

MONDAY
20 APRIL
Acts 4:23-31
Psalm 2:1-9
John 3:1-8

TUESDAY
21 APRIL
Acts 4:32-end
Psalm 93
John 3:7-15

WEDNESDAY
22 APRIL
Acts 5:17-26
Psalm 34:1-8
John 3:16-21

THURSDAY
23 APRIL
George, martyr,
patron of England
1 Maccabees
2:59-64
or Revelation
12:7-12
Psalm 126
2 Timothy 2:3-13
John 15:18-21

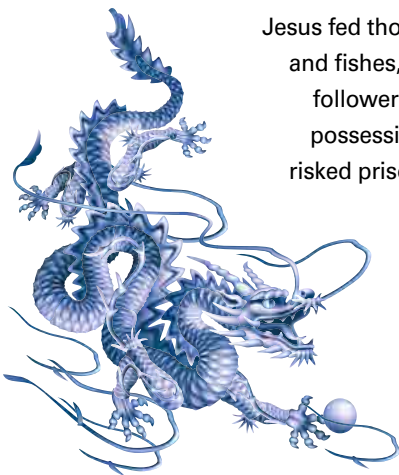
FRIDAY
24 APRIL
Acts 5:34-42
Psalm 27:1-5. 16-17
John 6:1-15

SATURDAY
25 APRIL
Mark the
Evangelist
Proverbs 15:28-end
or Acts 15:35-end
Psalm 119:9-16
Ephesians 4:7-16
Mark 13:5-13

REFLECTION

Some of this week's readings might remind us of fantasy fiction. Thursday's celebration of St George understandably involves a dragon. On Wednesday a supernatural being opens a prison door. But the message of this second week of Easter is no fantasy.

Yes, it might seem too good to be true that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, as Jesus reassures Nicodemus – who had asked, "How can these things be?" Don't we sometimes ask that question? Are we sometimes led astray, as Saturday's celebration of St Mark cautions against? We too are reassured that the promised Holy Spirit will help us distinguish fact from fiction, discern what is truly of God, as Gamaliel wisely observes in Friday's reading from Acts.



Jesus fed thousands with a few loaves and fishes, and after his crucifixion his followers were inspired to share their possessions to feed the hungry. They risked prison to tell others about Jesus.

Something very special must have happened. So if we're reminded of *The Lord of the Rings* this week, let it be because the Easter message rings out loud and clear that Jesus is the risen Lord.

PRAYER

God of truth, we thank you for the witness of the first disciples and all the saints.
 May our Easter faith slay the dragons of doubt.
 And in the name of Jesus Christ, our risen Lord,
 may we be liberating angels for all who are held captive by fear.

STATIONS OF THE RESURRECTION

STATION III – THE STONE ROLLED AWAY

Concluding our series of extracts from Richard Greatrex's book *Stations of the Resurrection*.

Jesus' death had been public, witnessed by many. The evidence that his life had departed was laid out for all to see. Hung on a cross, a spear in the side, Jesus was no more. For his friends and followers to believe anything else would mean scaling immense barriers and holding firmly to an untested hope – resurrection. His burial was in secret, in the dark, known by few, attended by only the bravest and most indomitable. The stone that blocked the entrance was as huge and heavy as all the black thoughts and memories that were crushing out of mind the words of Jesus – his prophecies, repeated over and again to dim ears: that the Son of Man must go to Jerusalem, suffer, die and on the third day rise again. If that Temple curtain, torn in two at Jesus' death, marked the sundering of the borders between heaven and earth, then this stone, in all its rearing solidity, was a last-ditch attempt to close down the blazing potential of divine reconciliation with creation.

But as the new dawn fades, love comes again. Just as bluebells grow back every year, pushing their way through tarmac and concrete, so hope springs green. Tons of limestone were shifting, the entrance was unguarded, the sweet air of day swirled inside the tomb. A transformation in the very fabric of existence was taking place, in the dark, in the shadows, in the quiet of night. Distraught hearts and minds were still exhaustedly racing to process the vicious destruction of the light-filled future they had sold everything to follow. How could they come to understand, accept, celebrate that the world they had woken up to was turning on a different plane?



LIVE
 the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU
 THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by
 Caroline Hodgson
 and
 Heather Smith

Second week of Easter

Monday 20 April to
 Saturday 25 April
 2020

WEEK