

Sunday Worship at Home, 25th April, Easter 4

Introduction:

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

who knows our needs, hears our cries, feels our pain, and heals our wounds.

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

A Prayer of Confession:

Christ our passover lamb has been sacrificed for us. Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all malice and evil and confessing our sins with a sincere and true heart

Like Mary at the empty tomb, we fail to grasp the wonder of your presence.

Lord, have mercy.

Like the disciples behind locked doors, we are afraid to be seen as your followers.

Christ, have mercy.

Like Thomas in the upper room, we are slow to believe.

Lord, have mercy.

May the Father of all mercies cleanse *us* from *our* sins, and restore us in his image to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Collect for Easter Day

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, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Bible Reading: Mark 16:1-8

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 on the reading:

Mark's Gospel ends as abruptly as it begins, with the strangest of endings compared to the other three Gospels. You might even say it doesn't really end at all, it just stops. If you look in your bible you will find two alternative endings that are both much later additions, by different authors who assumed that the original ending had somehow become lost. However, many modern scholars now believe there was no lost original ending, and that Mark intended the Gospel to finish where it does with the women fleeing amazed and afraid, and probably confused as well, from the empty tomb. So why would Mark end his Gospel this way? I believe the clue is in how he began: with the words "The beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ". There is no neat ending to Mark's Gospel because the story of Jesus Christ is not over. The story did not end on Easter Sunday 2,000 years ago – that was just the beginning. The story of the Good News of Jesus Christ has continued for 2,000 years; it continues still in the lives of you and me, and will continue for all eternity. It continues because Jesus IS risen, Jesus is alive and reigns forever. Alleluia. **Amen**

The Creed

We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named.
We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.
We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.
We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

Be still and pray:

In your prayers, include prayers for the church, the needs of the world and our local community. Pray for Church leaders as we share the Good News of the risen Christ this year. Give thanks for the success of our vaccination programme and the easing of lockdown and pray for those who are still waiting for the vaccine and for countries where lockdowns are being re-imposed. Give thanks for front-line health and other key workers caring for the sick and vulnerable and pray for their wellbeing. Pray for those struggling with isolation or financial hardship because of lockdown. Pray for healing who are ill. Give thanks for the lives of those who have recently died and pray for God's peace and comfort for those who are mourning their loss. Give thanks that Christ is risen and pray for all those who need to know they joy and peace of the risen Christ in their hearts.

Finish with The Lord's Prayer:

Conclusion

God of our salvation, you have restored us to life, you have brought us back again into your love by the triumphant death and resurrection of Christ.

Continue to heal us, as we go to live and work in the power of your Spirit, to your praise and glory.

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia. Amen.

Reverend Eddie