

Easter Sunday

20th April 2025- Rachel Mitchell



After darkness light; after Winter, Spring;
After dying, life: Love has overcome!
Turn away in grief; turn away in faith;
Come whatever may, God will have his way;
Welcome Easter Day! Alleluia! (Fred Pratt Green)

Ever-faithful God,
By your divine wisdom you have gathered us out of the darkness, that has spoken its worst in the death of our Saviour, into the light of the risen Christ.
Enable us to celebrate now your many acts of mercy, the love by which you delivered us, and the signs of your new life all around us, as we proclaim together your gospel of resurrection and new life today. **Amen.**

Christ is risen – He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

STF 298 Christ the Lord is risen today

<https://youtu.be/nzy7iFNUc3w>

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!

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!

Charles Wesley

Let us pray:

Living, Loving, Victorious Lord

We come as one in this moment to celebrate,
For where there was death, now there is life,
Where there was despair, now there is hope,
Where there is sin, now there is forgiveness
and an invitation into your new and better life, lived in
your eternal kingdom. Your kingdom, which you have
opened to all who trust in the promises of Jesus, Your
Son, who you have raised from the dead.

And so, we come boldly before you now,
trusting in His goodness and the promise of His blood;
trusting that before you, we are all welcome,
for we come in His name.

Yet, even as we approach and give thanks for all you
have done, **we come before you recognising our need
of forgiveness and our unworthiness.** We confess that
we have not always followed your ways or honoured
your will for us and all your creation.

Wash us in your forgiveness, so that before you we
may be clean again – not by our own doing,
but because you chose to save us,
through the death of your Son, our Lord.

Then raise us to life with Christ.
Scatter the darkness from our hearts
and open our hearts anew to the power of your love,
that we may live with you, and you may live in us.
For Christ is risen – He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!
Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Reading: Mark 16 verses 1-8

STF 309: See What a Morning

<https://youtu.be/-QlcOUIRkBk>

**See, what a morning, gloriously bright,
With the dawning of hope in Jerusalem.
Folded, the grave clothes, tomb filled with light,
as the angels announce Christ is risen!
See God's salvation plan, wrought in love, borne in
pain, paid in sacrifice, fulfilled in Christ the Man,
for He lives, Christ is risen from the dead!**

**See Mary weeping, 'Where is He laid?'
As in sorrow she turns from the empty tomb.
Hears a voice speaking, calling her name,
It's the Master, the Lord raised to life again!
The voice that spans the years, speaking life,
stirring hope, bringing peace to us, will sound till He
appears, for He lives, Christ is risen from the dead!**

**One with the Father, Ancient of Days,
Through the Spirit who clothes faith with certainty.
Honour and blessing, Glory and praise
To the King crowned with power and authority!
And we are raised with Him, death is dead, love has
won, Christ has conquered; And we shall reign with
Him, for He lives, Christ is risen from the dead!**

Keith Getty, Stuart Townend, © 2003 Thankyou Music

Reflection

One of the characters we often focus on in the Easter story is Mary Magdalene, one of the women who followed Jesus and stayed with him, right to the end. Today we take a moment to reflect on what she had seen and imagine how she may have felt....

Mary Magdalene

I was there when they nailed him to the cross. My heart broke as I looked on his body, so broken, marked already with his dried blood – weak and helpless in their hands. Yet I knew that, inside he was not weak or helpless – this was his choice. The choice of the man I first met in Galilee when he healed me. The man with the power of God inside him. The man I chose to support and to follow.

He told us this would happen when we went to Jerusalem, but we just didn't want to hear. He told us he would be put to death and that he would rise again. Somehow though, because we didn't believe he would die, we didn't really think about what it would mean for him to rise again.

I was there when they laid him in the tomb. Through my tears I helped to wrap his body in linen cloth and watched while six grown men struggled to roll the stone across the entrance to the tomb. I saw the Roman guards arrive too. After all the tension of that Friday it seems the Roman Governor wanted to make sure that the body was not stolen or desecrated.

I was there when he rose up from the dead – well not quite as it happened, but it must have been soon after. I was the first to see something extraordinary had happened. Even before we entered the tomb, we knew...then as we entered, gingerly stepping into the dark, and we realised we were not alone...

“Do not be afraid” the angel said. As if! We quaked in our shoes as the angel continued “He (Jesus) is not here” – well, yes, we could see that. Also, we saw this was no rushed body grab either – the linen cloth we had wrapped him in was all folded neatly

The angel ignored our questions and fear. “He is risen” he said. “Go and tell Peter and the others. Tell them to go to Galilee, tell them he will meet them there, tell them Jesus is alive!”

As we hurried back, I wondered if Peter would believe us. I wasn’t sure I believed us - but I took courage from Jesus’ mum, who I knew had seen an angel once before. I rushed into the room where Peter was and told them all – **we’ve seen an angel who says Jesus is alive!** It didn’t matter to me what they thought. We had a message to give them. I was doing my bit and must trust God to do the rest. I could do no more.

Later He, my Jesus, met me. How wonderful that was; my heart was no longer heavy with grief; they could see the change meeting Him made, as if the tomb of my grief had been opened and replaced by joy...

What would come next I didn’t know. I never ever imagined the number of people who would follow me in meeting him... or that Jesus would continue to meet people and raise them out of the darkness of the tombs they were living in, into His glorious light and “Technicolor” life, for centuries to come. How wonderful my Jesus is – mine and yours!

How wonderful too, that he really, truly, is, ALIVE!

Questions to ponder:

- **What does resurrection mean to you?**
Is Jesus resurrection only a story to you -or have you encountered the risen Christ in your life? Do you too have a story to tell?
- **What comfort do you know** because Jesus lived through suffering as great as any we know and overcame death itself? Do you know him alive and with you when you are in dark places?
- **What does it mean to live Jesus’ “Technicolor” life here today?** How does Jesus’ resurrection make your life different here and now?

MP 745: Were you there...

<https://youtu.be/Y4mcJi390ng>

**Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Were you there when they crucified my Lord?
Oh, sometimes it causes me to I tremble, tremble....
Were you there, when the crucified my Lord?**

Were you there when they nailed him to a tree?

Were you there when they laid him in a tomb?

Were you there when He rose up from the dead?

American folk hymn – Public domain.

Let us pray:

Risen Lord, as we give thanks today for your resurrection and the wonderful new life you bring, we remember before you this world, which you made, you love, and for which you died:

We give thanks for your church and all who know you as their risen Lord, asking that your risen life will be seen in them and us, and that we will shine with your love and mercy in all we do and say, every day.

We pray for all people living under the darkness of greed, anger, poverty or fear – asking that you will dwell in even the darkest places and shine your light there, to bring justice and hope once more.

We pray for the places in our world that appear dead. The places that no longer support life, the wild places and forests that are dying, and the polluted seas. Teach us how to restore your creation, so they may be full of good and wholesome life again.

We pray for all those who live with destruction, whether from disaster or conflict today, particularly those who mourn for loved ones no longer with them. We ask you to be with them in their darkness, bless them with your comfort and healing and renew their hope, so enabling them to rebuild and even forgive.

We pray for those we know who need our prayers today. We think particularly of those who are unwell or in pain and those who are grieving for loved ones they no longer see. We remember those on our prayer list... and those known to us personally...

Risen lord, we thank you that you hear all our prayers; those we give voice to and the unspoken prayers of our hearts. As we place these concerns in your hands, bless us with your peace today. **Amen.**

STF 313: Thine be the glory

<https://youtu.be/RbBOOmKMLmI>

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

**Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
Lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
Let the church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,
for her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting:
Thine be the glory...**

**No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of Life;
Life is nought without thee: aid us in our strife;
Make us more than conquerors through thy deathless love;
Bring us safe through Jordan
to thy home above:
Thine be the glory...**

Edmond Budry

Blessing

May God the Father, by whose glorious hand Jesus 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 today and for ever more. **Amen.**

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