

WORSHIP FOR EASTER

CALL TO WORSHIP

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Christ is Risen.

He is Risen indeed.

The King of glory is among us.

He has burst forth from the tomb that would hold him.

Who is the King of Glory?

The Lord of the stable and the cross, He is the King of glory!

Who is the King of Glory?

Jesus, the Word made flesh, He is the King of glory!

And we saw his glory.

Such glory as befits the Father's true Son,

Full of grace and truth.

Christ is Risen!

He is Risen indeed!

Let the people shout: Hallelujah!

Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Amen

Let us Pray

Lord God, we gather in the name of the Risen Christ to pour forth our praises in glad Easter Celebration. We rejoice that you have not left us without hope, but You have come back to us in the victory of the resurrection and given us the assurance of eternal life with Christ Jesus, the one whom You lifted from the tomb and have made Lord of all. Praise be to your name for your everlasting mercy, both now and forevermore.

Amen.

MATTHEW 28:1-10

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a

violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."

So, the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said.

They came to him, clasped his feet and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

AN EASTER LITANY AND PRAYER

The stone that sealed Jesus' tomb has been removed.
The wrappings that held Jesus' body lie empty.
The tomb lies empty.
Death cannot hold Jesus our Saviour.
And by his mercy death cannot hold us either.
He died that we might live, and He lives that we might never die.

Let us pray

Gracious God, Lord of Life and Love Eternal we give you thanks and praise for the good news; the news of Easter Day.
May the light of the resurrection guide us day by day, and the name of your only Son be glorified forever.

Amen

ACTS 10:34-43

Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. You know what has happened throughout 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 tree, 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."

COLOSSIANS 3:1-4

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

WE ARE RAISED WITH CHRIST

Today, with hundreds of millions of the faithful around the world we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour. For many of us, we celebrate this wonderful

day in isolation, as we stay in our homes because of Covid-19. But it still can be a celebration!

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the most significant event of all history.

It is God's endorsement of all that Jesus said and did during his life among us

It is the sign and seal of God's approval upon him.

It is the event by which all the other events in the life of Christ are validated and confirmed.

We all are very much aware of the astonishing events of the first Easter:

- how at first, those closest to Jesus did not believe that he had been raised from the dead

- how they had to be convinced by his presence among them, that the empty tomb was much more than a case of grave robbery and the reports of his being seen much more than the wishful thinking of people cast into deep grief by the brutal death of one whom they loved.

In the end, they were all convinced.

They were convinced despite their initial unbelief of the reports that they heard.

They were convinced despite their knowledge that Jesus had died.

They were convinced despite their instinct to regard what is dead as being dead and gone.

Indeed, they were convinced despite the incredibility, the implausibility and the impossibility of the entire affair.

In fact, they were so convinced that they spent the rest of their lives telling others about Jesus and about how God had anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and power, and how He went about proclaiming forgiveness of sin and peace with God, doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, and how he was at last killed, though he was innocent of any crime. They were so convinced that, in accordance with the scriptures from of old, he was crucified, dead, and buried for our sakes and then raised by God from the dead on the third day.

That is the message that we heard Peter proclaim to the household of Cornelius, and that indeed was the message, and is the message, of the entire church since the first Easter Sunday.

Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!

Christ is risen, and more, says Peter, "*He is the one whom God has appointed as judge of the living and the dead.*".

And what a judge he is.

He grants life here and now, and in the world to come, to all who believe in him.

He forgives the sin of all who trust in his name.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that save a wretch like me.

The words of Jesus, the life of Jesus, the teachings of Jesus are made true by His resurrection; a resurrection that God grants to Him on account of his faithful obedience and His love.

And the teaching of Jesus that is made true by His resurrection is that we too will be raised:

- raised not only from a life of sin to a life of righteousness in which we commune with God as we walk upon the earth, he made
- raised not only from a life of anxiety and fear, to a life of trust and hope in which we radiate the light of Christ's encouragement to those around us
- raised not only from a life of doubt and of cynicism to a life of certainty and faith in which we proclaim peace and help make peace by the power of God's Spirit.

We are raised from death

- raised from the tomb and from the urn,
- raised from the grave and from the ocean's depths,
- raised indeed from dust and ashes to a new and glorious life with God, our creator
- raised to a life beyond all the best things we can think of with God our Father, with Christ Jesus our Lord and our brother, and with God the Spirit, who is above all and in all.

Christ is Risen.

There is a twofold aspect to the Resurrection Life to which we are raised with Christ: life here before our mortal flesh is shuffled off; and life afterwards; life beyond death.

Paul, in today's reading from his letter to the Colossians, speaks of both aspects of what it means to be with raised with Christ.

He speaks of our new life here and now, and of our life when Christ appears again in glory.

For Paul, the resurrection of the dead to the life everlasting is a fundamental fact, a fact established for him by his own unexpected encounter with the Risen Lord, an encounter that changed him from one who sought to destroy the newly created church to one who helped establish it everywhere in the known world.

And for Paul, the resurrection of the dead to the glory of the life everlasting begins here and now as we allow ourselves to die with Christ in the waters of our baptism; as we die with him to all those things that separate us from God and from one another. We must accept His message; and believe in His name; and take up our cross and follow Him day by day.

That is why today Paul urges us to set our minds on things above rather than earthly things. Let us set our minds on what it is that God has done and is even now doing to bring his kingdom to pass in our midst, rather than upon those things that will fade and disappear like the grass of the fields and the flowers on these plants.

Our citizenship is not of this world. With Christ, we have been entrusted with the care of this world and we are told to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with our God.

Our citizenship is in the heavenly places where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. It is in the place beyond the sun and the moon and stars where God himself embraces us and we are able to embrace God.

The citizenship begins now, in this world, when we believe in our hearts that **Christ is Risen from the Dead** and when we name Him with our lips that He is our Lord and our God.

Those who have died with Christ are raised with Him.

This is our faith.

We thank God for this promise and of His eternal love and protection.

Amen

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Let us together confess our faith in our God, and in Christ Jesus our Risen Lord.

We are not alone; we live in God's world.

We believe in God: who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make us new, who works in us and others by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church,

-to celebrate God's presence,

-to live with respect in creation,

-to love and serve others,

-to seek justice and resist evil,

-to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our Judge and our Hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.

We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

LET US PRAY

O God of Grace and God of Glory, you gave your only Son to suffer death on the cross for our redemption and by His resurrection, you have delivered us from the power of sin and death. We give you thanks and praise for His love, for Your love. May we all enter into the joy and freedom of His risen life. May we dwell in him and He in us now always.

O God of Grace and God of Glory, enrich our lives with a growing knowledge of our Risen Lord. Help us to set our minds on the things above; those things which endure, and not on earthly matters which quickly pass away.

Help us to be joyful in all our trials, to be generous with all you give, to proclaim your peace and to live your peace at all times and in every circumstance. We pray that You would guard our faith so that when Christ appears, we might also appear with Him in his glory.

We pray, O Lord, for your church around the world this day that it may testify to your way, your truth, and your life in all that it does. Make us powerful and effective witnesses to what you have done, what you are doing, and what you will yet do. Because of this Covid-19 Pandemic we are not able to be together in person. Help us to pray for one another, that we may be kept safe.

We pray, O God for the nations of this world today. Give the leaders wisdom and the ability to make wise choices during this time.

We pray especially today for the health care workers, who are risking their own lives to keep us safe. Be with them and their families and as they face these difficult times.

We pray, O Lord, this special day, for those who are separated from loved ones, for those who are homeless and those who are unwanted or forgotten. With Christ we remember those who hungry, those who are naked, and those who in prison.

We pray, O Lord, for our families and for our neighbours and for all those whom you have placed upon our hearts this day. Hear the prayers of thanksgiving and intercession, we make for them in hearts and in our minds and with the word's of our lips.

Eternal and Compassionate God, we give thanks for all that You give us this day and always.

Amen.

BENEDICTION

In the power of the Holy Spirit we now go forth into the world, to fulfil our calling as the people of God; the body of Christ.

Go in peace.

May the blessing of the Ever-Present God be upon you.

May the power of the Risen Christ be within you.

May the wisdom and gentleness of the Holy Spirit surround and uplift you both now and forevermore.

Amen and Amen

MAY YOU HAVE A BLESSED EASTER!