of passing from this life to the next.

I have pointed out that the prophet who wrote of the Suffering Servant was thinking of the nation Israel in that role. I have reminded you of how, centuries later, the Church saw how his words were fulfilled in a new way in Christ. They are also to be fulfilled by the new Israel, the Body of Christ, the Church. The Church is always truest to her vocation when, like her Lord, she is more concerned with ministering to the sick, the lost, the bereaved, the lonely. One great danger of the so-called successful Church is that she will have little to say to those who suffer or fail. It is hard to see how the problems and diseases of the world can be healed unless some of the more fortunate are willing to bear the stripes of others, rather than to inflict further wounds by neglect or disinterest, or to prosper because of their poverty.

Our only salvation lies in our being healed by our Lord's stripes, and then having the patience to endure our own, and the charity to share those of others. This we can do,

knowing that God bears them too; that in all the afflictions of mankind, God also is afflicted. The ugliness, the hideousness of the suffering and death of Jesus was transformed into beauty, hope, and heroic goodness. The trials and tribulations of ourselves, and the world, may likewise be transformed in the light of the Cross of Christ our Saviour, the perfect Suffering Servant of God.

AMEN

From the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 17: "Paul argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who chanced to be there. Some also of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers met him. And some said: 'What would this babbler say?' Others said: I He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities because he preached Jesus and the Resurrection."

The people of Athens, where this incident took place, were accustomed to having holy and religious men come to their city to preach their various doctrines; they had heard of all sorts of peculiar beliefs. It was all very difficult to decide which was worth following, so by and large the Athenians were pretty blasé about religion in general. And when Paul turned up they gave him a hearing too. But obviously they were not really turned on: "What would this babbler say?"

His theme and text? "Jesus and the Resurrection". That's the Christian religion in a nutshell. That's why anyone anywhere has ever built a Christian place of worship! That's why anyone, anywhere, has ever said the Lord's Prayer! That's why you have set this hour or so aside to come here! That's why, for that matter, that there is this 4-day holiday period - though many thousands enjoying it don't recognise that. And if by chance the unheeding pagans should happen to hear the message of Easter - Jesus and the Resurrection, what is their response? The same as the Athenians so long ago. Some laugh, some mock, some are shocked, some find it interesting and would like to argue about it, sometime. As the poet Studdart Kennedy expressed it:

"They simply passed Him by.
They did not touch a hair of Him;
They merely let Him die.
For men had grown more tender,
And would not cause Him pain.
They only passed on down the street
And left Him in the rain."

But really - look at this Jesus: born in an obscure village; the child of a peasant woman; living in a working-class home for 30 years. Then wandering about teaching and preaching for another 3 years. And during all that time He never travelled 100 miles from where He was born. During all that time He never spoke to anywhere near the number of people any radio or TV commentator does each day. He never had a sermon or article published in His own day, and never wrote His memoirs.

And look how He died! Never was there a more complete fiasco and failure. Everyone disowned Him. They heard Him say He was even forsaken by God! One of His friends betrayed Him: I don't know how much 30 pieces of silver is in terms of Australian dollars, but it isn't much. He died the embarrassing death of an ordinary criminal, in the company of two thieves. And the public said as they returned home after their day's excitement: "Poor fellow. Serves Him right though for stirring up the Establishment. It was a pretty unjust sort of a trial, but it doesn't matter now, it's all over."

So would our Christian faith be if Christ's suffering had come to nothing. If He was just one more unfortunate mortal gone to his death. If just another man has come to an untimely end - too bad!

But the Christian Faith, based on unshakeable evidence, is that Christ rose from the dead. That He is alive for evermore. That is why the shout: "Jesus Christ is risen today" echoes around the world on Easter Morning. The Resurrection is not something tacked on to the Christian faith to give it a happy ending. Jesus and the Resurrection IS the Christian Faith. All the evidence of the New Testament and the experience of the Church over this 2000 years, shows that the core of the good news was not: "Follow this teacher and do your best". Not "Lead a decent life and do to others as you would be done by." Not "Service above self." Not "Religion is just between me and God." Not at all. The core of the Gospel message was then, is now, and ever shall be: "Jesus and the Resurrection". Take that away and you take away Christianity.

So we have to accept Him or reject Him. "He who is not with me is against me" He says. There is no pending basket into which the claims of Jesus can be put.

But what when the familiar world around us crumbles? If we should lose our job, or our home, or our health, or worse, a loved one? What, if we must stand helplessly while wife or husband or child suffers some cruel illness? And what happens after death? People want to know! WE want to know. Only Christ can give the answer. And because we accept Him as Lord in this world and, trustingly, of that which is to come, we may look to Him with all confidence. It is enough to hear Him say: "I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you Because I live, you will live also." That is what Easter Day says to us.

We know all too well that we are imperfect creatures living in an imperfect world. We still sin and suffer. There is still adultery, malicious gossip, scandal, lies, cruelty in our midst. Yet every time we pray; every time we make an act of sincere penitence; every time we resist the temptation to what we try and pretend are little sins, white lies, business conveniences; every time we turn our back on God only knows what temptations - then we are sharing with countless others, the victory of Easter Day - Jesus and the Resurrection. For now is Christ risen - Alleluia! **AMEN**

EASTER 1 or the 2nd SUNDAY OF EASTER, YEAR B 23rd April, 2006

Responsibility: Canon Barlow

"Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe." (John 20:25) The words of Thomas, earning him the nickname of "The Doubter".

But he was not the only one. Just the latest among the little Christian company. The first reaction of the disciples on hearing that Jesus had risen from the dead was: "I don't believe it!"

When the women who went to the tomb early on Easter morning had hurried back and told the others that they had found the stone rolled back, and the tomb empty, and suggested that something wonderful had happened, they were told they were talking nonsense. "Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told this to the apostles; but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them", so St.Luke records. (Luke 24:10,11)

The doubts of other disciples are mentioned too: "And when they saw him they worshipped him; but some doubted", St.Matthew reports. (Matthew 28:17)

The whole point of Easter is what made those doubts-vanish. It is very strange that today many people will not have a bar of religion because, they say, it is all so much superstition. It is not likely that those people have really studied the great religious truths, or even given them much serious thought.

On the other hand, because scientists have made such marvellous discoveries in our lifetime, these same people will believe almost anything if they are told, "A scientist said so," or, "A scientist has proved it, or found a way". So many advertisements start off: "Doctors say ...". And those who want to believe what is being said, do not stop to ask whether this is the opinion of a single, little-known scientist; or employees of some manufacturing firm; or whether it is the well-authenticated work of experienced and reputable men. Although quite a large number of people reject religion as superstitious, magazines of wide circulation continue to use what is expensive space if used for advertising, for the printing of horoscopes and other forms of fortune-telling. And people who say "The Bible is out-of-date", accept without question these very superstitious ways of guessing the future.

This is not to write off all religious doubters and unbelievers as superficial people who simply repeat what somebody has told them. There are those who have given the whole question of belief and worship a great deal of thought. The criticism of such people has led to a more rational and common-sense approach to the understanding of Holy Scripture, and a more common-sense approach to a number of mistaken ideas our forefathers had about religion, including a number which we now know

to be narrow-minded, and literal, and even superstitious. We may and we must differ from the opinions of such honest doubters, but we must also respect them.

Since our subject is concerned with the Resurrection, we must get back to the disciples who at first refused to believe in it. This is important, this early doubting, because it shows that later when they did believe, they were not simply people believing something they wanted to believe, or something they wished had happened, or something they had expected to happen. They started off suspicious of the Resurrection, and they had to be convinced before they would believe it.

What convinced them was the voice and touch and presence of Jesus, and above all, his personality. When they saw him they knew him to be the same kind, wise, and good Jesus they had always known.

Immediately they believed that their Lord had risen from the dead, their lives began to show the results of their belief. Before his death, they had shown timidity and fear. For instance they had deserted him and fled when he was arrested in the garden. Once they knew that Jesus had risen from the dead, they found new hope, and new courage, and new keenness to do the work to which their Master had called them. And after the Resurrection appearances had come to an end, and they had received the Holy Spirit, they fearlessly proclaimed their belief wherever they could, and regardless of the cost. Peter for instance, in addressing the crowd on the Day of Pentecost spoke of "this Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses." (Acts 2:32) And a day or so later, after the healing of the lame man in Jesus' name, Peter and John stood before the Sanhedrin, and said: "Be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by him this man is standing before you, well." (Acts 4:10).

Now there was no doubting, only absolute certainty.

Our belief in the Resurrection, to which we are witnessing now as we worship, should have the same effect upon us that it had upon the APOSTLES. It should make us brave and strong to do right, and inspire us to work unstintingly for Christ.

Belief is a far more constructive force in a person's life than is unbelief. Wrong beliefs can lead a person to wrong actions, just as right beliefs lead to right actions, but at least belief leads to action. Unbelief and scepticism have no such driving force: they are simply negative.

Our Christian belief, if it is sincere and true and strong, will make us different from those who for whatever reason, good or bad, do not believe. It will give us stronger character and greater strength of purpose than they have.

Jesus said to Thomas: "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."

AMEN

EASTER 2 or the THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

Responsibility: Canon Barlow

30th April, 2006

Some time after the Resurrection and the Ascension of Jesus, and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Peter and John were going to the Temple at Jerusalem to worship. At one of the gates of the Temple they were accosted by a lame beggar, asking for a hand-out. "Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said: "Look at us! So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said: Silver and gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.' And Peter took the cripple by the hand, pulled him to his feet, and the man was healed. "Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God." (Acts 3:4-8) When people clustered around to see the cause of the miracle, Peter took the opportunity of preaching to them of the Risen Jesus, and called them to repentance and new life in Christ.

This is the setting in which the First Reading this morning is placed. It is part of St. Peter's address in which he told them that it was by faith in Jesus, who God had raised from the dead, that the crippled man had been restored to perfect health. "By faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.'

This suggests perhaps that all Christians should be in perfect health all the time. For Christians profess faith in Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Yet very many of us are subject to ill health. Why is this so?

There are various reasons. The main one is that all too often we do not really take Jesus at His word. We do not expect to be well; we do not expect Him to heal us when we are ill. We are basically lacking in complete faith. And no doubt it is our lack of faith which places a block to our Lord's healing of us.

Our presence here this morning says that we do have a certain amount of faith in God - but is there sufficient commitment to bring us to public worship every Sunday? Do we have the faith which causes us to commit ourselves, our families, our everyday concerns to God every day? How sad it is that some people come to church on Good Friday, but not on Easter Day, or vice versa. Or at Christmas time, but not Easter. Or perhaps at Christmas and Easter, but rarely at other times. What kind of faith is that?

There are other blocks to Christ's healing, and an important one is our lack of forgiveness, and our resentment, towards those who have hurt us or disappointed us. We readily say: "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us" - and how often do we realize the condition of forgiveness which is in those words: forgive us as we forgive. If we do not forgive, we can hardly expect God to forgive us. So we set up this great block to God working in us.

Now in talking about healing, and why some people are healed and others are not, there is the real danger that we might fall into a judgmental attitude. We might be tempted to feel and even say that so and so is sick, therefore he or she is lacking in faith, or is a grievous sinner, or is holding a grudge against someone. We dare not even think that way. Not all prayers are answered in the way we might wish - God is not our slave, our genie who will do our will like the one who lived in Aladdin's lamp. Jesus Himself was denied on at least two occasions. He said to Peter, before the crucifixion, "I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail." But fail it did when Peter denied Him three times, and fled in the face of the threat of our Lord's enemies. And again, in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed: "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me." And the answer was "No", and Jesus went on to Calvary.

There are, you see, other reasons for both healing and apparent non-healing, which as Christians we should thoroughly understand and appreciate and be ready to apply when we find ourselves in either situation.

Firstly we are always healed in answer to our faithful prayers - outwardly and physically. Certainly if we are not we are spiritually healed and given strength and courage to cope with whatever the problem is. Physical healing may well follow, at least to some extent, as we dedicate our suffering to Christ.

Secondly, without our Lord's suffering and death there would have been no victory over sin and death and the power of evil. No resurrection; and no reassurance to us of the promise of eternal life. From evil, God can bring good; God can use to His glory our suffering, if we accept it and offer it to Him.

And thirdly, our illness and pain, properly accepted and borne, will give us opportunity to witness to our faith. While it was just great for the crippled man at the gate of the Temple to be healed, it was more important that it gave Peter and John the chance to speak of the resurrection of Christ and of the love of God for mankind.

Not everyone is as eloquent as was Peter. Most people are shy of talking about their faith. But everyone can witness to Jesus by the lives they lead; by the standards of conduct they accept or reject; by their kindness to their fellowmen; by their regular and faithful public worship; by their fellowship and friendship with others who are Christ's followers. And perhaps more significantly and obviously by the fortitude and trusting acceptance of misfortune, grief, and pain.

Peter spoke for himself and John as witnesses to the death and resurrection of Jesus. In the Gospel for today we hear Jesus telling the disciples that they were to be witnesses to Him. This duty is ours also, as followers of Christ, by a readiness to speak of our faith and of our confidence in Christ. We should be ready, as Peter wrote, to give an answer to anyone who calls on us for the reason of the hope that is in us.

And displaying by the quality of our lives, in sickness and in health, that our faith in the Risen Christ is not merely a matter of words expressed, but part of our very life. ‘This is the victory that overcomes the world; our faith.’

Amen