

The Easter Liturgy

30th March 2024 8.00 pm

President and Preacher: The Rt Revd Mark Tanner Bishop of Chester

WELCOME

We welcome you to Chester Cathedral! It is a place where the mission of the church to proclaim God's love is central, and your welcome presence here for worship helps to strengthen this vital act of witness.

We're a paperless Cathedral and are working environmentally to save paper. The service can be downloaded to your device using the QR code at the back of the nave, or by visiting Services - Chester Cathedral

Hymns, readings and responses will be presented on the screens.

Music

Communion Setting
Communion Service in B flat
Charles Villiers Stanford 1852-1924

Gradual The Easter Anthems

Communion Motet
My beloved spake Thomas Tomkins 1572-1656

Voluntary
Acclamations (Suite Médiévale)

Jean Langlais 1907-1991

Receiving Communion

We warmly invite Christians of all denominations to come and receive bread and wine at the distribution of Holy Communion. Gluten-free wafers are available – please indicate to the priest if you require one. If you prefer not to receive you are invited either to come forward for a blessing or to remain in your seat.

COLLECTION

The Cathedral costs around £6000 a day to keep open.

We invite you to generously give to ensure our future:

A cash collection will be taken during the service; donations can otherwise be left with cash or using the **Contactless Donation Plates;** a sidesperson can help you with this.

Via the Cathedral Website www.chestercathedral.com/donate

We really need your help to make sure that services like this one can continue and that we can keep the doors open for everyone. Thank you for your generous contributions.

THE VIGIL

The ministers and congregation gather outside the Pilgrim Porch in silence.

The Deacon reads these verses

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light.

Genesis 1.1

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation, to you be glory and praise for ever. Your steadfast love extends to the heavens and your faithfulness never ceases. Illuminate our hearts with your wisdom and strengthen our lives with your word, for you are the fountain of life; in your light we see true light. Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Blessed be God for ever.

The Bishop says

This is the night in which our Lord Jesus Christ passed over from death to life. The Church invites her members, dispersed throughout the world, to gather in vigil and prayer. For this is the Passover of the Lord, in which through word and sacrament we share in his victory over death.

As we await the risen Christ, let us hear the record of God's saving deeds in history, recalling how he saved his people in ages past and in the fullness of time sent his Son to be our Redeemer. Let us pray that through this Easter celebration God may bring to perfection in each of us the saving work he has begun.

The Old Testament reading

A reading from the book of the Exodus.

As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back, and there were the Egyptians advancing on them. In great fear the Israelites cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, 'Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have

you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, "Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians"? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.' But Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the Lord will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to keep still.'

Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Why do you cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. But you lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground.

Then I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and so I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots, and his chariot drivers. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gained glory for myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his chariot drivers.'

The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers.

At the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. The Egyptians said, 'Let us flee from the Israelites, for the Lord is fighting for them against Egypt.'

Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.' So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the

Lord tossed the Egyptians into the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great work that the Lord did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the Lord and believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.

Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord: 'I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously'.

Exodus 14:10-end; 15:1a

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Bishop says

Let us pray.

Blessed are you, Lord,
God of our salvation.
You heard the agony of your people
as they cried out from their slavery,
and you gave them Moses to lead them
to a land flowing with milk and honey.
Hear the cry of the enslaved
and the homeless today
and lead us through the turbulent sea
of life to our true home with you,
O Lord, our maker and redeemer.

Amen.

THE SERVICE OF LIGHT

The fire is blessed; the Bishop says

Let us pray.

Eternal God. who made this most holy night to shine with the brightness of your one true light: set us aflame with the fire of your love, and bring us to the radiance of your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Marking of the Paschal Candle

The Paschal Candle is marked with the sign of the Cross, the Alpha and Omega (the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet), and then the numbers of the current year, saying

Christ yesterday and today, the beginning and the end, Alpha and Omega, all time belongs to him, and all ages; to him be glory and power, through every age and for ever. Amen.

Five grains of incense are inserted into the paschal candle and the Bishop says

By his holy and glorious wounds may Christ our Lord guard and keep us. **Amen.**

The Presentation of the Candidates

The candidate is presented to the congregation. The Bishop asks the candidate for baptism

David, do you wish to be baptized? **I do.**

The Bishop asks the congregation

Faith is the gift of God to his people. In baptism the Lord is adding to our number those whom he is calling. People of God, will you welcome David and uphold him in his new life in Christ? With the help of God, we will.

The Decision/Renewal of Baptismal Vows

The Bishop addresses the candidate and the congregation

As we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, we remember that through the paschal mystery we have died and been buried with him in baptism. To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him. Therefore I ask:

Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?

I reject them.

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?

I renounce them.

Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?

I repent of them.

The Bishop lights the Easter Candle, saying

May the light of Christ, rising in glory, banish all darkness from our hearts and minds.

The Bishop says to the candidate and the congregation

In baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light. Therefore I ask:

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour? I turn to Christ.

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?

I submit to Christ.

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?

I come to Christ.

Signing with the Cross

The Bishop makes the sign of the cross on the forehead of the candidate for baptism, saying

David, Christ claims you for his own.
Receive the sign of the cross.
Do not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified.
Fight valiantly as a disciple of Christ against sin, the world and the devil, and remain faithful to Christ to the end of your life.

May almighty God deliver you from the powers of darkness, restore in you the image of his glory, and lead you in the light and obedience of Christ.

Amen.

Procession of Light

The choir, servers, clergy, deacon, bishop, candidate and congregation enter the Cathedral. The procession moves to the head of the nave stopping at three points; the Paschal Candle is held up and a lay clerk sings

The light of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

The Exultet

The choir sings

Rejoice, heavenly powers!
Sing, choirs of angels!
Exult, all creation around God's throne.
Jesus Christ, our King, is risen!
Sound, sound the trumpet of salvation!
Rejoice, rejoice, O earth,
in shining splendour,
radiant in the brightness of your King!

Christ has conquered! Glory fills you!
Darkness vanishes for ever!
Rejoice, O mother church! Exult in glory!
The risen Saviour shines upon you!
Let this place resound with joy,
echoing the mighty song of all God's
people. Rejoice!

Colin Mawby 1936-2019

Easter Acclamation

The Bishop says

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Gloria in excelsis

The choir sings

Glory be to God on high, and in earth peace, good will towards men. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father almighty.

O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesu Christ: O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.

Thou that takest away
the sins of the world, receive our prayer.
Thou that sittest at the right hand of God
the Father, have mercy upon us.
For thou only art holy;
thou only art the Lord;
thou only, O Christ,
with the Holy Ghost,
art the Most High,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen

Collect

The Bishop says

Let us pray that we may reign with the risen Christ in glory.

Lord of all life and power, who through the mighty resurrection of your Son overcame the old order of sin and death to make all things new in him: grant that we, being dead to sin and alive to you in Jesus Christ, may reign with him in glory; to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be praise and honour, glory and might, now and in all eternity.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Please be seated.

A reading from the Letter of Paul to the Romans.

Do you not know that all of us who have been baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin.

But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Romans 6:3-11

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Gradual: The Easter Anthems

The choir sings

Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast;

Not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness: but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over him.

For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin: but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Christ is risen from the dead: and become the first fruits of them that slept.

For since by man came death: by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all die: even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Please stand, if you are able, for the Gospel procession.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

I am the first and the last, says the Lord, and the living one; I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Holy Gospel

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they

might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?' When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed; you are looking for lesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.' So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Mark 16:1-8

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Please be seated.

Sermon

The Bishop of Chester

THE LITURGY OF INITIATION

Prayer over the Water

The Bishop says

Praise God who made heaven and earth, who keeps his promise for ever.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give thanks and praise.

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ was baptized in the river Jordan, we thank you for the gift of water to cleanse us and revive us. We thank you that through the waters of the Red Sea you led your people out of slavery to freedom in the Promised Land We thank you that through the deep waters of death you brought your Son, and raised him to life in triumph. Bless this water. that your servants who are washed in it may be made one with Christ in his death and in his resurrection. to be cleansed and delivered from all sin. Send your Holy Spirit upon them,

bring them to new birth in the household of faith and raise them with Christ to full and eternal life; for all might, majesty, authority and power are yours, now and for ever.

Amen.

The Profession of Faith

Brothers and sisters, I ask you to profess together with this candidate the faith of the Church.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

I believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

I believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God, and makes Christ known in the world? I believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

This is our faith.

We believe and trust in one God,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The president says to each candidate for baptism

David, is this your faith? This is my faith.

The Bishop pours water on each candidate, saying

David, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The Bishop says

May God, who has received you by baptism into his Church, pour upon you the riches of his grace, that within the company of Christ's pilgrim people you may daily be renewed by his anointing Spirit, and come to the inheritance of the saints in glory.

Amen.

The Bishop says

Almighty God, we thank you for our fellowship in the household of faith with all who have been baptised in your name. Keep us faithful to our baptism, and so make us ready for that day when the whole creation shall be made perfect in your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

May Christ dwell in your heart through faith, that you may be rooted and grounded in love and bring forth the fruit of the Spirit. Amen.

THE LITURGY OF CONFIRMATION

The Bishop stands before those who are to be confirmed and says

Our help is in the name of the Lord who has made heaven and earth. Blessed be the name of the Lord now and for ever. Amen.

Almighty and ever-living God, you have given your servant new birth in baptism by water and the Spirit, and have forgiven him all his sins. Let your Holy Spirit rest upon him: the Spirit of wisdom and understanding; the Spirit of counsel and inward strength; the Spirit of knowledge and true godliness; and let his delight be in the fear of the Lord.

Amen.

The Bishop lays hands on the candidate's head and anoints them with the oil of chrism, saying

David, God has called you by name and made you his own.

Confirm, O Lord, your servant David with your Holy Spirit.

Amen.

We pray together

Defend, O Lord, your servant with your heavenly grace, that he may continue yours for ever, and daily increase in your Holy Spirit more and more, until he comes to your everlasting kingdom.

Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT

Welcome

Please stand if you are able. The Bishop says

There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism: David, by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.

We welcome you into the fellowship of faith; we are children of the same heavenly Father; we welcome you.

The congregation greets the newly baptized.

Peace

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said, 'Peace be with you.'
Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia!

The peace of the risen Christ be always with you and also with you.

The Deacon says

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

Offertory Hymn

Please remain standing to sing

Come, ye faithful, raise the strain of triumphant gladness;
God hath brought His Israel into joy from sadness; loosed from Pharoah's bitter yoke Jacob's sons and daughters; led them with unmoistened foot through the Red Sea waters.

'Tis the spring of souls to-day: Christ hath burst His prison, and from three days' sleep in death as a sun hath risen; all the winter of our sins, long and dark, is flying from his light, to whom we give laud and praise undying.

Now the queen of seasons, bright with the day of splendour, with the royal feast of feasts, comes its joy to render; comes to glad Jerusalem, who with true affection welcomes in unwearied strains Jesu's Resurrection.

Neither might the gates of death, nor the tomb's dark portal, nor the watchers, nor the seal, hold thee as a mortal; but today amidst thine own thou didst stand, bestowing that thy peace which evermore passeth human knowing.

St John of Damascus c.675-749 ST JOHN DAMASCENE Arthur Henry Brown 1830-1926

Preparation of the Altar

The Bishop says

Be present, be present, Lord Jesus Christ, our risen high priest; make yourself known in the breaking of bread. Amen.

Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you and also with you.
Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, always and everywhere to give you thanks, almighty and eternal Father, and in these days of Easter to celebrate with joyful hearts the memory of your wonderful works.

For by the mystery of his passion Jesus Christ, your risen Son, has conquered the powers of death and hell and restored in men and women and children the image of your glory. He has placed them once more in paradise and opened to them the gate of life eternal. And so, in the joy of this Passover, earth and heaven resound with gladness, while angels and archangels and the powers of all creation sing for ever the hymn of your glory.

The choir sings

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high. Amen.

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

The Bishop continues

We praise and bless you, loving Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; and as we obey his command, send your Holy Spirit, that broken bread and wine outpoured may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends and, taking bread, he praised you. He broke the bread, gave it to them and said: Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.

Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:

Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did, in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation, we proclaim his death and resurrection until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith: Christ has died: Christ is risen: Christ will come again.

Lord of all life, help us to work together for that day when your kingdom comes and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth. Look with favour on your people, gather us in your loving arms and bring us with all the saints to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ. in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father, for ever and ever. Amen.

Please be seated.

The Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer can be offered in your own language

Rejoicing in God's new creation, let us pray as our Saviour has taught us:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Breaking of the Bread

The Bishop says

Jesus says, I am the bread of life, whoever eats this bread will live for ever. Lord, our hearts hunger for you, give us this bread always.

Giving of Communion

Alleluia!

Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!

Agnus Dei

The choir sings

- O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.
- O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us.
- O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace.

All Christians are welcome to receive Holy Communion or a blessing. Sidespeople will assist the congregation in coming forward.

Communion Motet

My beloved spake, and said unto me, rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come,

and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell.

Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

Song of Songs 2:10-13 Thomas Tomkins 1572-1656

Post Communion Prayer

The Bishop says

Let us pray.

God of Life, who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by his glorious resurrection have delivered us from the power of our enemy: grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his risen life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Please stand if you are able.

THE DISMISSAL

Blessing

The Bishop says

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

God the Father, by whose love Christ was raised from the dead, open to you who believe the gates of everlasting life.

Amen.

God the Son, who in rising from the grave has won a glorious victory, give you joy as you share the Easter faith.

Amen.

God the Holy Spirit, who filled the disciples with the life of the risen Lord, empower you and fill you with Christ's peace.

Amen.

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Final Hymn

The strife is o'er, the battle done; now is the Victor's triumph won; O let the song of praise be sung: Alleluya!

Death's mightiest powers
have done their worst,
and Jesus hath his foes dispersed;
let shouts of praise and joy outburst:
Alleluya!

On the third morn he rose again glorious in majesty to reign;
O let us swell the joyful strain:
Alleluya!

He brake the age-bound chains of hell; the bars from heaven's high portals fell; let hymns of praise his triumph tell: Alleluya!

Lord, by the stripes which wounded thee from death's dread sting thy servants free, that we may live, and sing to thee: Alleluya!

Francis Pott 1832-1909 VICTORY ad. from G. P. da Palestrina c.1525-94 with Alleluya by W.H. Monk 1823-89

Giving of a Lighted Candle

The Bishop gives each of the newly baptized and confirmed a lighted candle, lit from the Easter Candle, and then says

God has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and has given us a place with the saints in light. You have received the light of Christ; walk in this light all the days of your life. Shine as a light in the world to the glory of God the Father.

The Deacon says

With the risen life of Christ within you, go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia. Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

Please remain standing as the procession leaves and then be seated for the organ voluntary.

Voluntary

Acclamations (Suite Médiévale)

Jean Langlais 1907-1991

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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