

Easter message for Liverpool College

Did you know that the disciples of Jesus self-isolated?

We read in John 20:19 that 'On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!"

That 'first day' – a Sunday – was the same day that Jesus had miraculously risen from the dead. The same day he had thrown off the chains and shackles of death, rolled back the stone and came now to stand with his disciples, who were so afraid that the people who had killed Jesus would now come for them that they had locked themselves in a room together. Hiding. Self-isolating!

This is all despite Jesus' frequent teaching throughout his life that he would die, and three days later would rise again. And yet it seems his disciples did not believe him. They hid. Indoors. Alone. Cut off from the outside world. Sound familiar?

It required Jesus to break in. To literally manifest himself, bodily, actually there in that room. To shatter their self-isolation with a message of hope and a message of peace.

A message of hope and peace that is for us now as well.

1. A message of hope

The disciples had just watched their Lord, master and teacher betrayed, falsely accused, and killed as a criminal on a cross. A death reserved for the vilest of offenders or those the Romans considered the lowest of the low.

But here was this same man, alive, standing in their room, inviting them in a later encounter to put their hands in his wounds and see that he was physically alive. Once dead, now living.

This was hope personified. Death is the last great enemy, as we are being reminded only too often at the moment. And yet here is someone who encounters death, endures death, and comes out the other side.

The implication for the disciples, and for us, could not be clearer; the trajectory for a disciple of Jesus would be the same; death would not be the end, there was life after death.

Easter brings a message of hope.

2. A message of peace

What would be the first thing you would say if you had just resurrected physically from the dead? 'I'm back!' or 'guess who?!'

Well Jesus' first words are these: 'Peace be with you'. Jesus offers his disciples peace.

Now they could know peace fully and completely with God. Their determination to live life their own way and not God's, their lack of faith in Jesus' teaching that he would rise again, all was forgiven. All had been paid by the death of the Son of God 3 days previously. And now, Jesus reaches into their lives with a message of peace. 'Peace be with you'. You can know peace with me. Peace with God. Peace with yourself. Peace with others. 'Peace be with you'.

Easter brings a message of peace.

At this most unusual of Easters, nonetheless may you and your families find the hope and peace of Easter to be yours at this time.

God Bless you.

Mr P Hammersley
Chaplain