Christ Church Cathedral
Oxford

Easter Sunday
12 April 2020
He blesses every love which weeps and grieves
And now he blesses hers who stood and wept
And would not be consoled, or leave her love’s
Last touching place, but watched as low light crept
Up from the east. A sound behind her stirs
A scatter of bright birdsong through the air.
She turns, but cannot focus through her tears,
Or recognise the Gardener standing there.
She hardly hears his gentle question ‘Why,
Why are you weeping?’, or sees the play of light
That brightens as she chokes out her reply
‘They took my love away, my day is night’
And then she hears her name, she hears Love say
The Word that turns her night, and ours, to Day.

Malcolm Guite, *Easter dawn*

Although we cannot meet to celebrate, Christ is risen. Although we may find it hard to rejoice, the joy of the Resurrection fills the universe. And although we are many, we are one body – one Easter people, and Alleluia is our song!

We sing Alleluia, not ignoring the pain of many and the needs of the world, but because we trust that Christ’s victory over death gives hope for every situation: even the global pandemic in which we now find ourselves, suffering anxiety, isolation, illness and grief.

Our Easter Eucharist is celebrated by the Dean, the Very Revd Professor Martyn Percy. Music has been recorded by our Lay Clerks in their homes, by boys from the Cathedral School before the closure of schools, by our Cathedral Choir in previous years, and by our Organist, Professor Steven Grahl. Responses are made by voices from around the Cathedral community, recorded in their homes and with their families.

Entering into worship through audio broadcast is more familiar to some of us than to others. If this is new to you, try to actively share in the service, not just have it on in the background; and look at the images we offer or perhaps images of your own. Join in the words in bold. You may not want to stand or kneel as usual but find a comfortable position that helps you to pray, and to receive the love of God in your heart.

You can find all our recorded worship, alongside other resources for worshipping at home, at www.chch.ox.ac.uk/onlineworship
Awake, sad heart, whom sorrow ever drowns;
Take up thine eyes, which feed on earth;
Unfold thy forehead, gathered into frowns;
Thy Saviour comes, and with Him mirth:
    Awake, awake,
And with a thankful heart His comforts take.
    But thou dost still lament, and pine, and cry,
    And feel His death, but not His victory.

Arise, sad heart; if thou dost not withstand,
    Christ’s resurrection thine may be;
Do not by hanging down break from the hand
    Which, as it riseth, raiseth thee:
    Arise, Arise;
    And with His burial linen drie thine eyes.
Christ left His grave-clothes, that we might, when grief
Draws tears or blood, not want a handkerchief.

The Dawning, George Herbert (1593-1633)
The Gathering

Acclamation

Christ yesterday and today
the beginning and the end
Alpha and Omega
all time belongs to him, and all ages
to him be glory and power,
through every age and for ever. Amen.

Christ the Morning Star has risen in glory.
Christ is risen from the dead
and his flame of love burns within us.
Christ sheds his peaceful light on all the world;
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

President

This is the day when our Lord Jesus Christ
was raised gloriously from the dead.
This is the day when we celebrate his victory.
This is the day when we cry with confidence,
Death shall have no more dominion.

Yet this is also a day when we are far from one another
and celebrating alone in our homes.
It is a day of illness and grief, of loneliness and anxiety.
It is a day of clouds and deep darkness
which are not easily dispelled.

But it is in this darkness that the light of Christ shines.
Into our darkness the Sun shall dawn.
Whispers of Easter hope shall rise to a full-throated chorus
and we shall say with confidence that, even in the darkness,
we are an Easter people.
To us the light shall come.
And Alleluia is our song.
The Gloria, the angels’ song of praise, has been absent from our services throughout Lent. We hear it now sung by the Cathedral Choir (in a recording from 2007, conducted by Stephen Darlington) to a long setting by John Taverner (c.1490-1545). We will hear the Gloria rising and falling around the Easter proclamations, the Dean’s welcome and the Collect for Easter: proclamations of joy that Christ is risen from the dead and bestows light and life upon all people, and fervent prayers for his light and life to dawn on us and into the world, in all our need and pain.

Gloria in excelsis Deo
et in terra pax
hominibus bonae voluntatis.
Laudamus te, benedicimus te,
adoramus te, glorificamus te,
gratias agimus tibi
propter magnam gloriam tuam,
Domine Deus, Rex caelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.

Domine Fili unigenite, Iesu Christe,
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei,
Filius Patris, qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis;
qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.

Lord Jesus Christ,
only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated
at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus,
tu solus Dominus,
tu solus Altissimus,
Iesu Christe,
cum Sancto Spiritu
in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen
Minister: May the light of Christ, rising in glory, 
shine on those who dwell in the shadow of death 
and banish all darkness from our hearts and minds:

All: for we are an Easter people 
yesterday, today and forever, 
and Alleluia is and shall be our song.

Minister: Alleluia, Christ is risen!
All: He is risen indeed. 
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

The President, the Dean, welcomes those listening. 
He continues with the Collect.

President Let us pray that 
the light of Christ 
will come into this dark 
and broken world.

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.

All Amen.
The Liturgy of the Word

Reading
Acts 10:34–43 (NRSV)

A reading from the Book of Acts.

Then Peter began to speak to them:

‘I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and 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 ordained by God 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.’

This is the word of the Lord.
The hymn was recorded by the boys of Christ Church Cathedral School before the closure of schools. Please join in with the singing if you’d like.

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus;
His the sceptre, His the throne.
Alleluia! His the triumph,
His the victory alone.
Hark! The songs of peaceful Zion
thunder like a mighty flood;
"Jesus out of ev'ry nation
has redeemed us by His blood."

Alleluia! Not as orphans
are we left in sorrow now.
Alleluia! He is near us;
faith believes, nor questions how.
Though the cloud from sight received Him
when the forty days were o'er,
shall our hearts forget His promise,
"I am with you evermore"?

Words: William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898)
Music: Hyfrydol, RH Pritchard (1811-1887)

Gospel Acclamation

Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. Alleluia!
Death shall be no more, mourning and crying and pain shall be no more. Alleluia!
Weeping may endure for a night, but joy will come again. Alleluia!

Gospel
John 20:1–18 (NRSV)

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

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. 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.’
Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; 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. 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.’ When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?’ 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.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to him in Hebrew, ‘Rabbouni!’ (which means Teacher). 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.” ’

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.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Sermon

preached by the Dean, the Very Revd Professor Martyn Percy

The Butcher’s Shop, Anniballe Carraci (1560-1609)
Christ Church Picture Gallery
Reaffirmation of Baptismal Faith

Easter is the pre-eminent season of baptism and confirmation. In other years, the baptism and confirmation of new Christians is an important part of our Easter celebrations, especially at the Easter Vigil on Saturday evening. During the Easter liturgy, as we recall that we share through baptism in the one body of the Church, those of us who are baptised also reaffirm the vows made at our baptisms. This year, as we celebrate Easter far apart from one another and in the face of the suffering, fear and grief caused by global pandemic, it is more important than ever to affirm our faith in God and our unity with one another as the baptised people of God.

So, as we come now to declare the faith of the Church of which we are part, you are invited to join the profession of faith in the words of the Apostles’ Creed, an ancient statement of Christian faith used at baptism since at least the end of the fourth century. As we reaffirm our baptismal faith and our baptismal vows, alone or in our households, our voices join with the voices we hear and the voices of our friends and fellow members of Christ Church congregations – distant physically but not in love, as we renew the vows that make us one. Alone, we are yet part of the one body of the Church; which unifies us across space and time.

Creed

President: Brothers and sisters, in the words of your baptism and confirmation and in the words said by those being baptised and confirmed throughout history, I ask you to profess the faith of the Church.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father?

All I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ?

All I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit?

All I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.

Corporate Renewal of Baptismal Vows

Minister: Let us turn to Christ, affirming the calling by which we were called and the faith by which we are being saved.

Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?

All I reject them.

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?

All I renounce them.
Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?

All I repent of them.

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?

All I turn to Christ.

Do you submit to Christ as Lord?

All I submit to Christ.

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

All I come to Christ.

Will you continue in the faith of the Church and her teaching, but above all in faith in Christ, who promises to make all things new?

All With the help of God, I will.

Will you persevere in resisting temptation to despair and work instead for the flourishing of the world?

All With the help of God, I will.

Will you share, in all you do, the good news of God in Christ?

All With the help of God, I will.

Will you seek and serve Christ in all people, loving your neighbour as yourself?

All With the help of God, I will.

Will you acknowledge Christ’s authority over human society, by prayer for the world and its leaders, by defending the weak, and by seeking peace and justice?

All With the help of God, I will.

Eternal God, our beginning and our end, preserve in your people the new life of baptism; as Christ receives us on earth, so may he guide us through the trials of this world and enfold us in the joy of heaven, where you live and reign, one God for ever and ever.

All Amen.
Minister: We bring ourselves to the risen Lord, opening our ears to the whispers of his love opening our eyes to the dawning of his light opening our hearts to the warmth of his healing. Lord, you met Mary in the garden in the depths of her pain. Meet us in our homes, in our work, in our households. Meet us in all who take care of us and all for whom we care. Meet us in our pain, our isolation, our fears and show us the dawning of your light.

Lord, in your mercy  
All hear our prayer.

Lord, you called Mary by name and brought her to new life. Call us and commission us as your people that in the places where we are, we may shine with your light and however little we feel able to do, we may do it all in your name and know that we are sharing your light in the darkness.

Lord, in your mercy  
All hear our prayer.

Lord, you brought humanity to the heart of God. Walk with those whose hearts are broken and bruised, and with those whose humanity is put to the service of others that by them your healing, wholeness and hope may be whispered to all in darkness and despair.

Lord, in your mercy  
All hear our prayer.

Lord, by your resurrection you have conquered death forever. We give to you all who have died; all who approach death; all who are sick, suffering, broken; all who grieve. Bring them, with us, into the company of saints and angels the community of perfect souls, who ever sing to your glory.
Lord, in your mercy

All hear our prayer.

Minister: Christ our risen and redeeming Lord, we are surrounded by the whispers of your mercy. As your Resurrection dawns in the world kindle in us the flame of your presence and breathe on the embers of our hope that we may be your lights in the world and rejoice that you are risen.

All Amen

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Peace

President: Jesus says to his disciples, ‘Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.’ Let not your hearts be troubled, neither be afraid, for the love of Christ surrounds you.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

Preparation of the Table

President: As we offer you these our gifts, with all that we have and all that we are, in the joy of Easter and in supplication for our world: may the light of your Love be seen in the darkness; the whispers of your healing be heard in empty streets; the flowers of your hope blossom in many hearts.
The Eucharistic Prayer

President: The Lord be with you
All: and also with you.
President: Lift up your hearts.
All: We lift them to the Lord.
President: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All: It is right to give thanks and praise.

President: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, always and everywhere to give you thanks, almighty and eternal Father; for in his perfect love Jesus your Son gave himself up to death for us all; and in your perfect compassion you raised him from death for our salvation and made him shine like the sun with your radiance.

And although the light of Easter is veiled by darkness and the shouts of praise obscured by cries of pain, you bring your people back to your generous heart and promise that the risen Christ is with us on our way.

As we walk the path of suffering, you draw us into the promise of new life; as we weep for renewal you restore in us the image of your glory; as we cry out for healing and hope you gather up our voices to join the angels’ song:

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus
Dominus Deus Sabaoth:
pleni sunt cœli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Holy, holy, holy
Lord God of hosts:
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
President: Accept our praises, heavenly Father, through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, and as we follow his example and obey his command, grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit these gifts of bread and wine may be to us his body and his blood; who, in the same night that he was betrayed, took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them, saying: Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. Therefore, heavenly Father, we remember his offering of himself made once for all upon the cross; we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; we look for the coming of your kingdom, and with this bread and this cup we make the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All:

Christ has died:
Christ is risen:
Christ will come again.

Accept through him, our great high priest, this our sacrifice of thanks and praise, and as we eat and drink these holy gifts in the presence of your divine majesty, renew us by your Spirit, inspire us with your love and unite us in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Through him, and with him, and in him,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
with all who stand before you in earth and heaven,
we worship you, Father almighty,
in songs of everlasting praise:

**All:**  
**Blessing and honour**  
and glory and power  
be yours for ever and ever. Amen.

### The Lord’s Prayer

**President:**  
In times of hope, in times of trouble,  
in times of suffering, in times of resurrection,  
in the words of our risen Saviour, we pray:

**All:**  
**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.

### Breaking of the Bread

*The President breaks the consecrated bread.*

**Minister:**  
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy upon us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy upon us.  
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world:  
grant us peace.
President: Alleluia. Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.
All: Let us feed on him in our hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Even several weeks into the suspension of public worship, the fact that we cannot receive bread and wine together may still be strange, painful, or alienating; especially at Easter, when this first celebration of the Eucharist that brings us into the life of our risen Lord is so important. Yet, alone or isolated, alienated or sorrowful as we are, the risen Jesus comes to meet us. Jesus invites us to receive him in our hearts by faith; to unite our prayers and our wills with his; and to rest in his perfect and eternal love.

There are no special words or prayers for this. All the Church has ever thought necessary is true desire, lively faith and genuine love. So you are invited to come honestly before God the way you know how. You may like to close your eyes, or to look at a picture; to pause the recording in order to find stillness; to empty your mind, or to pray quietly. As we rest in the presence of Christ all around us, the Agnus Dei is sung.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, grant us peace.
You may also like to pray one of the following prayers:

**In union, O Lord with the faithful at every altar of thy Church, where the Holy Eucharist is now being celebrated, I desire to offer thee praise and thanksgiving. I present to thee my soul and body with the earnest wish that they may always be united to thee. And since I can not now receive thee sacramentally, I beseech thee to come spiritually into my heart. I unite myself to thee, and embrace thee with all the affections of my soul. Let nothing ever separate thee from me. May I live and die in thy love. Amen.**

Lord, you stand at the door of my heart and knock. You wait for me and only I can let you in. I believe and trust in you and ask you now to fill me with your presence. Feed me with your body and unite me in your blood, that I may be your blessing to a world in need. Amen.

*President:* Let us pray.

*All:* Father of all, we give you thanks and praise, that when we were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home. Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory. May we who are Christ’s body live his risen life; we who drink his cup of suffering yet bring life to others; we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world. Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us, so we and all your children shall be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.
Thine be the glory, risen, conqu'ring Son:  
endless is the vict'ry 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, conqu'ring Son;_  
_endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won._

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, conqu'ring Son;_  
_endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won._

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;  
life is naught without thee: aid us in our strife;  
make us more than conqu'rors, thro' thy deathless love:  
bring us safe thro' Jordan to thy home above.  
_Thine be the glory, risen, conqu'ring Son;_  
_endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won._

Words: Edmond Budry (1835-1932)  
translated Richard Birch Hoyle (1875-1939)  
Music: Maccabeus, GF Handel (1685-1759)
The Dismissal

Blessing

President: May God the Father whisper words of healing. May God the Son shine light upon you. May God the Spirit water your hearts that you may bring forth flowers of hope and joy and that your flowering may give grace to all you know; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

All: Amen.

Deacon Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.

Music after the service recorded by the Organist, Professor Steven Grahl

Fugue in C (BWV 547) JS Bach (1685–1750)
Happy Easter!

Thank you for being part of our journey into the hope of the Resurrection today. We pray that God’s light and love will shine on you, into your lives and homes, and upon all those you love today and always.

During these difficult times, please be assured that the prayers of the clergy and people of Christ Church continue. Please let us know if we can pray for you, or if you need our support. You are warmly invited to continue to participate in our community worship, prayer and spiritual life, whether you are a longstanding member of our congregations or new to us. You can find resources for prayer and contact details below:

www.chch.ox.ac.uk/onlineworship
www.chch.ox.ac.uk/cathedralblog
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