

Easter Day Worship and Reflection



Rejoice! The stone is rolled away, grave clothes neatly folded, no more the smell of death, behold the empty tomb!

Halleluia! He is risen!

Rejoice! Scripture has been fulfilled, the sting of death is gone,

the victory has been won, behold the risen Christ!

Halleluia! He is risen!

Rejoice! The curtain's torn in two, our God invites us in, Christ's sacrifice enough to wash away our sins!

Halleluia! He is risen!

Risen Lord Jesus, as Mary Magdalene met you in the garden on the morning of your resurrection, so may we meet you today and every day: speak to us as you spoke to her; reveal yourself as the living Lord; renew our hope and kindle our joy; and send us to share the good news with others. **Amen.**

Collect and Reading

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. **Amen.**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John 20.1-18 **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹Early 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. ²So 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.' ³Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. ⁴The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the

linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; ⁹for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. ¹⁰Then the disciples returned to their homes.

¹¹But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; ¹²and 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. ¹³They 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.' ¹⁴When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' 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.' ¹⁶Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbouni!' which means Teacher. ¹⁷Jesus 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."' ¹⁸Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection by Rev'd Canon Vanda Perrett

Easter is usually celebrated with much pomp, joy and delight. The churches burnished within an inch of their lives, the best robes, the Easter garden, the Pascal candle, the Alleluias, the Easter egg hunt and the wonderful family meal. But this year it is not the same. We are celebrating Easter in a foreign land, with a foreign language and it is not the same. We don't want this change; we want our Easter celebrations as they should be. But we cannot have what we want.

Surely this means that we can empathise more strongly with Mary Magdalene. When she set out from her home she did not want to go to the tomb, she did not want to have to prepare Jesus' body for burial. She did not want to smell the stench of three-day old death and try to cover it with the perfumed oils. Mary did not want to live in the truth of the death of her Lord. She wanted him back, for everything to be the same as before.

But this was not possible. Mary did not know what awaited her at the tomb, but of all the possibilities His absence seemed a cruel joke. Her Lord was dead, she was denied the final honour of tending his broken and beaten body with love and care. She was denied her final goodbye to the man who gave her life and hope. So, she raced to the only people who may understand her, Jesus' closest friends. Together they raced to the garden tomb, the men entering it "saw and believed". Then they "returned to their homes"

What! What about Mary Magdalene? They just left her, bereft, alone and weeping. So much for the commandments

from Jesus at the Last Supper to love one another! How was that loving? I find myself feeling rather upset for her, and rather cross with the men!

But of course, the last laugh is with the men, if only they had waited, if only they had gone to comfort Mary perhaps, they too would have seen and spoken to the “gardener”. Mary’s grief stopped her recognising Jesus at first, but the voice made no mistake. This was Jesus, back but not the same. Here was the risen Lord who had face death but rose again to come back to the people and place he loved.

When Mary came to the tomb, all her instincts and her preparation was for touch. For cleaning the body, soothing the broken skin, the kiss to overwrite that betrayal kiss. Here is Jesus, but she cannot touch him. Something else denied, but the gift of seeing, hearing Jesus was profound. This woman, the first apostle, was sent by Jesus to the men, to take to them the good news of Jesus’ resurrection and his future plans. A woman sent to bear the news of new life. She left willingly and filled with courage.

So the story comes to full circle, Jesus birthed into a mortal body by Mary, and then at the end of his mortal life, another Mary is the one to bring the words of Jesus to life, the one to tell the others of the good news of Jesus’ risen life. Life would never be the same as before for her, or for any of us.

At the end of this pandemic: Life will not be the same.
Church will not be the same. We shall not be the same.
For something of this magnitude changes us fundamentally.

We can choose to embrace the new life, and look towards to new future, or we can spend our time looking backwards to a glistening unreality of the past.

Mary did not get what she wanted, but she got far more than she could have dreamt possible. In Jesus's life death and resurrection is hope, joy, forgiveness, peace and challenge.

We cannot embrace the resurrection without remembering That we are challenged to be Christ-like. To follow in his footsteps in caring and loving with extravagance and abundance. To live with a concern for the others around us, for the world and creation. To live knowing – perhaps for the first time – the reality of our freedom and our blessing.

What does Easter mean to you in 2020?

What will resurrection in your life look like?

Jesus died for the freedom you have, that you know the forgiveness of sin, for the freedom you have knowing that there is a place for you in heaven.

Nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God; No isolation nor restriction on movement. No supermarket queues or food shortages. No illness or worry, no failing friends or fighting families. No virus or depression. Nothing in all creation that can separate us from the God of Love, his Son our Risen Lord, and the Holy Life-giving Spirit. You are held by God, loved by God, redeemed by God, forgiven by God. Just be thankful, do as Jesus commanded, love each other. Amen.

Prayers

Christ is Risen: The world below lies desolate

Christ is Risen: The spirits of evil are fallen

Christ is Risen: The angels of God are rejoicing

Christ is Risen: The tombs of the dead are empty

Christ is Risen indeed from the dead, the first of the sleepers,

Glory and power are his forever and ever

St. Hippolytus of Rome (AD 190-236)

How blessed is this day, when earth and heaven are joined and humankind is reconciled to God! May the light of Jesus shine continually to drive away all darkness. May Christ, the Morning Star who knows no setting, find his light ever burning in our hearts—he who gives his light to all creation, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

adapted from Book of Common Prayer -1979, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA.

Lord, the resurrection of Your Son has given us new life and renewed hope. Help us to live as new people in pursuit of the Christian ideal. Grant us wisdom to know what we must do, the will to want to do it, the courage to undertake it, the perseverance to continue to do it, and the strength to complete it.

New Saint Joseph People's Prayer Book

God our Father, may we look forward with hope to our resurrection, for you have made us your sons and daughters, and restored the joy of our youth. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Catholic Prayer for the 3rd Sunday of Easter

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in
heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our
trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever
and ever. Amen.**

God, who through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ
has given us the victory, give you joy and peace in your faith;
and may the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son,
and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you
always. **Amen.**

Thine be the Glory, Risen conqu'ring Son
endless is the vict'ry Thou o'er death hast won.
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave-clothes where Thy body lay.
*Thine be the glory, risen, conqu'ring Son;
endless is the vict'ry Thou o'er death hast won.*

Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb.
Lovingly He greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
let His church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,
for the Lord now liveth; death hath lost its sting. [Refrain]

No more we doubt Thee, glorious Prince of life!!
Life is nought without Thee; aid us in our strife;
make us more than conqu'rors, through Thy deathless love;
bring us safe through Jordan to Thy home above. [Refrain]

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