

Sunday 31st March 2024

Opening Prayer

In silence, read John 20:1 then pray quietly, with growing confidence:

After the agony of the cross, Lord Jesus you are here. After the desolation of the grave, Lord Jesus you are here. After your triumphant bursting from the tomb, Lord Jesus you are here.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed! Alleluia

Hymn: "Christ the Lord is Risen Today" (StF 298) Sing or read the words or listen to it here https://youtu.be/peSt3BT_MgM

Christ the Lord is risen today; Alleluia!
All creation joins to say: Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high; Alleluia!
Sing, you heavens; let earth, reply: Alleluia!

Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!
Fought the fight, the battle won; Alleluia!
Vain the stone, the watch, the seal; Alleluia!
Christ has burst the gates of hell: Alleluia!

Lives again our glorious King; Alleluia!
Where, O death, is now your sting? Alleluia!
Once he died our souls to save; Alleluia!
Where's your victory, boasting grave? Alleluia!

Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia!
Following our exalted Head; Alleluia!
Made like him, like him we rise; Alleluia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies: Alleluia!

King of Glory! Soul of bliss! Alleluia!
Everlasting life is this, Alleluia!
You to know, your power to prove, Alleluia!
Thus to sing, and thus to love: Alleluia!

Let us pray

O Lord God, Eternal Creator, you dwell in the hearts of all who worship you today. We praise and thank you for raising Jesus from the dead and setting us free to worship and adore you. To you belongs all the honour!

Jesus Christ, Merciful Saviour, you meet us when we turn to you. On that first Easter morning you rose from the grave to conquer sin and death for ever. To you belongs all the glory!

Holy Spirit, Divine Presence, you are the very Breath of Life. We receive the peace of the risen Christ as did those first disciples in the Upper Room. To you belongs all the praise!

Pause

O God, the Three-in-One, we confess that our lives have been full of death and hate instead of life and love. Forgive us our sins, and strengthen in us all that is good.

Pause

As we receive your assurance of forgiveness, you fill us afresh with love and life, compelling us to pour them out into the lives of others. Amen.

Acts 10:34-43

John 20:1-18

Time to Reflect

Have you heard? Easter's cancelled – they found the body! So jgoes the old schoolchild joke

The women first, and then the disciples, had far more world-shattering news to share. Have you heard? Death is cancelled – Jesus is alive again! This time they weren't joking.

Without question, the resurrection of Jesus was the one event that blew apart all time and space, resetting clocks and calendars,

returning us in that early morning garden to a very reset of Creation. The empty tomb turned timid, fearful disciples into fearless proclaimers of the Gospel. Have you heard? Jesus is alive – and living in your heart!

Several years ago at St. Thomas's and last year at Newhall I spent the whole of Lent telling folk that I was going to preach the finest Easter sermon possible. Come the day and come the moment they were ready and waiting, a hush around the sanctuary. I stood slowly, paused and then proclaimed "Christ the Lord is risen today !" And sat down.

After all can there be any finer statement, proclamation, than that. Lets make it the sermon of our lives

Take a time to sit quietly.

A time of prayer

Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son; Endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.

On this Easter Day, we remember those who have gone before us to glory. May we, like them, inherit your eternal kingdom.
We pray for all who are fearful today: people living alone; people who have endured great trials; people who are scared for each new day. Come among them and breathe your resurrection peace.
We pray for your worldwide church, united today in joyful acclamation of the risen Christ. May we, your church, daily witness to the life of the risen Christ in our own lives through our love for God, self and neighbour.
We pray for the leaders of the world, and for the people they govern. Endue them with wisdom and justice, so that they might govern all people with equity.
Finally we pray for ourselves. In Christ we are indeed more than conquerors. May Alleluia! be our triumphant song today and always.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: Listen to 'You're Alive' by Graham Kendrick or sing a verse of a hymn that comes to mind
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6FouNdeqH0o>

Led like a lamb to the slaughter
In silence and shame,
There on Your back You carried a world Of violence and pain.
Bleeding, dying, bleeding, dying.
You're alive, You're alive,
You have risen, Alleluia!
And the power and the glory is given, Alleluia, Jesus, to You.

At break of dawn, poor Mary,
Still weeping she came,
When through her grief she heard Your voice Now speaking her name.
Mary, Master, Mary, Master!
At the right hand of the Father Now seated on high
You have begun Your eternal reign Of justice and joy.
Glory, glory, glory, glory.

A prayer of blessing

God the Father, by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead, strengthen us to walk with him in his risen life; and may almighty God bless us, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen

Acts 10:34-43

Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

John 20:1-18

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?"

She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.