



Reflections & Prayers for Easter Day  
4 April 2021



## Contents

Readings for this Sunday	p. 2
Reflection	p. 3-5
Prayers for the beginning of Holy Week	p. 5-6
Parish Prayers	p. 6-7

## Readings for this Sunday

These are the readings for this Sunday which you may like to read in your bibles at home.

Isaiah 25:6-9

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

**Mark 16:1-8**

### **The Resurrection of Jesus**

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

## *Reflection from Anne Edwards*

For the past six and a half weeks, since Ash Wednesday, we have been travelling to the cross. During that time some may have read a specially chosen book – there are many titles specifically written to help us journey through Lent, or been on a retreat (via Zoom or YouTube this year) – all of this to help us remember that the joy of light and life of Jesus' resurrection came out of the darkness and death of Good Friday.

The other day at Morning Prayer Emma read from John Chrysostom, an Early Church Father of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, who served as Archbishop of Constantinople. He pointed out that in the beginning there was a virgin, Eve; a tree, the tree of knowledge of good and evil; and death, banishment from the garden. Then came salvation: a virgin, Mary; a tree, the cross; and death, the death of Jesus. I'd never appreciated this before, but I do think it's worth thinking about.

Last Sunday, Palm Sunday, there were celebrations as Jesus rode into Jerusalem apparently triumphant – at least the crowds were. But, and it is a very big but ... but before that could happen there were still another four days to be lived, one day of unimaginable pain and death, one day of darkness in the tomb, before the again unimaginable triumph of resurrection. The glorious hope of the resurrection was preceded by sacrifice, pain and death – awful events, losing life in an excruciatingly painful manner, the world plunged into darkness. The glorious hope of the resurrection groans within the sacrificial death of Christ. There is a wonderful paradox written into the DNA of creation – as Tim Lomax pointed out in his sermon last Sunday (both on line and printed), the seed needs to fall into the darkness of the ground and cease being a seed in order for the new life to appear and grow. The bleakness of autumn and winter must come before the warmth of spring and summer, the growth of new life. Life grows out of death. Christ died so that we might live.

We have just come through a Covid-coloured Holy Week – none of the colourful praise-filled Palm Sunday, the foot washing of Maundy Thursday, the three hours of reflection and grief of Good Friday, and the haunting nothingness of Saturday. It will have been a very different Holy Week for

most of us at home, socially distancing ourselves in order to keep ourselves and everyone else safe from the ravages this virus can wreak, especially on the vulnerable.

Now, today, we enter the mystery of Easter.

In his Daily Study Bible on Mark's Gospel, William Barclay points out that if Jesus had not risen from the dead, we would never have heard of him. The attitude of these women, Mary of Magdala and Mary the mother of James and Salome, was that they had come to find a dead body and prepare it with the spices they had brought with them. This would normally have happened within hours of the death, but the Sabbath had intervened, and so Joseph of Arimathaea, who had taken Jesus' body once it was taken down from the cross, had simply wrapped it in linen before putting it in the tomb. The attitude of the disciples was that everything had finished in tragedy. All their expectations had been dashed.

But when they got to the tomb, the women found it open – the great stone as big as a cart-wheel had been rolled away, and the women were met by a messenger with the news: “He is risen. He is not here ... Go! Tell his disciples and Peter.”

Barclay writes: “By far the best proof of the Resurrection is the existence of the Christian Church ... the Resurrection is the central fact of the whole Christian faith.” And so Jesus is not a figure in a book, but a living presence. It is not enough to study the story of Jesus like the life of any other great historical figure. Jesus is not someone to discuss so much as someone to meet, and the Christian life is not the life of someone who knows about Jesus, but someone who knows Him.

In the Church we say: “Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!” All in the present tense.

In this world we are all going to face hard things, yet in Jesus there is hope that conquers even death. Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness will never overcome it. There is nothing wrong with finding the resurrection story utterly baffling. Dead people stay dead, but Jesus didn't. Jesus rose from the dead. He was dead – executed. Mortally wounded. Wrapped in linen and buried in a tomb. Dead. And then he was alive again – bearing

the scars: his hands, his feet, his side where the soldier's spear checked he really was dead; and He called Mary by name.

Today as we go forward to live our lives in the full light of the resurrection, let us remember that just as the risen Jesus called Mary by name, so he calls each one of us by name.

However, knowing the risen Jesus knows us isn't the whole picture. Mary was then commanded to "Go! Tell ...!" During our Lent book group zooms we have been challenged to find ways of telling our story – sometimes referred to as 'gossiping the Gospel'. Do your friends know you go to church – do they know why you go to church?

As we hopefully come out of the lockdown and social distancing Covid-19 has forced on us and return to meeting together in church, let us find new ways of living out the gospel message, telling the story that Jesus is risen, loves you and me by name, and wants everyone to know the wonder of His saving grace and love – no matter who you are!

### Prayers

Lord, we love the joy of Easter Sunday.  
But we may not have walked through Holy Week.  
We may not have been humbled by Jesus' hands washing our feet.  
We may not have tasted the bread and wine of his last shared meal.  
We may not have known the primal fear of Gethsemane,  
or the bewilderment of his disciples at his betrayal.  
We have not known the way of sorrow to Golgotha,  
the blood, sweat and tears of a crown of thorns,  
and the weight of a cross that will bear our dying body.  
Therefore Lord, we confess our failure to feel at one with Jesus  
in his dying as well as in his risen life.  
As we celebrate our risen Lord, we remember the man of sorrows  
who died for our sins, and we bow our heads in penitence. Amen

Lord, in the warmth of your hands washing human feet,  
we are forgiven.  
Lord in your willingness to drink the cup of suffering for us,  
we are forgiven.

Lord, in the wide embrace of your arms upon the cross,  
we are forgiven.  
Risen Lord, in your emerging from the tomb, death is defeated,  
and we are forgiven.  
Alleluia! Amen.

Praise be to the Son of Man who dwelt among us  
Praise be to Jesus!  
Praise be to the Son of God who died on the cross for us  
Praise be to Jesus!  
Praise be to the risen Christ who defeated death and opened the gates of  
heaven for us  
Praise be to Jesus!  
Lord, we thank you for living your life for us,  
and dying our death for us.  
We pledge to live our lives for you,  
and hereafter to join you in glory.  
Praise be to Jesus! Amen.

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 of life stands open  
in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

### Parish Prayers for the week ahead

#### **In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer:**

Sunday	Pray for the peace of Jerusalem
Monday	The Diocese of Belize – The Church in the Province of the West Indies
Tuesday	The Diocese of Bendigo – The Anglican Church of Australia
Wednesday	The Diocese of Benin – The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion)
Thursday	The Diocese of Bentiu – The Province of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan

Friday            The Diocese of Bermuda – Extra Provincial to the Archbishop  
                         of Canterbury  
Saturday         The Diocese of Bethlehem – The Episcopal Church

**In our Diocesan Cycle of Prayer:**

Sunday            Parish of Cople (Deanery of Biggleswade)  
Monday           Parish of Dunton (Deanery of Biggleswade)  
Tuesday          Parish of Eaton Socon (Deanery of Biggleswade)  
Wednesday      Parish of Eyeworth (Deanery of Biggleswade)  
Thursday         Parish of Great Barford (Deanery of Biggleswade)  
Friday             Parish of Moggerhanger (Deanery of Biggleswade)  
Saturday         Parish of Northill (Deanery of Biggleswade)

**For the homes and families in:**

Sunday            Long Buftlers, Longfield Road  
Monday           Magna Close, Maple Cottages  
Tuesday          Meadow Walk, Meadway  
Wednesday      Mons Close, Nairn Close  
Thursday         Netherfield Road, Newton Close  
Friday             Oak Way, Oakfield Road  
Saturday         Oakhurst Avenue, Oakley Road

**The Sick:**

Amy, Claire, Sue, Christine, Hermione, Karen, Chris, and all whose names are entered on our St Luke's Cell Prayer List.

**For the recently deceased:**

Janet Carruthers, Pamela Richardson

**On their year's mind:**

James Warren, Beryl Hutchings, Beryl Bird, Dennis Russell, Gladys Jubb, Maureen Lacey, Ian McMillin, David Fenton

### A reminder... of this phone service:

**Daily Hope** – dial 0800 804 8044 for prayer, reflection, music and worship services from the Church of England. A weekly service is available from 9 am every Sunday.

### Church at home:

We are delighted to produce each week these printed papers. If you would prefer not to receive these papers each week, please let Julie in the parish office know. If you are aware of others in the parish who would also value the opportunity to worship at home in this way, do please contact a member of the Ministry team or Julie (Parish Office Tel: 01582 712776).