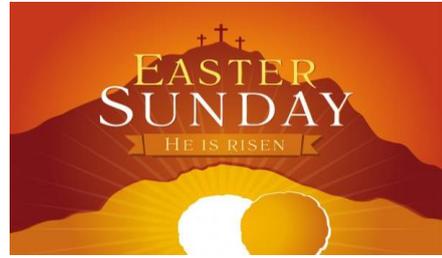




Heacham Parish Church



Easter Day – 4th April 2021

Adrian plays on the Church organ his short improvisation on Handel's tune 'Maccabaeus' thinking of the words 'Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son'

As we gather in our homes, together yet apart, we meet in the presence of God, so let us come together to be God's people and to worship.

Alleluia, Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed, Alleluia.

Alleluia, Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed, Alleluia.

Alleluia, Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed, Alleluia.

This is the day when Jesus Christ passed through death to life. Throughout the world Christians celebrate the awesome power of God. As we hear his word and proclaim all that God has done, we can be confident that we shall share his victory over death and live with him for ever.

The Easter Candle is lit

May the light of Christ, rising in glory, banish all darkness from our hearts and minds.

The light of Christ

Thanks be to God

Song: **Thine be the glory**

sung & played by lots of familiar faces and voices - our large virtual choir and musicians

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.*

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

No more we doubt Thee, glorious Prince of life;
life is nought 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

Confession

Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord, we come to you in sorrow for our sins, and confess to you our weaknesses and unbelief.

We have lived by our own strength, and not by the power of your resurrection.

In your mercy, forgive us

Lord, hear us and help us.

We have lived by the light of our own eyes, as faithless and not believing.

In your mercy, forgive us

Lord, hear us and help us.

We have lived for this world alone, and doubted our home in heaven.
In your mercy, forgive us
Lord, hear us and help us.

May the God of love and power forgive you and free you from your sins,
heal and strengthen you by his spirit, and raise you to new life in Christ
our Lord. **Amen**

The Collect for Easter Day

Lord of all life and power, who through the mighty resurrection of your
Son overcame the old order of sin and death to make all things new in
him: grant that we, being dead to sin and alive to you in Christ Jesus,
may reign with him in glory; to whom with you and the Holy Spirit be
praise and honour and glory and might, now and in all eternity. **Amen**

Bible Reading: John 20 1-18 read by John Bird

Reflection by Pip Lawrence

Let's pray.

Father on this special Sunday we thank you that you called us from
darkness into your glorious light. Help us now as we think about your
word, for we ask in Jesus' precious name. **Amen.**

I think it is only right as I begin this reflection that I declare an interest.
John is my favourite gospel. Chapter 20 is one of my most favourite
chapters in the gospel. I have chosen it to be read at my funeral. As far
as I am concerned this particular account of the resurrection is so much
more uplifting, moving, and personal than all the other accounts. It
touches me at a deeply connected level. It speaks of hope in the midst of
great distress. It brings comfort in the face of colossal disturbance. It
brings peace in a space of great change and upheaval. All necessary
requirements on that first Easter morning so long ago and equally needed
for us all today.

Mary has arrived at Jesus's tomb, probably earlier I suspect than the other ladies mentioned in the other accounts. We are told it was still dark. It is easy to assume that Mary had not slept that night. Loss and grief have a habit of robbing us of sleep. Despite that, Mary goes to the tomb. Those of us who have lost loved ones will understand the desire to be close to what remains.

When Mary arrives at the tomb, things are not as expected. We are all, no doubt, aware of how these well told events unfold. Mary runs to tell the disciples. Peter and John race to the tomb and discover it is indeed empty. Peter is the first to actually enter the tomb and discover the strips of linen lying there and the burial cloth folded. The disciples leave the tomb. Mary is left weeping, unable to tear herself away. 'As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white seated where Jesus's body had been'. What follows is a short conversation which Mary was willing to have if it would lead her to The Lord's body. Aware of another presence, Mary is asked again why she is crying and also who she was looking for. Thinking he is the gardener, as she certainly was not expecting to see Jesus alive, Mary is finally rewarded with an encounter with the living Lord. I particularly love the verse which starts Jesus said to her, "Mary". That first Easter morning Jesus reveals his resurrection by simply saying Mary's name. Instant recognition takes place and Mary is sent to declare the good news to the devastated disciples.

I have preached on this passage several times. It never gets old; it always thrills me and surprises me. For the first time I found myself thinking of the death of Jesus' friend Lazarus and the difference in the accounts. [John 11:v38-44] Lazarus comes out, with his grave clothes on, at the call of Jesus. Jesus clearly has a different resurrection, the grave clothes are left behind in the tomb, even folded. Lazarus would die again, Jesus lives forever.

So, what can we take away from this lovely passage this Easter Sunday of 2021; when the whole world feels like an alien place? When we have spent an entire year living with all manner of restrictions, fears, loneliness, pain, and separation. Let's think again of the beginning of verse 16 where Jesus calls Mary's name. Let's pause for a moment, wait on Jesus, and think of our Lord calling our name. Listen in your heart for Jesus to say your name.....

As Mary is called by name because she is known by Jesus, we can all rejoice this Easter Sunday because Jesus knows us too. He knows each and every one of us. He knows what kind of year we have had. He knows what we need to keep going. We are all shielded by His love and care, no matter what has unfolded, He has stood beside us. Are we comforted by this? Do we recognise the call from Jesus? I pray that we all do, that the thought of Jesus knowing us, calling our name, is something that is fundamental to our being. Something that enables us to keep going despite the current situation.

Like the song says, "Because he lives I can face tomorrow, because he lives all fear is gone; because I know who holds the future, life is worth the living just because he lives."

Amen Christ is risen.

Profession of Faith

Brothers and sisters, I ask you to profess together 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.**

Prayers of Intercession, led by Sue Bird

Our Loving Heavenly Father, on this Easter Day we come together to offer praise and adoration for Jesus – Jesus risen, alive, powerful, and victorious, the salvation of the world, He is risen indeed – Alleluia. Lord, without the resurrection of your son, our faith would be empty and without hope, but he is alive, and we rejoice in the knowledge that in Jesus all that separates, injures, and destroys has been overcome by that which unites, heals, and creates.

Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer**

We think of your church today celebrating in socially distanced clusters all over the world. Our language, race, and nationalities may be different but our love for you is one and our praise for you united. We pray that your spirit may guide and strengthen us all in mission and service to you, to our community, and to the world outside in whatever way we can each contribute. Thank you for all our NHS staff, front line workers, and hospital Chaplains for their amazing contribution during this pandemic. Thank you for our Veronica and her leadership, for her wisdom, compassion, and her mission for us all here in this place. Continue to inspire and uphold her Lord.

Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer**

Lord, on this special day grant us peace in your world for countries where there is war and communities are broken. We remember before you the situation in Yemen, Myanmar, Syria, Northern Ethiopia, and the Uyghur communities in China. We are shocked and saddened when we see the poverty, cruelty and suffering on our screens, and we feel helpless.

Thank you Lord that when we are silenced by the suffering of others, you are praying through us and when we feel helpless to act we can be strengthened because you are with the Father praying for us.

Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer**

We pray a special prayer for Elizabeth our Queen. Father she must grow weary of her duty to our country, yet she continues giving the service she has always been committed to. We ask that you will uphold and strengthen her, Lord, through this difficult time and that which is yet to come.

Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer**

We remember before you Lord, all those in our hearts that need your touch today. For all those that are prayed for regularly and especially for those that get forgotten. Hold them close Lord so that they experience the love, comfort, and peace that only you can give.

On this Easter morning Lord, we are reminded that death could not hold you and because of your resurrection, we too, can live. Thank you that the grave is only a journey into the presence of God. You have removed the sting of death and empowered this thing called life. Now we will live in your presence for ever.

Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer**

God of all creation, draw us forward and away from limited certainty into the immense world of your love. Give us the capacity to, even for a moment, taste the richness of the feast you give us. Give us the peace to live with uncertainty, with questions, with doubts. Help us to experience the resurrection anew with open wonder and an increasing ability to see you in the people of Easter.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your son our Saviour Jesus Christ.

We pray together the Lord's Prayer

**Our Father which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today 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.**

The Peace

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said 'Peace be with you.' Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia!

The peace of the Lord be always with you

*Song: **Led like a lamb to the slaughter***

sung & played by Hilary, Lesley, Steph, Karen, and Terry

Led like a lamb to the slaughter
in silence and shame
there on Your back You carried a world
of violence and pain
Bleeding, dying, bleeding, dying

*You're alive, You're alive
You have risen! Alleluia!
And the power and the glory is given,
Alleluia! Jesus, to You*

At break of dawn, poor Mary
still weeping she came,
when through her grief she heard Your voice,
now speaking her name.
Mary! Master! Mary! Master!

You're alive, You're alive

At the right hand of the Father,
now seated on high,
You have begun Your eternal reign
of justice and joy
Glory, glory, glory, glory

You're alive, You're alive

Closing Prayers

Alleluia. Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
He has given us new life and hope. He has raised Jesus from the dead.

God has claimed us as his own.
He has brought us out of darkness. He has brought light to the world.

Alleluia. Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Blessing

God the Father, by whose love Christ was raised from the dead, open to you who believe the gates of everlasting life. **Amen.**

God the Son, who in bursting from the grave won a glorious victory, give you joy as you share the Easter faith. **Amen.**

God the Holy Spirit, who filled the disciples with the life of the risen lord,
empower you and fill you with Christ's peace. **Amen**

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always. **Amen**

Dismissal

He is not here. He is risen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Alleluia. Alleluia.

In the name of Christ. Amen. Alleluia, Alleluia.

*Adrian plays on the Church organ 'The Hallelujah Chorus' from Handel's
'Messiah'.*

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