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For Easter Sunday 12th April 2020.

Alleulia, Christ in Risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

# John 20:1-10 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

### The Resurrection of Jesus

**20**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. **2**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.” **3**Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. **4**The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. **5**He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. **6**Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, **7**and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. **8**Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; **9**for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. **10**Then the disciples returned to their homes.

This is the Gospel of Christ.

Alleluia, praise to Christ our Lord.

Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures.

He was buried and was raised on the third day.

He appeared to many, who are his witnesses.

Come, see for yourself.

Come and worship the Risen Lord.

Hymn CHRIST THE LORD IS RISEN TODAY

STF 298.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9khJXoL9QGk>

 1 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!*

 2 Love's redeeming work is done,
 *Alleluia!*
 Fought the fight, the battle won;
 *Alleluia!*
 Vain the stone, the watch, the seal;
 *Alleluia!*
 Christ has burst the gates of hell:
 *Alleluia!*

 3 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!*

 4 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!*

 5 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 (1707–1788)

PRAYER FOR EASTER WORSHIP/

Almighty God, with joy and praise, with awe and wonder,

with gladness and celebration, we bring our Easter worship.

We lift up our hearts, our thoughts and our voices,

recognising afresh all you have done for us in Christ.

We rejoice in the message of this day,

the Good News at the heart of our faith-

light after darkness, joy after sorrow,

good after evil, life after death.

Almighty God, speak to us again today,

through all we read, all we hear, all we sing, all we do.

May the truth of the resurrection inspire us with new hope,

May the victory of Christ fill us with new joy,

May the reality of his presence fill us with new faith.

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

READING: John 20:11-18 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

**11**But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+20%3A11-18&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-26868a)] into the tomb; **12**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. **13**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.” **14**When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. **15**Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?” 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.” **16**Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+20%3A11-18&version=NRSV#fen-NRSV-26873b)] “Rabbouni!” (which means Teacher). **17**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.’” **18**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.

Hymn.SEE,WHAT A MORNING: STF 309,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xM-fpXayUg>

 1 See, what a morning, gloriously bright,
 with the dawning of hope in Jerusalem;
 folded the graveclothes, 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!

 2 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!

 3 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!

Stuart Townend (*b.*1963) and Keith Getty (*b.*1974)

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SERMON.

Have you ever wondered how you might have reacted if you had actually been present on that first Easter morning?

As we share together this morning, in our homes, not together physically, but very much together in our love for our Lord Jesus,

I invite you to  really imagine yourself, if you can, to have been there on that first Sunday morning.

Imagine if you were Mary.

On Friday night you had watched Joseph and Nicodemus(John 19 v 39) bury Jesus.

Now deeply grieving and with very little sleep, you return to the tomb as in a dream.

Devoted Mary, who had stayed with her beloved Master throughout his ordeal, could barely cope with yet another tragedy.

The little comfort she may have gained from anointing His body with spices had been snatched from her grief stricken heart.

A heart heavy with sorrow at the death of the man she loved so dearly and of whom she had high hopes.

Earlier in her life Mary had been the woman from whom Jesus cast out seven demons (Luke8 v 2 )

What a state of mind she must have been in then.

Was it her courage that initially drew her to Jesus in order to be set free?

Or maybe it wasn't courage, perhaps she didn't even expect that her life would be totally transformed.

Perhaps she just had an urge to see him, to be near him, like a moth in the dark night , mysteriously and irresistibly drawn in to the light,

Perhaps too, she never expected the eyes of Jesus' incarnate love to turn in her direction.

How could she, in such a wretched condition, expect such tender compassion and mercy?

Mary’s love was not a fair weather kind of love.

She is prepared to go all the way.

She is present at the crucifixion, she doesn't run away from suffering, but witnesses and shares every painful moment.

Afterwards it seems that nothing can separate her from her beloved Lord- she follows him even in death, watching as he's laid in the tomb.

When she returns, even his body has gone and she experiences the dark desolation of someone who can't find God in the midst of a tragic situation.

The disciples have seen the empty tomb and gone home- but Mary- she stays and weeps, she searches, she doesn't give up in the face of total disaster.

"Tell me where you have put him, and I will go.."...

This persistent and uncompromising love is answered with one word "Mary",

This is the moment of recognition, a moment unparalleled in the history of creation when a light shines in the dark, a light that darkness  could not overpower (John 1 v 5 ) and Mary Magdalene is the first person in history to see the risen Lord. Mary the convert, the sinner who had been set free, the one whose love remained undiminished in the midst of confusion and disaster.

And so, we have thought about Mary and what it might have been like to have been at the resurrection.

How did it seem to each of us I wonder?

Barry Chant a former president of Tabor College in America, tells of a visit he made to the Holy Land.

He says "If you ever have the chance to visit Israel, make sure the Garden Tomb is on your itinerary.

It is one of the most tranquil places in the Holy Land.

Although there is a smoky, noisy bus station nearby and main roads are not far away, inside the walls of the garden, there is a sense of quietness and peace.

At most of the tourist spots of Israel there are church buildings, basilicas, tourist shops and the like which all seem to proclaim loudly and clearly, "In this place, you can experience the presence of Jesus better than anywhere else in the world"!

By contrast, at the entrance to the Garden Tomb, is a small sign, "He is risen, he is not here".

Barry says "When I first saw that I almost leapt for joy.

Here at last, of all the holy places was one which declared the truth, that Jesus is not found by pilgrimage to sacred sites, but wherever people come to him in faith".

I think it is true to say that so often we think that faith consists of knowing and understanding important truths about God and the world.

But isn't it really that faith is more about a relationship, and belief is more about trusting someone.

One of the great Church fathers Augustine said "Following and being obedient to Jesus will lead us to the truth"

.

Even though the disciples at the tomb didn't understand all that was happening it didn't stop them believing.

Today as we go forward to live our lives in the full light of the Resurrection, let us remember that the risen Jesus calls each one of us individually, by name.

Let us pray, that we will each of us recognise him, when he speaks our name, and respond like Mary with the greatest gift of all, the gift of love..

AMEN.

Lord, Mary had the privilege of knowing you on this earth

You loved her and she loved you,

We are your brothers and sisters and you love us and we love you.

Help us to share this wonderful news with those around us

As we celebrate your resurrection.

Hallelujah.

HYMN ALL I ONCE HELD DEAR

STF 489

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4r8XfE_VNb0>

 1 All I once held dear,
 built my life upon,
 all this world reveres,
 and wars to own,
 all I once thought gain
 I have counted loss;
 spent and worthless now,
 compared to this.
 *Knowing you, Jesus,
 knowing you,
 there is no greater thing.
 You're my all, you're the best,
 you're my joy, my righteousness,
 and I love you, Lord.*

 2 Now my heart's desire
 is to know you more,
 to be found in you
 and known as yours.
 To possess by faith
 what I could not earn,
 all-surpassing gift
 of righteousness.

 3 Oh, to know the power
 of your risen life,
 and to know you in
 your sufferings.
 To become like you
 in your death, my Lord,
 so with you to live
 and never die.

Graham Kendrick (*b.*1950)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION.

Loving God, we bring before you the sick and  suffering of our world.

A world torn apart and overwhelmed by the effects of Coronavirus.

For those afflicted in body, mind and spirit.

Fearful of what the future may hold.

For the many who find themselves suddenly bereaved,

Loving   God, , grant to those who grieve your special blessing at this time.

May they know that your hand is upon them, your arms encircling them, and your heart reaching out to them.

Loving God, we thank you for all who are working tirelessly to bring help, wholeness and healing to the sick,

Doctors, nurses, surgeons, all medical staff, and many others.

Support and strengthen all who strive to bring relief, all who minister to others.

Grant them your wisdom and guidance, your care and compassion.,

your strength and support.

We pray for all those unable to make sense of the situations they find themselves in, their hopes shattered.

The anxious, fearful, disillusioned and depressed.

Loving God, may the truth of Easter break into each and every one of these situations.

Grant to each one of us, loving God, the deep inner assurance which only Easter can bring, that whatever life brings,

whatever we face, however things may seem , your will shall be done and your kingdom come.

God of grace and resurrection power,

bring your joy and healing today.

Amen.

**Holy Communion**

This link to a short service led by Rev. Andrew Farrington.

<https://youtu.be/ZVqZGqO20JY>

HYMN THINE BE THE GLORY RISEN CONQUERING SON.

STF 313.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GaoV5w2Qfag>

 1 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.*

 2 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:

 3 No more we doubt thee,
 glorious Prince of Life;
 life is naught 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:

Edmond Budry (1854–1932)
*translated by* Richard Birch Hoyle (1875–1939

)

BLESSING

May we go in peace and be led in the joy of the Risen Christ.

ALLELUIA! CHRIST IS RISEN.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3TUWU_yg4s>

Worship prepared by Maureen Ownsworth.
Music and videos added by R. Andrew Farrington