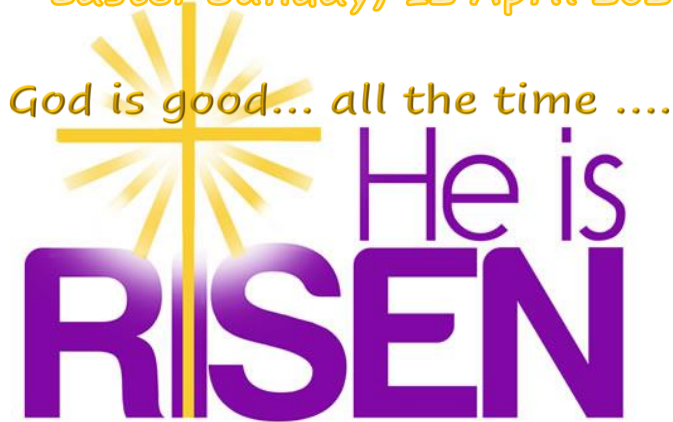




Join others in our parish and beyond on Sunday, from 10:30am (or at any other time that suits you) to worship God, in the comfort of your home.

Easter Sunday, 12 April 2020



We join Mary Magdalene at Jesus' tomb - in a prayer entitled, 'Jesus is risen'. Let us pray

Where is my Lord? They have taken Him away. All I see is a tomb, a place that is empty. And just when I need Him, and long for his voice, even His body would not wait for my tears. Shut away in a box, He has conquered their coffin. Shut away in a book, He fulfils, the Living Word. Shut away in our concepts, He shatters such shackles. No prison can hold Him; no tomb can thwart God's miracle. His life is our liberty; His life changed my life. No dying can rob me of what He has given; once blind, now I see. Hallelujah! His promise: 'in the day when the hearts of men fail them for fear, then look up, little flock, your redemption draws near.'

Let all creation give thanks to the Risen Lord.

**We give thanks to the Risen Lord!**

Filled with His praises

**We give thanks to the Risen Lord.**

He is our Shepherd, and we are His sheep

**We give thanks to the Risen Lord!**

Stepping out boldly, we claim resurrection

**We give thanks to the risen Lord.**

#### The Lord's Prayer

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

#### Song: Because He Lives

1. God sent His son, they called Him Jesus  
He came to love, heal and forgive  
He lived and died to buy my pardon  
An empty grave is there to prove my saviour lives

**Because He lives, I can face tomorrow  
Because He lives, all fear is gone  
Because I know He holds the future  
And life is worth the living, just because He lives**

2. How sweet to hold a new-born baby  
And feel the pride and joy He gives  
But greater still the calm assurance  
This child can face uncertain day, because He lives

**Because He lives, I can face tomorrow  
Because He lives, all fear is gone  
Because I know He holds the future  
And life is worth the living, just because He lives**

3. And then one day, I'll cross the river  
I'll fight life's final war with pain  
And then, as death gives way to victory  
I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know He reigns

**Because He lives, I can face tomorrow  
Because He lives, all fear is gone  
Because I know He holds the future  
And life is worth the living, just because He lives  
And life is worth the living, just because He lives**

Source: CCLI Song # 16880  
CCLI Licence No. 1198082

#### BIBLE READING: Matthew 28:1-7 (GNB)

##### Jesus Has Risen

<sup>1</sup> After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. <sup>2</sup> There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. <sup>4</sup> The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup> The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup> Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."

## Reflection

On this Easter Sunday morning, we join two women at the empty tomb. We hear the announcement of the angel: **'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee.'** This is good news. This is the greatest news of all time! Christ is alive. He is still with us, for us and goes before us in our good and lean times. He goes before us in our doubts or when our friends fail us. Jesus goes before us in sickness and in conflict. He goes before us in sorrow and in death. He goes before us, as He says (John 14:3) 'to heaven to prepare a place for us

But the risen Christ does not just go before us, He invites us to meet Him in Galilee. It was in Galilee that Jesus began His ministry. In Galilee, Jesus walked along the shores of the lake as the fishermen were casting their nets. There, He called them, and there they left everything to follow Him. It was also in Galilee that the disciples would have returned in search for a safe hiding place, among their relatives.

This invitation to join Jesus in Galilee was first sent out to these friends (who, I should add, denied and deserted Jesus during His time of great need). It is also sent out to us who, during tough times like this, have fears, questions and doubts of our own. As we journey to Galilee to meet with Jesus, we travel in good company of the two women and disciples who, though they had received the good news that Jesus was alive, set out in fear, and in the hope of seeing Jesus. As we join them on this journey, we hear the words of the angel: "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; He has risen, just as He said.

We travel without fear and in hope to Galilee, to our Galilees (the places where our journeys with Jesus began). I should add that for some, Galilee is not a physical place. It is a situation, a frame of mind or a choice. For some, Galilee is a difficult place, a place of pain, hurt or abuse, a place of broken promises and unfulfilled expectations. Whatever or wherever our Galilee is, the joy-filled and hope-filled message of Easter is the promise made to us that Christ is not only there when we arrive, He has gone ahead of us, to meet with us there.

Lastly, on this Easter Sunday, you and I are invited return – to return again without fear to a place where the loving and risen Christ waits for us. We are invited to come to a place of peace of Christ, a place where Christ seeks to enrich our personal relationship with Him, to forgive our sins, to address our fears and anxieties (if there any) and to enrich and empower our resolve to serve Him and His people. This is our Galilee. This is the

place where the risen Christ asks us to join Him this morning. He asks us go back there, to see Him and to become witnesses of His resurrection. Amen.

## Prayer (from Christian Aid)

Love never fails. Even in the darkest moments, love gives hope. Love compels us to stand together in prayer with our neighbours near and far. Love compels us to give and act as one. As we pray in our individual homes – around the nation and around the world – we are a united family. We bring before you in thanksgiving and prayer for protection; the health workers tending the seriously ill; the scientists working on a vaccination; the researchers analysing data and identifying trends; the media outlets working to communicate reality; the supermarket workers, hygiene and sanitation providers; the good news stories of recoveries and effective planning; the singing from balconies by locked-down communities; the recognition that isolation doesn't need to mean loneliness; the notes through letterboxes offering help and support; the internet and telephones and technology that connects; the awakened appreciation of what is truly important; those who are unwell and concerned for loved ones; those who were already very anxious; those immune suppressed or compromised; those vulnerable because of underlying conditions; those in the 'most at risk to coronavirus' categories; those watching their entire income stream dry up; those who have no choice but to go out to work; those who are afraid to be at home; those who are more lonely than they've ever been; those who are bereaved and grieving. God be our healer, comfort and protection, be our strength, shield and provision; be our security, safety and close companion. And raise up your Church to be your well-washed hands and faithful feet to be present to the pain to respond with love in action - if even from a safe distance. God, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

## Closing Hymn: Thine be the Glory

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.**

## Final prayer/ benediction

And now to God who is able to keep us from falling, and lift us from the dark valley of despair to the bright mountain of hope, from the midnight of desperation to the day break of joy; from the sunset and darkness of Good Friday to the dawn and light of Easter; to God be power and authority, for ever and ever. Amen.

(slightly adapted from Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-68))

**God is good ...  
all the time...**