

## EASTER VIGIL

**Christ yesterday and today,  
the beginning and the End,  
the Alpha and the Omega.**

**All time belongs to him and all the ages.  
To him be glory and power through every age and for ever.**

**Amen**

**May the light of Christ rising in glory dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds.**

The Easter Proclamation ( The Exsultet)

Exult and sing, O heav'nly choirs of angels!  
Rejoice, all you powers in heaven and on earth!  
Jesus Christ our King is risen!  
Sound the trumpet, sing of our salvation!  
Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendour,  
radiant in the brightness of your king!  
Lands that once lay covered by darkness,  
see Christ's glory filling all the universe!  
Rejoice, O mother Church, with all your children,  
resplendent in your risen Saviour's light!  
Let our joyful voices resound this night!  
Let God's people shake these walls with shouts of praise!

Rejoice, beloved friends and heirs with Christ,  
standing with me in this wondrous light!  
Join me in seeking from God's Holy Spirit  
grace to sing this Easter proclamation.

How holy is this night, which heals our wounds and washes all evil away!

A night to restore lost innocence and bring mourners joy!

A night to cast out hatred!

A night for seeking peace and humbling pride!

O truly blessed night

when heaven is wedded to earth

and we are reconciled with God!

Therefore, Father most holy, in the joy of this night,

receive our evening sacrifice of praise,

the solemn offering of your holy people.

Accept this Easter candle,

a flame divided but undimmed,

a pillar of fire that glows to the honour of God.

Let it mingle with the lights of heaven  
and continue bravely burning  
to dispel the darkness of this night!  
May the Morning Star which never sets  
find this flame still burning.  
Christ is that Morning Star,  
who rose to shed his peaceful light on all creation  
and lives and reigns with you for ever and ever.

It is truly right and just  
that with full hearts and minds and voices,  
we should praise you, unseen God, almighty Father,  
and your only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.  
For Christ ransomed us with his precious blood  
and, by nailing to the cross the decree that condemned us,  
he paid to you, eternal Father, the price of Adam's sin.  
This is our passover feast,  
when Christ, the true Lamb, is slain,  
whose blood consecrates the homes of all believers.  
This is the night when first you set the children of Israel free:  
you saved our ancestors from slavery in Egypt  
and led them dry-shod through the sea.  
This is the night  
when Christians everywhere,  
washed clean of sin and freed from all defilement,  
are restored to grace and grow in holiness.  
This is the night  
when Jesus Christ broke the chains of death  
and in triumphant glory rose from the grave.  
What good would life have been for us  
had Christ not come as our Redeemer?  
O God, how wonderful your care for us!  
How boundless your merciful love!  
To ransom a slave, you gave up a Son!  
O necessary sin of Adam,  
destroyed by the death of Christ!  
O happy fault,  
which gained for us so great a Redeemer!  
How holy is this night,  
which heals our wounds and washes all evil away!  
A night to restore lost innocence and bring mourners joy!  
O truly blessed night  
when heaven is wedded to earth  
and we are reconciled with God!

## THE VIGIL READINGS

A Reading from the book of Genesis

1:1 – 2:2

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. · Now the earth was a formless void, there was darkness over the deep, and God's spirit hovered over the water. God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. · God saw that light was good, and God divided light from darkness. · God called light "day," and darkness he called "night." Evening came and morning came: the first day. God said, "Let there be a vault in the waters to divide the waters in two." And so it was. · God made the vault, and it divided the waters above the vault from the waters under the vault. · God called the vault "heaven." Evening came and morning came: the second day. God said; "Let the waters under heaven come together into a single mass, and let dry land appear." And so it was. · God called the dry land "earth" and the mass of waters "seas," and God saw that it was good. God said, "Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants, and fruit trees bearing fruit with their seed inside, on the earth." And so it was. · The earth produced vegetation: plants bearing seed in their several kinds, and trees bearing fruit with their seed inside in their several kinds. God saw that it was good. · Evening came and morning came: the third day. God said, "Let there be lights in the vault of heaven to divide day from night, and let them indicate festivals, days and years. · Let them be lights in the vault of heaven to shine on the earth." And so it was. · God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, the smaller light to govern the night, and the stars. · God set them in the vault of heaven to shine on the earth, to govern the day and the night and to divide light from darkness. God saw that it was good. · Evening came and morning came: the fourth day. God said, "Let the waters teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth within the vault of heaven." And so it was. · God created great sea serpents and every kind of living creature with which the waters teem, and every kind of winged creature. God saw that it was good. · God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas; and let the birds multiply upon the earth." · Evening came and morning came: the fifth day. God said, "Let the earth produce every kind of living creature: cattle, reptiles, and every kind of wild beast." And so it was. · God made every kind of wild beast, every kind of cattle, and every kind of land reptile. God saw that it was good.

God said, "Let us" make man! in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves, and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all the wild beasts and all the reptiles that crawl upon the earth." God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. God blessed them, saying to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and conquer it. Be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven and all living animals on the earth." · God said, "See, I give you all the seed-bearing plants that are upon the whole earth, and all the trees with seed-bearing fruit; this shall be your food. · To all I wild beasts, all birds of heaven and all living reptiles on the earth I give all the foliage of plants for food." And so it was. · God saw all he had made, and indeed it was very good. Evening came and morning came: the sixth day. Thus heaven and earth were completed with all their array. · On the seventh

day God completed the work he had been doing. He rested on the seventh day 3 after all the work he had been doing. The word of the Lord.

Ps 103: 1-2. 5-6. 10.12-14. 24.35

R/. Send forth your spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth.

Bless the Lord, my soul!  
Lord God, how great you are,  
clothed in majesty and glory,  
wrapped in light as in a robe!

You founded the earth on its base,  
to stand firm from age to age.  
you wrapped it with the ocean like a cloak:  
the waters stood higher than the mountains.

You make springs gush forth in the valleys:  
they flow in between the hills.  
On their banks dwell the birds of heaven;  
from their branches they sing their song.

From your dwelling you water the hills;  
earth drinks its fill of your gift.  
You make the grass grow for the cattle  
and the plants to serve man's needs.

How many are your works, O Lord!  
In wisdom you have made them all.  
The earth is full of your riches.  
Bless the Lord, my soul!

R/. Send forth your spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray.

Almighty ever-living God, who are wonderful in the ordering of all your works, may those you have redeemed understand that there exists nothing more marvellous than the world's creation in the beginning except that, at the end of the ages, Christ our Passover has been sacrificed. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

## Second Reading

A reading from the book of Genesis

22:1-18

It happened sometime later that God put Abraham to the test. "Abraham, Abraham," he called. "Here I am," he replied. · "Take your son," God said, · "your only child Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah." There you shall offer him as a burnt offering, on a mountain I will point out to you." 3 Rising early next morning Abraham saddled his ass and took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. He chopped wood for the burnt offering and started on his journey to the place God had pointed out to him. · On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. · Then Abraham said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey. The boy and I will go over there; we will worship and come back to you." Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering, loaded it on Isaac, and carried in his own hands the fire and the knife. Then the two of them set out together. Isaac spoke to his father Abraham, "Father," he said. "Yes, my son," he replied. "Look," he said, "here are the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" · Abraham answered, "My son, God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering." Then the two of them went on together. When they arrived at the place God had pointed out to him, Abraham built an altar there, and arranged the wood. Then he bound his son Isaac and put him on the altar on top of the wood. · Abraham stretched out his hand and seized the knife to kill his son. But the angel of Yahweh called to him from heaven. "Abraham, Abraham," he said. "I am here," he replied. · "Do not raise your hand against the boy," the angel said. "Do not harm him, for now I know you fear God. You have not refused me your son, your only son." · Then looking up, Abraham saw a ram caught by its horns in a bush. Abraham took the ram and offered it as a burnt offering in place of his son. · Abraham called this place, "Yahweh provides," and hence the saying today: On the mountain Yahweh provides. The angel of Yahweh called Abraham a second time from heaven. · "I swear by my own self-it is Yahweh who speaks-because you have done this, because you have not refused me your son, your only son, · I will shower blessings on you, I will make your descendants as many as the stars of heaven and the grains of sand on the seashore. Your descendants shall gain possession of the gates of their enemies. All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants, as a reward for your obedience." The word of the Lord.

Psalm 15:5. 8-11

R/. Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you.

O Lord, it is you who are my portion and cup;

it is you yourself who are my prize.

I keep the Lord ever in my sight:

Since he is at my right hand, I shall stand firm

And so my heart rejoices, my soul is glad;  
even my body shall rest in safety.  
For you will not leave my soul among the dead  
nor let your beloved know decay

You will show me the path of life,  
the fullness of joy in your presence,  
at your right hand happiness for ever.

R/. Preserve me, God, I take refuge in you.

Let us pray:

O God, supreme Father of the faithful,  
who increase the children of your promise  
by pouring out the grace of adoption  
throughout the whole world  
and who through the Paschal Mystery  
make your servant Abraham father of nations,  
as once you swore,  
grant, we pray,  
that your peoples may enter worthily  
into the grace to which you call them.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## Third Reading

A reading from the book of Exodus

14:15 – 15:1

The Lord said to Moses, "Why do you cry to me so? Tell the sons of Israel to march on. For yourself, raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and part it for the sons of Israel to walk through the sea on dry ground. I for my part will make the heart of the Egyptians so stubborn that they will follow them. So shall I win myself glory at the expense of Pharaoh, of all his army, his chariots, his horsemen. · And when I have won glory for myself, at the expense of Pharaoh and his chariots and his army, the Egyptians will learn that I am The Lord." Then the angel of God, who marched at the front of the army of Israel, changed station and moved to their rear. The pillar of cloud changed station from the front to the rear of them, and remained there. · It came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. The cloud was dark, and the night passed without the armies drawing any closer the whole night long. · Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The Lord drove back the sea with a strong easterly wind all night, and he made dry land of the sea. The waters parted and the sons of Israel went on dry ground right into the sea, walls of water to right and to left of them. The Egyptians gave chase: after them they went, right into the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. · In the morning watch, The Lord looked down on the army of the Egyptians from the pillar of fire and of cloud, and threw the army into confusion. · He so clogged their chariot wheels that they could scarcely make headway. "Let us flee from the Israelites," the Egyptians cried. "The Lord is fighting for them against the Egyptians!" "Stretch out your hand over the sea," The Lord said to Moses, "that the waters may flow back on the Egyptians and their chariots and their horsemen." Moses stretched out his hand over the sea and, as day broke, the sea returned to its bed. The fleeing Egyptians marched right into it, and The Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the very middle of the sea. · The returning waters overwhelmed the chariots and the horsemen of Pharaoh's whole army, which had followed the Israelites into the sea; not a single one of them was left. But the sons of Israel had marched through the sea on dry ground, walls of water to right and to left of them. That day, The Lord rescued Israel from the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. · Israel witnessed the great act that The Lord had performed against the Egyptians, and the people venerated The Lord; they put their faith in The Lord and in Moses, his servant. It was then that Moses and the sons of Israel sang this song in honour of The Lord:

Psalm

Ex 15: 1-6. 17-18

I will sing to the Lord, glorious his triumph!  
Horse and rider he has thrown into the sea!  
The Lord is my strength, my song, my salvation.  
This is my God and I extol him,  
my father's God and I give him praise.

The Lord is a warrior! The Lord is his name.  
The chariots of Pharaoh he hurled into the sea,  
the flower of his army is drowned in the sea.  
The deeps hide them: they sank like a stone.

Your right hand, Lord, glorious in its power,  
your right hand, Lord, has shattered the enemy.  
In the greatness of your glory you crushed the foe.

You will lead them and plant them on your mountain,  
the place, O Lord, where you have made your home,  
the sanctuary, Lord, which your hands have made.  
The Lord will reign for ever and ever.

R/. I will sing to the Lord, glorious his triumph!

Let us pray:

O God, who by the light of the New Testament  
have unlocked the meaning  
of wonders worked in former times,  
so that the Red Sea prefigures the sacred font  
and the nation delivered from slavery  
foreshadows the Christian people,  
grant, we pray, that all nations,  
obtaining the privilege of Israel by merit of faith,  
may be reborn by partaking of your Spirit.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## Fourth Reading

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

54: 5-14

Thus says the Lord:

For now your creator will be your husband,  
his name, The Lord Sabaoth;  
your redeemer will be the Holy One of Israel,  
he is called the God of the whole earth.  
Yes, like a forsaken wife, distressed in spirit,  
The Lord calls you back.  
Does a man cast off the wife of his youth?  
says your God.  
I did forsake you for a brief moment,  
but with great love will I take you back.  
In excess of anger, for a moment  
I hid my face from you.  
But with everlasting love I have taken pity on you,  
says The Lord, your redeemer.  
I am now as I was in the days of Noah  
when I swore that Noah's waters  
should never flood the world again.  
So now I swear concerning my anger with you  
and the threats I made against you;  
for the mountains may depart,  
the hills be shaken,  
but my love for you will never leave you  
and my covenant of peace with you will never be shaken,  
says The Lord who takes pity on you.  
The new Jerusalem  
Unhappy creature, storm-tossed, disconsolate,  
see, I will set your stones on carbuncles  
and your foundations on sapphires.  
I will make rubies your battlements.  
your gates crystal,  
and your entire wall precious stones.  
Your sons will all be taught by The Lord.  
The prosperity of your sons will be great.  
You will be founded on integrity;  
remote from oppression, you will have nothing to fear;  
remote from terror, it will not approach you.  
The word of the Lord.

Psalm

Ps 29: 2. 4-6. 11-13.

R/. I will praise you, Lord, you have rescued me.

/. I will praise you, Lord, you have rescued me  
and have not let my enemies rejoice over me.  
O Lord, you have raised my soul from the dead,  
restored me to life from those who sink into the grave.

Sing psalms to the Lord, you who love him,  
give thanks to his holy name.  
His anger lasts but a moment; his favour through life.  
At night there are tears, but joy comes with dawn.

The Lord listened and had pity.  
The Lord came to my help.  
For me you have changed my mourning into dancing,  
O Lord my God, I will thank you for ever.

R/. I will praise you, Lord, you have rescued me.

Let us pray:

Almighty, ever living God,  
surpass for the honour of your name,  
what you pledged to the Patriarchs by reason of the faith,  
and through sacred adoption increase the children of your promise,  
so that what the Saints of old never doubted would come to pass  
your church may now see in great part fulfilled.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## Fifth Reading

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

55: 1-11

Thus says the Lord: Oh, come to the water all you who are thirsty; though you have no money, come! Buy corn without money, and eat, and, at no cost, wine and milk. Why spend money on what is not bread, your wages on what fails to satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and you will have good things to eat and rich food to enjoy. Pay attention, come to me; listen, and your soul will live. With you I will make an everlasting covenant out of the favours promised to David. See, I have made of you a witness to the peoples, a leader and a master of the nations. See, you will summon a nation you never knew, those unknown will come hurrying to you, for the sake of The Lord your God, of the Holy One of Israel who will glorify you. Seek the Lord while he is still to be found, call to him while he is still near. Let the wicked man abandon his way, the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn back to The Lord who will take pity on him, to our God who is rich in forgiving; for my thoughts are not your thoughts, my ways not your ways-it is the Lord who speaks. Yes, the heavens are as high above earth as my ways are above your ways, my thoughts above your thoughts. Yes, as the rain and the snow come down from the heavens and do not return without watering the earth, making it yield and giving growth to provide seed for the sower and bread for the eating, · so the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do. The word of the Lord.

Psalm

Is 12: 2-6

R/. With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

Truly God is my salvation'

I trust, I shall not fear.

For the Lord is my strength, my song,  
he became my saviour.

With joy you will draw water  
from the wells of salvation.

Give thanks to the Lord, give praise to his name!  
Make his mighty deeds known to the peoples,  
declare the greatness of his name.

Sing a psalm to the Lord  
for he has done glorious deeds,  
make them known to all the earth!  
People of Zion, sing and shout for joy  
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

Let us pray:

Almighty ever-living God, sole hope of the world,  
who by the preaching of your prophets  
unveiled the mysteries of this present age,  
graciously increase the longing of your people,  
for only at the prompting of your grace  
do the faithful progress in any kind of virtue.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen

## Sixth Reading

A reading from the prophet Baruch

3: 9-15. 32 – 4:4

Listen, Israel, to commands that bring life; hear, and learn what knowledge means. Why, Israel, why are you in the country of your enemies, growing older and older in an alien land, sharing defilement with the dead, reckoned with those who go to Sheol? Because you have forsaken the fountain of wisdom. Had you walked in the way of God, you would have lived in peace for ever. Learn where knowledge is, where strength, where understanding, and so learn where length of days is, where life, where the light of the eyes and where peace. But who has found out where she lives, who has entered her treasure house? But the One who knows all knows her, he has grasped her with his own intellect, he has set the earth firm for ever and filled it with four-footed beasts, he sends the light-and it goes, he recalls it-and trembling it obeys; the stars shine joyfully at their set times: when he calls them, they answer, "Here we are"; they gladly shine for their creator. It is he who is our God, no other can compare with him. He has grasped the whole way of knowledge, and confided it to his servant Jacob, to Israel his well-beloved; so causing her to appear on earth and move among men.

This is the book of the commandments of God, the Law that stands for ever; those who keep her live, those who desert her die. Turn back, Jacob, seize her, in her radiance make your way to light: do not yield your glory to another, your privilege to a people not your own. Israel, blessed are we : what pleases God has been revealed to us. The word of the Lord.

Psalm

18: 8-11.

R/. You have the message of eternal life, O Lord.

The law of the Lord is perfect,  
it revives the soul.

The rule of the Lord is to be trusted,  
it gives wisdom to the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right,  
they gladden the heart.

The command of the Lord is clear,  
it gives light to the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is holy,  
abiding for ever.

The decrees of the Lord are truth  
and all of them just.

They are more to be desired than gold,  
than the purest of gold  
and sweeter are they than honey,  
than honey from the comb.

Let us pray: O God, who constantly increase your Church by your call to the nations, graciously grant to those who wash clean in the waters of Baptism the assurance of your unfailing protection. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Seventh Reading

A reading from the prophet Ezekiel

36: 16-28

The word of the Lord was addressed to me as follows: "Son of man, the members of the House of Israel used to live in their own land, but they defiled it by their conduct and actions. I then discharged my fury at them because of the blood they shed in their land and the idols with which they defiled it. I scattered them among the nations and dispersed them in foreign countries. I sentenced them as their conduct and actions deserved. And now they have profaned my holy name among the nations where they have gone, so that people say of them, 'These are the people of the Lord; they have been exiled from his land .' But I have been concerned about my holy name, which the House of Israel has profaned among the nations where they have gone. And so, say to the House of Israel, 'The Lord says this: I am not doing this for your sake, House of Israel, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. · I mean to display the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned among them. And the nations will learn that I am the Lord, it is the Lord who speaks- when I display my holiness for your sake before their eyes. · Then I am going to take you from among the nations and gather you together from all the foreign countries, and bring you home to your own land. · I shall pour clean water over you and you will be cleansed; I shall cleanse you of all your defilement and all your idols. I shall give you a new heart, and put a new spirit in you; I shall remove the heart of stone from your bodies and give you a heart of flesh instead. I shall put my spirit in you, and make you keep my laws and sincerely respect my observances. · You will live in the land which I gave your ancestors. You shall be my people and I will be your God. The word of the Lord.

Psalms

41: 3, 5; 42:3, 4.

R/. Like the deer that yearns for running streams, so my soul is yearning for you, my God.

My soul is thirsting for God,  
the God of my life;  
when can I enter and see  
the face of God?

These things will I remember  
as I pour out my soul:  
how I would lead the rejoicing crowd  
into the house of God,  
amid cries of gladness and thanksgiving,  
the throng wild with joy.

O send forth your light and your truth;  
let these be my guide.  
Let them bring me to your holy mountain  
to the place where you dwell.

And I will come to the altar of God,  
the God of my joy.  
My redeemer, I will thank on the harp,  
O God, my God.

Let us pray

O God of unchanging power and eternal light, look with favour on the wondrous mystery of the whole Church and serenely accomplish the work of human salvation, which you planned from all eternity; may the whole world know and see that what was cast down is raised up, what had become old is made new, and all things are restored to integrity through Christ, just as by him they came into being. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen,

### **GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST**

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.

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

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.

## Epistle

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

6: 3-11

When we were baptized in Christ Jesus we were baptized in his death; · in other words, when we were baptized we went into the tomb with him and joined him in death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father's glory, we too might live a new life. If in union with Christ we have imitated his death, we shall also imitate him in his resurrection. · We must realize that our former selves have been crucified with him to destroy this sinful body and to free us from the slavery of sin. When a man dies, of course, he has finished with sin. But we believe that having died with Christ we shall return to life with him: Christ, as we know, having been raised from the dead will never die again. Death has no power over him any more. When he died, he died, once for all, to sin, so his life now is life with God; and in that way, you too must consider yourselves to be dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus. The word of the Lord.

Psalm

Ps 117: 1-2. 16-17. 22-23

R/. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,  
for his love has no end.

Let the sons of Israel say:

'His love has no end.'

The Lord's right hand has triumphed;  
his right hand raised me up.

I shall not die, I shall live  
and recount his deeds.

The stone which the builders rejected  
has become the corner stone.

This is the work of the Lord,  
a marvel in our eyes

## Gospel (Year A)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

28: 1-10

After the sabbath, and toward dawn on the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala and the other Mary went to visit the sepulchre. And all at once there was a violent earthquake, for the angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled away the stone and sat on it. His face was like lightning, his robe white as snow. The guards were so shaken, so frightened of him, that they were like dead men. But the angel spoke; and he said to the women, "There is no need for you to be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. · He is not here, for he has risen, as he said he would. Come and see the place where he lay, then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has risen from the dead and now he is going before you to Galilee; it is there you will see him.' Now I have told you." Filled with awe and great joy the women came quickly away from the tomb and ran to tell the disciples. And there, coming to meet them, was Jesus. "Greetings," he said. And the women came up to him and, falling down before him, clasped his feet. · Then Jesus said to

them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers that they must leave for Galilee; they will see me there." The Gospel of the Lord.

## **WHERE TO FIND RESURRECTION**

Fr Ron Rolheiser OMI. APRIL 6, 2015

Something there is that needs a crucifixion. Everything that's good eventually gets scapegoated and crucified. How? By that curious, perverse dictate somehow innate within human life that assures that there's always someone or something that cannot leave well enough alone, but, for reasons of its own, must hunt down and lash out at what's good. What's good, what's of God, will always at some point be misunderstood, envied, hated, pursued, falsely accused, and eventually nailed to some cross. Every body of Christ inevitably suffers the same fate as Jesus: death through misunderstanding, ignorance, and jealousy.

But there's a flipside as well: Resurrection always eventually trumps crucifixion. What's good eventually triumphs. Thus, while nothing that's of God will avoid crucifixion, no body of Christ stays in the tomb for long. God always rolls back the stone and, soon enough, new life bursts forth and we see why that original life had to be crucified. ("Wasn't it necessary that the Christ should so have to suffer and die?") Resurrection invariably follows crucifixion. Every crucified body will rise again. Our hope takes its root in that.

But how does this happen? Where do we see the resurrection? How do we experience resurrection after a crucifixion?

Scripture is subtle, though clear, on this. Where can we expect to experience resurrection? The gospel tell us that, on the morning of the resurrection, the women-followers of Jesus set out for the tomb of Jesus, carrying spices, expecting to anoint and embalm a dead body. Well-intentioned but misguided, what they find is not a dead body, but an empty tomb and an angel challenging them with these words: "Why are you looking for the living among the dead? Go instead into Galilee and you will find him there!"

Go instead into Galilee. Why Galilee? What's Galilee? And how do we get there?

In the gospels, Galilee is not simply a geographical location, a place on a map. It is first of all a place in the heart. As well, Galilee refers to the dream and to the road of discipleship that the disciples once walked with Jesus and to that place and time when their hearts most burned with hope and enthusiasm. And now, after the crucifixion, just when they feel that the dream is dead, that their faith is only fantasy, they are told to go back to the place where it all began: "Go back to Galilee. He will meet you there!"

And they do go back to Galilee, both to the geographical location and to that special place in their hearts where once burned the dream of discipleship. And just as promised, Jesus appears to them. He doesn't appear exactly as he was before, or as frequently as they would like him to, but he does appear as more than a ghost and a memory. The Christ that appears to them after the resurrection is in a different modality, but he's physical enough to eat fish in their presence, real enough to be touched as a human being, and powerful enough to change their lives forever. Ultimately that's what the resurrection asks us to do: To go back to Galilee, to return to the dream, hope, and discipleship that had once inflamed us but has now been lost through disillusionment.

This parallels what happens on the road to Emmaus in Luke's gospel, where we are told that on the day of the resurrection, two disciples were walking away from Jerusalem towards Emmaus, with their faces downcast. An entire spirituality could be unpacked from that simple line: For Luke, Jerusalem means the dream, the hope, and the religious centre from which all is to begin and where ultimately, all is to culminate. And the disciples are "walking away" from this place, away from their dream, towards Emmaus (Emmaus was a Roman Spa), a place of human comfort, a Las Vegas, or Monte Carlo. Since their dream has been crucified, the disciples are understandably discouraged and are walking away from it, towards some human solace, despairing in their hope: "But we had hoped!"

They never get to Emmaus. Jesus appears to them on the road, reshapes their hope in the light of their disillusionment, and turns them back towards Jerusalem.

That is one of the essential messages of Easter: Whenever we are discouraged in our faith, whenever our hopes seem to be crucified, we need to go back to Galilee and Jerusalem, that is, back to the dream and the road of discipleship that we had embarked upon before things went wrong. The temptation of course, whenever the kingdom doesn't seem to work, is to abandon discipleship for human consolation, to head off instead for Emmaus, for the consolation of Las Vegas or Monte Carlo.

But, as we know, we never quite get to Las Vegas or Monte Carlo. In one guise or another, Christ always meets us on the road to those places, burns holes in our hearts, explains our latest crucifixion to us, and sends us back – and to our abandoned discipleship. Once there, it all makes sense again.

## **The Passion transposed into today's situation**

Who said there wouldn't be a Holy Week?

Haven't you seen the enormous procession of people, without tunic, belt or hood, having tested positive for coronavirus?

Don't you see the Via Crucis of the care workers climbing the Calvary of the pandemic, overwhelmed by the power and pain of heartache?

Those who said that the Nazarene would not come out for this Holy Week haven't seen the doctors with their white coats and their sensitive spirits, who carry the cross of the sorrow of those who are afflicted.

Can't you see how many scientists are sweating blood and water, as at Gethsemane, as they try to find a vaccine or similar treatment?

Do not say that Jesus does not walk the streets this year, when so many people have to work in order to bring nourishment and medicines to the entire world.

Have you not seen the number of people from Cyrene offering themselves in one way or another to carry the heaviest of crosses?

Don't you see how many people, how many like Veronica, have exposed themselves to the infection in order to wipe the face of people affected by the virus?

Who said that Jesus would not fall to the ground each time that we hear the chilling figures about yet more victims?

Isn't it the vast quantity of care homes, filled with elderly people who are most at risk, and their carers, who are living the Passion?

Isn't it like a crown of thorns for children who have to live through this crisis in lockdown, without really understanding and without being able to run around in the parks and streets?

Don't they feel themselves unjustly condemned, all the schools, universities and so many shops that have been forced to close?

All the peoples of the earth, have they not been beaten and flagellated by the scourge of this virus?

Aren't they just like the hand-washing Pontius Pilate, those in charge who are only looking to derive some political advantage from the situation?

Aren't they suffering, powerless like the disciples without their Master, all those families confined to their houses, so many of them with problems, not knowing how and when all this will end?

The sorrowful face of Mary, doesn't it reflect the faces of so many mothers and family members who suffer through the death and distancing of their loved ones?

Isn't it like being stripped of their garments, the anguish of so many families and small businesses that are watching their finances vanish?

The agony of Jesus, isn't it found in the lack of ventilators in the intensive care units of so many countries?

Do not say "there will be no Holy Week", do not say it, because the drama of the Passion has surely never been so real and so true.

**Miquel-Àngel Ferrés**

*Originally written in Catalan; this English version from a French translation*

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## **SOME HYMNS:**

**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

2) Lo! Jesus meets us.  
Risen from the tomb:  
lovingly he greets us.  
scatters fear & gloom.  
Let the Church with gladness  
hymns of triumph sing.  
for her Lord now liveth;  
death has lost its sting **Chorus**

3) No more we doubt thee, glorious prince of life;  
life is nought without thee: aid us in our strife.  
Make us more than conqu'rors through thy deathless love;  
bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above. **Chorus**

### **The light of Christ has come into the world (2x)**

1. All men must be born again  
to see the kingdom of God  
The water and the Spirit  
bring new life in God's love

2. God gave up His only Son  
out of love for the world  
So that all men who believe  
in Him will live forever

3. The light of God has come to us  
so that we might have salvation  
From the darkness of our sins  
we walk into glory with Christ Jesus.

**1 Jesus Christ is ris'n today, Alleluia!**  
our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!  
who did once upon the cross Alleluia!  
suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia!

2 Hymns of praise then let us sing Alleluia!  
unto Christ our heav'nly King, Alleluia!  
who endured the cross and grave, Alleluia!  
sinners to redeem and save. Alleluia!

3 But the pains which he endured, Alleluia!  
our salvation have procured; Alleluia!  
now above the sky he's King, Alleluia!  
where the angels ever sing. Alleluia!

4 Sing we to our God above Alleluia!  
praise eternal as his love; Alleluia!  
praise him, all ye heav'nly host, Alleluia!  
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia!

**Verse 1**

**Now the green blade riseth from the buried grain,**  
Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;  
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:  
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.

**Verse 2**

In the grave they laid him, love whom men had slain,  
Thinking that never he would wake again.  
Laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:  
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.

**Verse 3**

Forth he came at Easter, like the risen grain,  
He that for three days in the grave had lain.  
Quick from the dead my risen Lord is seen:  
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.

**Verse 4**

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,  
Thy touch can call us back to life again;  
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:  
Love is come again, like wheat that springeth green.