

WELCOME TO ST. JOHN THE DIVINE, RASTRICK

Easter Praise

Sunday 12th April 2020

Click on the underlined links to take you to safe content on the internet. The Gospel reading is an audio click the arrow to start follow it in your own bible and stop the reading at the relevant verse. In preparation for this service you are invited to prepare a small bowl of water and have a candle ready to light.

Introduction

Today we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christians are called by God to live His Risen Life. Baptism marks the start of that commitment and so on this Easter morning we again affirm our baptismal promises. First pausing to bring before God the sins we have committed since we last made our confession to Him.



We allow a time of silence

The Renewal of our Baptism Vows

In baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light.
To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him.

Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?

I reject them.

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?

I renounce them.

Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?

I repent of them.

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

I turn to Christ.

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?

I submit to Christ.

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?

I come to Christ.

May God, who has received us by baptism into his Church,
pour upon us the riches of his grace,
that within the company of Christ's pilgrim people
we may daily be renewed by his anointing Spirit,
and come to the inheritance of the saints in glory. **Amen.**

*You are invited to renew your commitment to Christ by taking some water
and making the sign of the cross with it on your forehead.*

Almighty God, we thank you for our fellowship in the household of faith
with all who have been baptized in your name.

Keep us faithful to our baptism, and so make us ready for that day
when the whole creation shall be made perfect in your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen**

You are invited to light a Candle

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

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

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. **Amen.**

Hymn: [Jesus Christ is Risen Today](#)

The Word of God Prepared by Canon Michael Storey

Easter Day is the most important date in the Christian Calendar,
so it is very good to remember the events of that first Easter Day
and how they influenced the witnesses.



John's Gospel tells of Mary Magdalene, Peter and John finding an empty tomb and then Peter and John going home. Mary Magdalene, a bit nosey?? wanted answers. She stayed and met Jesus and reported this to the disciples.

Reading: [John 20 1-18 – To listen click here](#)

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!'

So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped round Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. Finally, the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

They asked her, 'Woman, why are you crying?'

'They have taken my Lord away,' she said, 'and I don't know where they have put him.' At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realise that it was Jesus.

He asked her, 'Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?'

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.'

Jesus said to her, 'Mary.'

She turned towards him and cried out in Aramaic, 'Rabboni!' (which means 'Teacher').

Jesus said, 'Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."'"

Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: 'I have seen the Lord!' And she told them that he had said these things to her.

Watch this Video: [Jesus is Resurrected](#)

In our reading from the Book of Acts we shall hear of an event of at least 10 years later. It is as if the "penny has dropped" and Peter realises that Jesus should be "preached" to both Jews and non-Jews - "all people".

Reading: Acts 10:34-43

Peter began to speak: 'I now realise how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

'We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen – by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.'

Reflection from Michael

So, this is Easter Day, and which, I think, comes following the strangest Holy Week the world has ever experienced. The Black Death of 1348. The Great Plague of 1665 and Spanish Flu of 1918 have all been noted for how they changed the lives of those alive at the time and thereafter.

Similarly, the two World Wars changed the way in which people lived during them and ever afterwards. As far as I know, in none of those periods of time were church services cancelled. I can well remember going to my church, St Peter's Knowl, during World War Two and singing "Eternal Father, strong to save" at the end of every Sunday Evensong.

So, this year, no Palm Sunday, singing in the streets, handing out palm crosses; no Maundy Thursday – not for the Queen and the Maundy Money, nor for us to celebrate The Last Supper and hold a vigil, remembering the words of Jesus to the disciples, “Couldst thou not watch with me, one brief hour?” nor Good Friday and a procession in Brighthouse, with a one hour or three hour time of devotion in church in the afternoon.

Instead, for worship, we have relied on our own private prayer time and various Christian “programmes” on both TV and Radio. I think that, thankfully, the Christian Faith has come a bit more to the fore in these Lockdown Days. I’m sure that that we do all thank God for that. It has been a pleasant change to have noticed an increase in Christianity being brought to the notice of Jo Public.

What is important to Christians and, I hope, to Jo Public, is a message of HOPE in these dark days. Christians have been given that Hope because of what they believe took place on that first Easter Day in about 30AD.

We have the “story” from John’s Gospel in our service this morning – both word and film (thank you Alan for your wonderful efforts in bringing our worship alive). In that “story” we heard how three people went to the tomb, the first day possible after the Crucifixion on Good Friday. Saturday is the Jewish Holy Day, their day of rest. As we know, Christians have Sunday as their Holy Day – to celebrate each week the event which marks the Christian Faith as being different from all other faiths.

John, Peter and Mary Magdalene had a shock; the body of Jesus was not there. We know what happened in the days following – Jesus appeared a few times until his Ascension on what we call Ascension Day – 40 days later. On that day He told the disciples to “make disciples of all nations”. Well they, and others in their footsteps have done that.

The very first NON- Jew convert was the Roman Centurion, about whom we had in the second reading. We might think that the disciples were slow off the mark –Peter’s conversion of the Roman was some 10 years after the first Easter Day. He, like all Christians, knew how hard it is to convert anyone.

In these tough days it is still hard. BUT all Christians have the same call.

Each person’s faith is built on a variety of sources: experience, revelation, scripture, tradition, culture and reason. By whatever ways we have come to faith, we are all called to share it. Perhaps the words, based on 1 Corinthians 13 which I put in my Easter cards may help?

May our Lord give us FAITH in this time of the Virus CROSS. HOPE in the Easter Story and His LOVE through family and friends.

Perhaps we could also adopt some simple words I read recently in a Missionary leaflet: *“Nobody cares what you know, until they know you care?”*

May God guide us through these tough days, and, if I may quote our wonderful Queen – “we will meet again” both in this world and the next.

Hymn: [Tell out my soul](#)

Prayers of intercession. – Prepared by Jane Hearson

On this Easter Day when we celebrate your resurrection, we come and wonder afresh with Mary, Peter and John as the truth slowly dawns and the conversations Jesus had before his death, slowly begin to make sense. Despair, grief, confusion and desolation begin to melt in the warmth of hope, expectancy wonder, joy. Nobody has taken him away – he has left his grave clothes neatly folded. Mary has seen him and heard him speak her name. JESUS IS ALIVE. As we let the truth slowly move from our head to our hearts, we say thank you to him for taking the path of suffering right to the end, so that the resurrection could take place.

“We do not know; we cannot tell what pains he had to bear. We believe it was for us he hung and suffered there”

We pause a moment to reflect on how the resurrection has changed our lives.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

We turn our thoughts to our suffering world, recognising the positives which are blossoming amidst the pandemic and reflect on the spirit of cooperation rather than competition. Lord it is so heart-warming to hear of sick people being airlifted from Italy to Germany. Lord we pray that lasting good will come from this new spirit, for the benefit of the whole world.

There is a new insight into people's worth and recognising the part we all play in society. We are grateful for what is being done for us and we applaud and honour our new heroes. Lord we pray that lasting good will come from this new spirit for the benefit of our country.

Bless those who are caring for others at personal cost, whether in the NHS, in supermarkets and keeping other essential services going for the benefit of all. In particular we pray for Brighthouse Central Food Bank and Focus for Hope in our town distributing food parcels and prescriptions to the vulnerable.

Protect them and their families from coronavirus and help them as they work out how to keep themselves and others safe.

Bless those of us too who would wish we could do more to help but are classed as vulnerable or shielding someone in that position. May we find peace and rest in the sure conviction that we are helping others by staying at home.

Lord shopping is an issue for many of us. May we all help each other find creative ways to get the things we need, whilst keeping each other safe. Lord we are learning the valuable difference between needs and wants!

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Our hearts turn to the Diocese of Mara in Tanzania, where schools and universities have shut. There are 100 cases in Dar es Salaam, a day's bus journey from Mara. We pray that the outbreak, confined to visiting tourists, will be successfully contained and that testing will be available and vigorous.

We pause a moment to lift up to you friends and family that we have in other parts of the world.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In our own area, we pray for those known to us who are sick and name them before You now. We remember the care homes for the elderly – for Rastrick Hall and Grange and St Winifreds and pray for continuing wellbeing and protection from coronavirus. For our prime minister, we pray for increasing strength and complete healing.

John Sentamu, Archbishop of York reminded us in a television interview of the verse in the Bible: “Perfect Love casts out Fear”

May we all feel Your love and that of our family, friends and community and may we draw on your resurrection power recognising that “He who is in us is greater than he that is in the world”. May we keep our hearts and minds in peace, drawing our strength and positivity from you, our Saviour, Lord and friend.

Merciful Father accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.

A Prayer for Church Growth

God of Mission

**Who along brings growth to your church,
Send your Holy Spirit to give
Vision to our planning
Wisdom to our actions
And power to our witness.
Help our church to grow in numbers,
In spiritual commitment to you,
And in service to our local community,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

The Collect for today

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

Hymn: [Thine be the Glory](#)

Final Prayers

God the Father, by whose love Christ was raised from the dead, open to those who believe the gates of everlasting life. **Amen.**

God the Son, who in bursting from the grave has won a glorious victory, give us joy as we share the Easter faith. **Amen.**

God the Holy Spirit, who filled the disciples with the life of the risen Lord, empower us and fill us with Christ's peace. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among us and remain with us always. **Amen.**

Go in Peace to Love and Serve the Lord in the name of Christ. Amen

Happy Easter from everyone at St Johns

