

Easter Sunday and following Sundays

In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

All Amen.

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you

All and also with you.

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

All He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Hymn – Ye Holy Angels Bright

1 Ye holy angels bright,
who wait at God's right hand,
or through the realms of light
fly at your Lord's command,
assist our song,
for else the theme
too high doth seem
for mortal tongue.

2 Ye blessèd souls at rest,
who ran this earthly race,
and now, from sin released,
behold the Saviour's face,
his praises sound,
as in his sight

with sweet delight
ye do abound.

3 Ye saints, who toil below,
adore your heavenly King,
and onward as ye go
some joyful anthem sing;
take what he gives
and praise him still,
through good and ill,
who ever lives.

4 My soul, bear thou thy part,
triumph in God above,
and with a well-tuned heart
sing thou the songs of love;
let all thy days
till life shall end,
whate'er he send,
be filled with praise.

Richard Baxter

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

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

All Almighty God, our heavenly Father,

we have sinned against you

and against our neighbour

in thought and word and deed,

through negligence, through weakness,

through our own deliberate fault.

We are truly sorry

and repent of all our sins.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,

who died for us,

forgive us all that is past

and grant that we may serve you in newness of life

to the glory of your name.

Amen.

Almighty God,

who forgives all who truly repent,

have mercy upon you,

pardon and deliver you from all your sins,

confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
All Amen.

Gloria in Excelsis

**All 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.
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.
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.**

The Collect

2nd May

Almighty God,
who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ
have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life:
grant that, as by your grace going before us
you put into our minds good desires,

so by your continual help
we may bring them to good effect;
through Jesus Christ our risen Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Acts 8v26-end

²⁶ Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Get up and go towards the south^[g] to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (This is a wilderness road.) ²⁷ So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸ and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over to this chariot and join it.' ³⁰ So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' ³¹ He replied, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. ³² Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

'Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.

³³ In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth.'

³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, 'About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?' ³⁵ Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶ As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is water! What

is to prevent me from being baptized?'^[h] ³⁸ He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip^[i] baptized him. ³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰ But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Hymn – Thou Art the Way to Thee Alone

1 Thou art the Way: to thee alone
from sin and death we flee;
and he who would the Father seek,
must seek him, Lord, by thee.

2 Thou art the Truth: thy Word alone
true wisdom can impart;
thou only canst inform the mind,
and purify the heart.

3 Thou art the Life: the rending tomb
proclaims thy conquering arm,
and those who put their trust in thee
nor death nor hell shall harm.

4 Thou art the Way, the Truth, the Life:
grant us that Way to know,
that Truth to keep, that Life to win,
whose joys eternal flow.

George W. Doane

Gospel Reading

Alleluia, alleluia.

Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life.

Whoever comes to me will never be hungry,
and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'

John 6.35

Alleluia.

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

All Glory to you, O Lord.

John 15v1-8

'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. ² He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes^[a] to make it bear more fruit. ³ You have already been cleansed^[b] by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become^[c] my disciples

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Jesus is the vine, the true source of life for us all. He's the one who was there at the beginning of creation the one who started it all, and he is the continuing life of the whole world. The vine is the source of nourishment, of water, it provides support and protection. For us in our journey of faith Christ is the source of our spiritual nourishment, of our life. It's why we receive him in the bread and wine, it's why we keep coming back because this is a place where we find his life.

I can remember I had to give someone some negative feedback on something they'd done. It wasn't terrible but it needed a few changes to be right, and I felt concerned about giving this advice I didn't want to crush them or damage their confidence but it would help them in the future. But as I was giving the advice I realised something I realised why I needed to tell this person what I was telling them, it was because they were worth telling it to. They had so much to offer, but making a change in this area would make them so much more effective, and they took it on board. Our reading today encourages us to think that we too are worth pruning, that we're worth sanding off our own rough edges. It's because Jesus loves us that we're worth pruning. I've said before that I'm no great gardener but I can understand the principle of dead heading roses of taking off that which maybe at one stage was beautiful but now needs to be trimmed for new growth and for something even more beautiful to appear.

I don't know how much you know of church history but the reformation the great split of the protestant church away from what was at the time terrible practices by the Catholic church, not too long after they had a counter-reformation where they corrected many of these errors. But the reformation was caused in large part because Martin Luther, the man who gave his name to the Lutheran church felt guilty because he was years behind on his daily prayers. As a Monk he was meant to pray set prayers every day but he got behind, and rather than skip days what he did was to try to catch up to spend some days saying several days worth of prayers from over a year ago in an attempt to catch up. But he realised that was pointless, he realised that this wasn't the right way to pray it wasn't what prayer was about just saying the right words or feeling guilty for not saying them.,

Jesus' encouragement is to abide with him, for each of us that will mean something different, but I think it means something deeper than just Sunday attendance but it's something richer than what Martin Luther was imagining. It is a real relationship with Christ. I know with all of the changes to routine we've had over this past year I'm quite a few months behind on my prayers, but it won't help if I put Tuesday aside and catch up on November last year. But I need to begin again finding fresh ways to abide in Christ and for each of us with our own personalities that could be something different, for some that could be putting on some music, whether that's modern guitar lead worship, the choir of Kings College or Gregorian chant. It may be Anglican daily prayer and there's books or websites you can use for that. It may be just sitting and reading your Bible or going for a long walk and taking the time to pray, it may be something which I wouldn't even think of. But I'd encourage you to do whatever you can to abide with him, to take strength from him and to grow with him too.

Amen

The Creed

**All We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

In joy and hope let us pray to the Father.
That our risen Saviour may fill us [and ...] with the joy of his
glorious and life-giving resurrection ...
we pray to the Father.

Hear our prayer.

That isolated and persecuted churches
may find fresh strength in the good news of Easter ...
we pray to the Father.

Hear our prayer.

That God may grant us humility
to be subject to one another in Christian love ...
we pray to the Father.

Hear our prayer.

That he may provide for those who lack food, work or shelter ...
we pray to the Father.

Hear our prayer.

That by his power war and famine may cease through all the world ...
we pray to the Father.

Hear our prayer.

That he may reveal the light of his presence to the sick,
the weak and the dying,
to comfort and strengthen them ...
we pray to the Father.

Hear our prayer.

That, according to his promises,
all who have died in the faith of the resurrection
may be raised on the last day ...
we pray to the Father.

Hear our prayer.

That he may send the fire of the Holy Spirit upon his people,
so that we may bear faithful witness to his resurrection,
we pray to the Father.

Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father,
you have delivered us from the power of darkness
and brought us into the kingdom of your Son:
grant that, as his death has recalled us to life,
so his continual presence in us may raise us to eternal joy;
through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**All Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

Hymn – Thine for ever! God of Love

1 Thine for ever! God of love,
hear us from thy throne above;
thine for ever may we be
here and in eternity.

2 Thine for ever! Lord of life,
shield us through our earthly strife;
thou the Life, the Truth, the Way,
guide us to the realms of day.

3 Thine for ever! O how blest
they who find in thee their rest!
Saviour, guardian, heavenly friend,
O defend us to the end.

4 Thine for ever! Shepherd, keep
us thy frail and trembling sheep;
safe alone beneath thy care,
let us all thy goodness share.

5 Thine for ever! Thou our guide,
all our wants by thee supplied,
all our sins by thee forgiven,
lead us, Lord, from earth to heaven.

Mary Fawler Maude

May Christ,
who out of defeat brings new hope and a new future,
fill you with his new life;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
All Amen.

Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.

All Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

Material in this service is taken from Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England (2000) (including the Psalter as published with Common Worship)

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