

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you all: **and also with you.**

Lord, speak to us, that we may hear your word.
Move among us, that we may behold your glory.
Receive our prayers, that we may learn to trust you. **Amen.**

Penitential Kyries of Easter Day

Lord God, you raised your Son from the dead:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord Jesus, through you we are more than conquerors:
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Holy Spirit, you help us in our weakness:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Absolution May God our Father forgive us our sins,
and bring us to the fellowship of his table with his saints for ever. **Amen.**

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his mercy endures for ever.
The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation...

John 20:1-18 [The Resurrection of Jesus]

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 towards 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 round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus 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.' 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.

This is the gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Sermon

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Easter Day. What's so special about today? So Lent is over. We can all eat chocolate again. Easter eggs are just everywhere. For Christians, however, it's the biggest event of the year. Every year. Three words are probably sufficient to explain, amid all the verbiage and hype, all the chocolate, the Easter eggs. Three words: – "He is risen!" We're now able to leave aside the failure of the world to recognize Jesus as the Messiah; their refusal to see him as the Son of God; their determination to squash the message that Jesus was preaching, by putting him to death.

Why is it a celebration? - because the world did not win!

God's Son came to earth. His Son fulfilled his destiny and gave us a message to love one another, as he has loved us. It's a very simple message. I just wish it wasn't so difficult to follow!

Each of the four gospel writers has his own version of the resurrection of Jesus. We have now heard John's take on it. It's rather different. The stories of the Resurrection had been passed on through at least a couple of generations since the time of Jesus. John's community had obviously treasured them, and it shows. They carefully crafted the important aspects of the story and stripped away some of the memories which other gospel writers had preserved.

It's told through the eyes of just three people – Mary Magdalene, Simon Peter, and the unnamed yet important figure of John's Gospel – the Beloved Disciple.

Take Peter for instance. By the end of Jesus' ministry Peter had emerged as the senior Apostle, but he was no more perfect or infallible than any of us. In other words, a normal hot-headed man!

Mary Magdalene represents womanhood: one of the few women in the NT who survived a paternalistic negativity towards women. Mark restricts the women to performing the women's' task of anointing Jesus' body with spices. But John doesn't constrain Mary to such tasks: no, he places her as the first one to approach the tomb. It is she who sees that the stone has been rolled away. Perhaps John was an early proponent of equality!

The third representative figure was the unnamed disciple. He is usually referred to as the Beloved Disciple. He was not an apostle: he represents the idealism, the constancy, of the youthful followers of Jesus. And he is the hero of the Community from which John comes. There are several instances in John's Gospel where the Beloved Disciple is shown to be closer to Jesus than Peter.

Like now. Here he is seen to out-run Peter to be the first man to peer into the tomb. And we are told that "he saw and believed". Believed that Jesus had risen from the dead. These three were obviously committed followers of Jesus, then; but they're ordinary people. They aren't kings; they aren't saints. Just like Jesus' choice of his apostles, John has chosen ordinary people to reveal the extraordinary event of today – that Jesus is risen.

At first, there's the simple realization that the tomb is empty. Jesus' body is no longer there. That is witnessed by our three representatives and carefully noted for us by John. He leaves us in no doubt. It is strictly factual. A huge grave stone has been rolled away. Jesus' body is ... well ... gone. The two men are now dismissed from the story. But the second part of the story re-introduces Mary Magdalene as the pivotal character. She stands weeping, in the physical darkness of dawn, in the spiritual darkness of grief and unbelief; still unable to believe or understand what might have happened. Mary looks into the tomb, and sees not grave-clothes but two angels! And then, turning away, she almost bumps into a gardener in the gloom, who asks her who she is looking for. There is a perfectly natural exchange between the two, and then the gardener reveals himself to be Jesus.

It must have been quite a moment! The dawning realization that Jesus has risen is told clearly, but sparsely. No histrionics; no incredulous screams or fainting fits.

Just a quiet command to Mary to go to her brothers and give to them his message: "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."

Given the absolute importance of the resurrection of Jesus to us as Christians; and to the whole basis of Christianity, it is a strangely restrained and terse narrative.

The actions of the story, the emotions of our three representatives, are pared back to the minimum. And that's the whole point. John used no flowery language, no flights of spirituality, just the bare facts. His purpose was to leave us in no doubt of the reality of what happened on that Easter Day.

Later, John will provide great detail about what exactly the resurrection means, in narratives of appearances of Jesus to the disciples; to Thomas, and to disciples at the Sea of Tiberius.

But for today, we just have a simple, memorable slogan to take away with us; a slogan for us to hold onto - the stupendous message that Jesus is risen. He is risen indeed! Allelujah! **Amen.**

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. **Amen.**

Intercessions, beginning with the Collect of Easter Day

Almighty God, through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ
you have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life
Grant that, as by your grace going before us you put into our minds good desires, so by your continual help we
may bring them to good effect;
through Jesus Christ our risen Lord
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

As your Church rejoices this day in the Resurrection of her Lord and Saviour, may her worship be reverent and
her proclamation faithful. May every Christian soul respond in faith to the call of the Master and make haste to
tell the good news. *... hear our prayer*

Let the Easter hope be known in all the world. Give light to those who seek, assurance to those who doubt, and
peace to all. Be with our families and friends and all who share with us the wonderful day of Resurrection.

May the presence of Christ bring us close to those who are separated from us, in the knowledge that no
distance can part us from his love. *... hear our prayer*

Our prayer is especially for all who have been struck by COVID-19, whether personally or through their
families and friends; those for whom the virus has left them distressed; those for whom the brightness of life
has been dimmed by fear. May the light of hope shine through their darkness and give them comfort.

... hear our prayer

We pray for those who, having shared with Christ the death of the body, now share with him the eternal life of
his Resurrection: our hope in this world and our place in the world to come. *... hear our prayer*

The Great Thanksgiving

Christ our passover has been sacrificed for us
therefore let us celebrate the feast.

The Lord is here. **His Spirit is with us.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

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

All glory and honour, thanks and praise be given to you at all times and in all places, Lord, holy Father, true and living God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

For he is your eternal Word through whom you have created all things from the beginning and formed us in your own image.

In your great love you gave him to be made man for us and to share our common life. In obedience to your will your Son our Saviour offered himself as a perfect sacrifice, and died on the cross for our redemption.

Through him you have freed us from the slavery of sin and reconciled us to yourself, our God and Father. He is our great high priest whom you raised from death and exalted to your right hand on high where he ever lives to intercede for us.

Through him you have sent upon us your holy and life-giving Spirit and made us a royal priesthood called to serve you for ever.

Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Merciful Father, we thank you for these gifts of your creation, this bread and this wine, and we pray that we who eat and drink them in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit in obedience to our Saviour Christ in remembrance of his death and passion may be partakers of his body and his blood, who on the night he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given you thanks he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, eat. This is my body which is given for you; Do this in remembrance of me.

After supper, he took the cup, and again giving you thanks he gave it to his disciples, saying, Drink from 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.

Father, with this bread and this cup, we do as our Saviour has commanded:

we celebrate the redemption he has won for us;

we proclaim his perfect sacrifice, made once for all upon the cross, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; and we look for his coming to fulfil all things according to your will.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Renew us by your Holy Spirit, unite us in the body of your Son, and bring us with all your people into the joy of your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom and in whom, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we worship you, Father almighty, in songs of never-ending praise:

Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

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.

The Breaking of the Bread

The bread which we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.

We being many are one body, for we all share in the one bread.

The Communion

The Great Silence

Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the spiritual food
of the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work to your praise and glory. **Amen.**

Dismissal:

God grant to the living, grace;
To the departed, rest;
To the people of every church and nation, peace and concord;
And to us and all the servants of God, life everlasting;

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

Go in the peace of the Risen Christ. Alleluja!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia!