

Easter Sunday 12th April 2020

Call to Worship: Christ is risen, he is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Hymn: Christ the Lord is Risen today (StF 298)

Sing/ Read /pray /proclaim the words, or listen to this version:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XdL4j8NKmUg>

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!*

Let us pray together

Resurrection God, you offer life overcoming death, love overcoming emptiness, light overcoming darkness.

I give you thanks for the hundred small and powerful ways I experience resurrection every day.

Thank you for Jesus, who shows us how to live as a resurrection people, living defiant and in resistance to death.

For those times when I have failed to challenge the things of death, the political systems, relationships, selfish desires, I'm sorry.

For those times when I have failed to resist death and ignored your call to live the life I am gifted, I'm sorry.

I trust that you forgive me, I hear your forgiveness intertwined with your call to me to live the life I am gifted, and I trust that you are merciful in all ways. Amen.

Read Today's Gospel Reading: John 20:1-18

Time to Reflect

Take a moment to think about:

The Easter story is one that is familiar to us, we know it so well but how do we live it? How do we live as resurrection, Easter Day people, the whole year round?

We are surrounded by death, and we are called to live as resurrection, Easter day people in the midst of death, how is that possible? How do we do that?

Easter isn't just "happy". Easter is much more powerful than happiness. Easter isn't safe. Saying 'Alleluia' isn't a passing pleasantry. Easter is the big shout of protest to all that is death. Easter is a defiant act against all that has tried to suppress life.

Easter is black Americans chanting "I can't breathe" whilst those with white privilege often become deaf. Still they chant attempting to dispel death. That is Easter, it's angry.

Easter is a young journalist from Northern Ireland, shot dead by terrorists but whose message of inclusion for the LGBTQI+ community continues to echo after her death. That is Easter, it is passionate.

Easter is the force of climate change protestors, trying to alert us all to the climate catastrophe about to happen, being arrested in their pursuit of the truth. That is Easter, it recognises truth. Truth is life.

Easter is the welcome we offer refugees who leave behind their home, fleeing violence and conflict for the increasing hatred and far right politic of the west. That is Easter, it is the love of welcome.

Easter is throwing off the grave clothes of death, not in a pretty delicate fashion but with power, with force, with strength. Easter is life beyond the things of death amidst the things of death.

It's Easter, it is triumphant, it is victorious, it is persistent, it is angry, passionate, truth, life and love.

While I was ill, I claimed a phrase as my own and it was 'live the life you are gifted'. By that I mean, whatever life you have - really live it.

So at Easter we talk about life winning over death, light over darkness, hope over despair. I invite you to really think about that life that you have been gifted, with whatever limitations you might have, and really embrace it, really live it. Resurrection is living the life you are gifted in the face of death.

We experience resurrection in a hundred small and powerful ways every day. And it all begins when we commit ourselves to live the life we are gifted as a form of strong resistance to death.

To live the life we are gifted as resurrection people, as an act of radical resistance to death.

If you can, take the time to sit and listen to, or quietly join with, this Taize chant:

Bless the Lord My Soul <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IC2XWBxktk>

Bless the Lord, my soul
And bless God's holy name.
Bless the Lord, my soul,
He rescues me from death.

1. It is He who forgives all your guilt,
Who heals every one of your ills,
Who redeems your life from the grave,
Who crowns you with love and compassion.

Bless the Lord, my soul....

2. The Lord is compassion and love
Slow to anger and rich in mercy.
He does not treat us according to our sins
Nor repay us according to our faults.

Bless the Lord, my soul....

3. As a Father has compassion on his children
The Lord has pity on those who fear him,
For he knows of what we are made
He remembers that we are dust.

Bless the Lord, my soul....

Bless the Lord, my soul....

A time of prayer

Resurrection God I bring before you now my hopes, desires, needs and concerns and I trust that you hear me and help me.

For your church, a people of resurrection; frightened, weary, hopeful – may we all know your love empowering us to live the life we are gifted.

For your world, a people and creation; frightened, weary, determined – may we all know your love empowering us to live the life we are gifted.

For your vulnerable ones, the sick, the grieving, the isolated; frightened, weary, loved – may we all know your love empowering us to live the life we are gifted.

I especially want to pray for

Resurrection God, These are my prayers, our hopes, concerns, desires and needs and I trust that you hear me and will help me, help me to be your hands, your feet, your voice in all those situations and with all those people who need to know your gift of life. Amen.

Our Father

Hymn: Thine be the Glory (StF 313) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPjTfw4a2ZE>

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:

*Thine be the glory,
risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory
thou o'er death hast won*

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:

*Thine be the glory,
risen, conquering Sun,
endless is the victory
thou o'er death hast won*

A prayer of blessing

May you know life rising from the death,
May you know hope rising from the pain,
May you know light rising from the darkness,
May you know and live love,
May you know and live the life you are gifted. Amen

Original Materials by Charity Hamilton