**EASTER SUNDAY 2020**

Welcome everyone to the Easter Day service. This is somewhat different from our usual gathering, but I hope you are ready to celebrate together?

**Liturgy for the lighting of the paschal candle**

Christ yesterday and today​

**(All) The beginning and the end**

Alpha and Omega, all time belongs to him, ​and all ages;

**(All) To him be glory and power, through every age and forever.**

**Amen.**​

This is the day when our Lord Jesus Christ passed from death to life. Throughout the world Christians celebrate the awesome power of God. As we hear his word and proclaim all that God has done, we can be confident that we shall share his victory over death and live with him forever.​

**​The candle is lit.​**

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

The light of Christ!

**(All) Thanks be to God!**

**Easter Acclamation.**

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

**He is risen indeed, Alleluia!**

**Opening Song: Jesus Christ is risen today**

<https://youtu.be/X1brSOs0lMc>

**Acts 10.34-43**

**Gentiles Hear the Good News**

34 Then Peter began to speak to them: ‘I truly understand that God shows no partiality, 35but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. 36You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. 37That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: 38how 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. 39We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; 40but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, 41not 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. 42He 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. 43All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.’

**Gospel Reading Matthew 28.1-10**

**The Resurrection of Jesus**

28After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. 2And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. 4For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. 5But the angel said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. 6He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. 7Then go quickly and tell his disciples, “He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.” This is my message for you.’ 8So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to tell his disciples. 9Suddenly Jesus met them and said, ‘Greetings!’ And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. 10Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.’

**Homily**

We greet this Easter morning in a different way and with a different mindset and yet the story of the resurrection is familiar, we know it so well, we live our lives in a particular way because of it. Yet this year we are confined to our homes; for some it is an anxiety- inducing time, people are worried about their jobs, frightened of catching the virus, unsure of what the future holds. What will the world, society, church be like when we are allowed back out?

In the final chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, early in the morning on the first day of the week, the women arrive to see the tomb of Jesus “*2And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.”* What they do **not see** is the body of Jesus. *“6He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. 7Then go quickly and tell his disciples, “He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.”*

***Tell his disciples that he is going ahead of you to Galilee*.**

Jesus, the one in the stories who so often got there first, once again is going on ahead.

Jesus, the one who waited on the shore while the boat was still at sea;

Jesus, the one who taught his followers in parables that still confound his people;

Jesus, the one who chided the slow of heart -- this same Jesus, now risen, will go on ahead of the women to Galilee.

The resurrected Jesus will go on ahead of us too, outpacing us, calling us into God’s future. The point of the story of Easter is not to linger at a tomb that is empty. The point is to go, go faithfully forward, to head in the direction that the risen Christ is leading. Risen from the dead, Jesus is now leading into the future that only God dreams possible.

This familiar story that claims us, tells us that the risen Christ is out ahead of us, let loose in the world, leading us into a future beyond anxiety and poverty and uncertainty and fear. Jesus goes ahead of us into a future that cannot be defined by death or grief or loss. Jesus goes before us into a future of peace and love, justice and truth, restoration and reconciliation.

The story says Jesus is waiting for us.

On Easter Sunday, we are prompted to remember that the risen Jesus is present and that he goes ahead of us. Ahead into a life that has changed, to a workplace that has changed, to a way of being church that has changed .

**We** are called to look and see and witness to the places where we are seeing seeds of hope, where we are seeing the resurrecting power of God in our own lives. We are challenged to see that resurrection is not just a thing of the past but a thing of today.

God’s resurrecting power is not restricted to a moment in time when Jesus rose from the dead, but is power that defines God’s ongoing activity in the world in response to death and destruction.

We do not sing a requiem for a past that is lost but we sing a song of hope, a resurrection song.

Seeds of hope are already springing up, people tell me that they are more in contact with friends and family than ever before; we see companies changing their usual production to make hand gel, masks and scrubs instead; we see thousands of people offering to help those around them, in their communities and beyond; we see a new respect for key workers, people without whom we would be lost at the moment

Signs of the kingdom are around us, nurture them. Dream of what our church could be like with an even more caring, nurturing, communicating way of being.

All this is possible as we live through our grief for what we have lost, as on Good Friday; as we wait to see what life will be like after confinement, as on Easter Eve; and as we remember that the dawn on Easter Morning comes in all its glory and splendour and power, and life is changed, Jesus goes ahead of us and leads us by God’s Spirit into a new day.

We live because of God’s love and power over death.

*Keep silence for a moment*

Let’s affirm our faith in the words of the Apostle’s Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

Ah, now , the power of God. I was just wondering if you really believe in the power of God over death? Do you really believe that Jesus is risen from the dead? Is the tomb empty? Has Jesus been raised and gone on ahead of us?

Let’s just check…….

**Intercessions**

Let’s pray together:

We praise You Jesus that You, the Son of God, are the Lord of Heaven and earth and we worship You on this Resurrection Day.

We praise You Jesus that on the cross You paid for our sins in full so that we may be set free to know our Heavenly Father’s love.

We praise You Jesus that You defeated death making it possible for us to live with You forever.

We praise You Jesus that Your life within us can change the world. Keep us faithfully following You. Amen.

*Heal those who are sick with the virus. May they regain their strength and health through quality medical care.*

*Heal us from our fear, which prevents nations from working together and neighbours from helping one another.*

*Jesus Christ, healer of all, stay by our side in this time of uncertainty and sorrow.*

*Be with those who have died from the virus. May they be at rest with you in your eternal peace.*

*Be with the families of those who are sick or have died. As they worry and grieve, defend them from illness and despair. May they know your peace.*

*Be with the doctors, nurses, researchers and all medical professionals who seek to heal and help those affected and who put themselves at risk in the process. May they know your protection and peace.*

*Be with the leaders of all nations. Give them the foresight to act with charity and true concern for the well-being of the people they are meant to serve. Give them the wisdom to invest in long-term solutions that will help prepare for or prevent future outbreaks. May they know your peace, as they work together to achieve it on earth.*

We thank you for the seeds of hope that we see around us, help us to nurture the hope of a more caring world, help us to play our part in sharing the hope that is in us because of your love.

**Collect**

God of glory, by the raising of your Son

you have broken the chains of death and hell:

fill your Church with faith and hope;

for a new day has dawned and the way to life stands open

in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

**All Amen**

**Blessing:**

Today, as our hearts rejoice at the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, let us go into the world to share the good news with others.

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

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

**He is risen indeed, Alleluia!**

**Final Song: 689 Thine be the glory!**

<https://youtu.be/UPH7-dNrwb8>

Bonus 😊

<https://youtu.be/G_YDpP-nU6w>