

# Catholic Parish of Blackiriars

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Year A

Under the care of the Dominican Fathers



## VERITAS



# Easter

### HOLY ROSARY CHURCH

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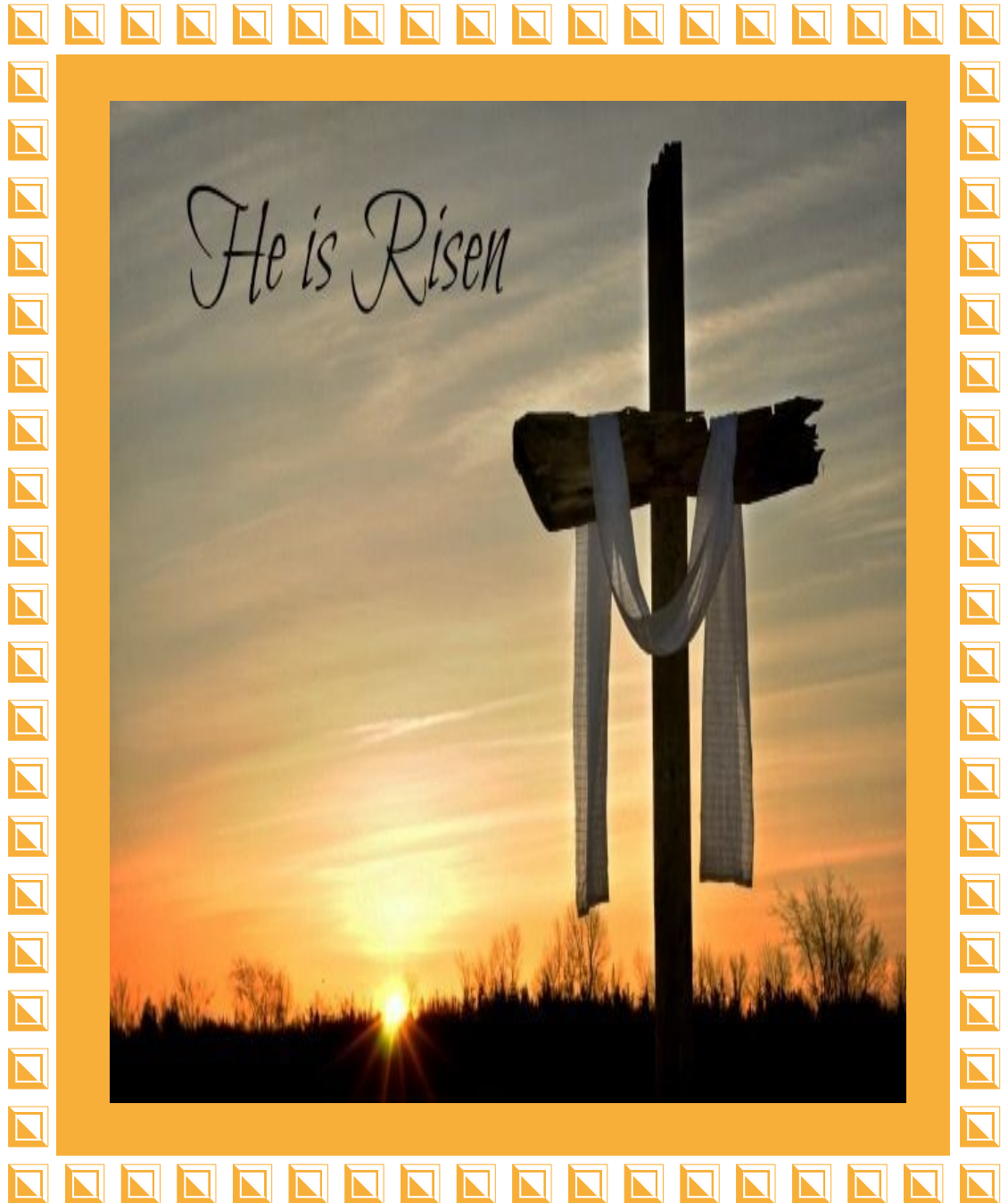
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## ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

### Entrance Antiphon

I have risen, and I am with you still,  
alleluia.  
You have laid your hand upon me,  
alleluia.  
Too wonderful for me,  
this knowledge, alleluia, alleluia.



## FIRST READING

### First Reading

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Peter proceeded to speak and said:  
“You know what has happened all over Judea,  
beginning in Galilee after the baptism  
that John preached,  
how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth  
with the Holy Spirit and power.  
He went about doing good  
and healing all those oppressed by the devil,  
for God was with him.  
We are witnesses of all that he did  
both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem.  
They put him to death by hanging him on a tree.  
This man God raised on the third day and granted that he  
be visible, not to all the people, but to us,  
the witnesses chosen by God in advance,  
who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.  
He commissioned us to preach to the people  
and testify that he is the one appointed by God  
as judge of the living and the dead.  
To him all the prophets bear witness,  
that everyone who believes in him  
will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.”

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

### Responsorial Psalm

Ps 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

**(R) This is the day the Lord has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad.**

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,  
for his mercy endures forever.  
Let the house of Israel say,  
“His mercy endures forever.”

**(R) This is the day the Lord has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad.**

“The right hand of the LORD has struck with power;  
the right hand of the LORD is exalted.  
I shall not die, but live,  
and declare the works of the LORD.”

**(R) This is the day the Lord has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad.**

The stone which the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone.  
By the LORD has this been done;  
it is wonderful in our eyes.

**(R) This is the day the Lord has made;  
let us rejoice and be glad.**

## SECOND READING

### Second Reading

Colossians 3:1-4

Brothers and sisters:  
If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above,  
where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.  
Think of what is above, not of what is on earth.  
For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in  
God. When Christ your life appears,  
then you too will appear with him in glory.

## SEQUENCE

### Victimae Paschali Laudes

Christians, to the Paschal victim  
Offer your thankful praises!  
A Lamb the sheep redeems:  
Christ, who only is sinless,  
Reconciles sinners to the Father.  
Death and life have contended  
in that combat stupendous:  
The Prince of life, who died, reigns immortal.  
Speak, Mary, declaring  
What you saw, wayfaring:  
“The tomb of Christ, who is living,  
The glory of Jesus’ resurrection;  
Bright angels attesting,  
The shroud and napkin resting.  
Yes, Christ my hope is arisen;  
To Galilee he will go before you.”  
Christ indeed from death is risen, our new life obtaining;  
Have mercy, victor King, ever reigning!  
Amen. Alleluia.

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

### Gospel Acclamation

1 Corinthians 5:7b-82

### Alleluia, alleluia!

Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed;  
let us then feast with joy in the Lord.

### Alleluia.



On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him." So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.

## VIGIL GOSPEL READING

## Vigil Gospel Reading

Matthew 28:1-10

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, approached, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing was white as snow. The guards were shaken with fear of him and became like dead men. Then the angel said to the women in reply, "Do not be afraid! I know that you are seeking Jesus the crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him.' Behold, I have told you." Then they went away quickly from the tomb, fearful yet overjoyed, and ran to announce this to his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them on their way and greeted them. They approached, embraced his feet, and did him homage. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

<http://www.ibrevariary.com/m2/lettire.php?s=lettire>

## Easter Vigil

## THE QUEST FOR MEANING



As we approach this Easter eve we do so not before the blazing fire from which we light the paschal candle, nor will we hear in our ears the proclamation of God's salvation in the variety of readings for this vigil of the Lord, neither shall we feel the cold sprinkle of the newly minted baptismal water. This palpable absence of the paschal rites leads us in our isolation to probe the deeper meaning of our celebration and indeed the deeper meaning of our very existence.

At the heart of all of this isolation is perhaps a palpable fear. Since Western societies have discarded God nature abhors a vacuum, where there is no faith, no religion, other things take their place. In our affluent western societies we have replaced God with a lot of poor shoddy substitutes. Now in our isolation the diversions of the materialism we have all come to embrace have been robbed from us; a nice meal at a restaurant, the hearty barracking for the football team, all gone.

Yet, the problem however is deeper; fear is merely a symptom of the real crisis, a crisis of meaning. Our western "so called" culture is very much agnostic about life's purpose. Man without an acknowledgement of God descends into a pit of chaos where one's life plan has to be concocted, made up; there is no objective meaning to life.

For the citizen of the so called civilised West everyone supposedly has license to write their own story, unfortunately not everyone has the means to do so and it is this inability to write one's own personal story that creates the tension and the violence we see on our TV screens and on the net daily. This is the state of things today in Australia and throughout the Western world.

Pope Benedict recently addressed this crisis of meaning in his analysis of the Abuse Crisis in the Church, he says:

*A world without God can only be a world without meaning. For where, then, does everything that is come from? In any case, it has no spiritual purpose. It is somehow simply there and has neither any goal nor any sense. Then there are no standards of good or evil. Then only what is stronger than the other can assert itself. Power is then the only principle.*

*Truth does not count, it actually does not exist. Only if things have a spiritual reason, are intended and conceived — only if there is a Creator God who is good and wants the good — can the life of man also have meaning.*

At the Easter Vigil we acknowledge that life does have a meaning. Fear has no place in the Christian heart. We acknowledge that hatred, violence, war, poverty even this plague that scourges us right now is consumed in what we celebrate.

Our celebration is about victory over darkness, victory over fear, victory over selfishness, victory over death. Our celebration of Christ Jesus' resurrection from the dead gives meaning to everything we've commemorated so far: the Last Supper, the institution of the Eucharist, the institution of the Priesthood, the sacrificial death on the Cross all find their meaning in what we celebrate—RESURRECTION.

The perennial question that has puzzled philosophers, artists, politicians and the man on the street is, what is life's purpose?—For us Christians this question is answered by an empty tomb. Jesus Christ is raised from the dead. Let us be clear, this is not just a mere resuscitation, this is not just some kind of celestial CPR that has occurred, no. What we celebrate is in a sense the termination of all things. All the roads of our human existence lead to Christ and his resurrection.

The resurrection is a demonstration of the human dimension touching the divine. It is this rationale then that gives meaning to our lives as Christians. The resurrection of Christ from the dead is a destruction of mortality but not so as to continue to live this terrestrial existence; rather it is the dynamic invitation of God to man so that man may be totally fulfilled in God and as a god.

In the light of Jesus' resurrection we as Christians look forward to this being our destiny too—bodily resurrection into glory, living a new life in God, not the same life in this valley of tears. Our purpose then as Christians, our meaning for this life we've been given now is to come to a deeper understanding of what we celebrate at Easter. If we are unsure about what the purpose and meaning of the Christian faith is let us look no further than what we commemorate on this Easter eve. Our path is clear, we are called now at this moment in history, like never before, to know, worship and love God in this life so that we may be with him after our own resurrection. Our destiny is to be totally fulfilled in God and in doing so all the yearnings of our hearts, all the incompleteness we realise in our lives, all the pain and suffering we've endured will all melt in that ultimate encounter with the beatific face of Christ who says to us "I have risen and am still with you, I have risen and am still for you, I have risen so that you may rise too".

God love you all. You're all in my prayers

Fr Mannes OP



The tide of joy released by the Easter Vigil flows over into Easter Day. During the night the church glowed with light from within. Now light floods the world. The flame of the Easter Candle is matched by the fire of the sun that brings light and warmth and life to all. Christ is risen indeed! So wonderful is this mystery that it can't be taken in all at once, even with a liturgy as rich in word and symbol as the Easter Vigil. We need time to marvel at what it all means. Easter Day is the springboard for our revelling in the mystery. The Mass of Easter Sunday glances back to the vigil service and looks ahead to the Easter season. For fifty days the Church keeps company with the Risen Lord. Day by day we will enjoy the peace of his presence and will delight in the Spirit he has breathed upon us.

With the newly baptised we will explore the unlimited possibilities that life in Christ offers us. Augustine understood: Easter was no time for kneeling; it was for standing upright and singing "Alleluia!" The readings for Easter Sunday are the same throughout the three-year cycle.

1. What images, words, or phrases do you associate with Easter Sunday?
2. What are some important Easter traditions in your own family?
3. Where do you encounter the Risen Christ?

As you celebrate the Easter season, take time to notice the daily experience of resurrection and new life. Share these moments with your family and friends at the end of each day or week. You might be surprised how much new life permeates our world!

Easter celebrates the promise of life in the face of death. Easter celebrations also reflect on peace and forgiveness which has come out of aggression. It is also a time for thinking about suffering, injustice and hardship. During Good Friday services Christians meditate on Jesus' suffering and on his words spoken from the cross: 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' (Luke 23:34) We meet and remember the events in Jerusalem – the paschal sacrifice of Jesus, our Lamb; the good news of the resurrection given first to Mary Magdalene, the "apostle to the apostles." We meet and renew our baptismal identity. We are the sheep saved from death, the new creation, the people risen with the living One. We meet and rehearse the transformation of this very world. Our alleluia imbues us with sure hope, lets our very bones sing, "Lord, send out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth!"

Easter means to live with a sense of newness. Just as the return of spring lifts our spirits and makes us feel like the whole world is new, the Resurrection of Jesus makes "all things new." (Rev. 21:5) The Easter spirit is a spirit of renewal that enables us to show up at work with a positive attitude, to renew relationships that have been taken for granted, and to express appreciation and affection to those closest to us. It means to see the world through new eyes—God's eyes.

We can use these 50 days to cultivate an Easter spirit that enables us to be truly Christian: embracing joy, living without fear, and seeing the world again—as if for the first time.

## EASTER JOY

The Psalm for Easter Sunday says, “This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

Above all days, Easter is a day of joy.

But what is joy? The answer St. Francis gave to this question is famous. St. Francis said to his Brother Leo, “When we come to St. Mary of the Angels [our house], soaked by the rain and frozen by the cold, all soiled with mud and suffering from hunger, and we ring at the gate of the place and the brother porter comes and says angrily: ‘Who are you?’ And we say: ‘We are two of your brothers.’ And ... he does not open for us, but makes us stand outside in the snow and rain, cold and hungry, until night falls—then if we endure all those insults and cruel rebuffs patiently, ... oh, Brother Leo, ... perfect joy is there!”\*

Whatever we may think of St. Francis’s explanation of perfect joy, Easter reminds us that Francis’s kind of joy is not the end of the story. At Easter, we celebrate the other kind of joy, the kind each of us longs for, when every tear is wiped away, and there is no sorrow anymore—no more suffering from weather or hunger or hurtful human beings. As we sing in the much-loved hymn by Fr. John Foley, SJ, at Easter there is only “the cross and passion past; dark night is done, bright morning come at last!”\*\*

When we ourselves rise to meet our risen Lord, in that bright morning we will hear the Lord say, “Come away, beloved. The winter is past; the rain is gone, and the flowers return to the earth” ([Song of Songs 2:10-12](#)). In the loving union of that encounter, all the heartbrokenness of our lives will be redeemed. *That* will be perfect joy.

If all we had was the joy St. Francis describes, our courage might fail us in this life. Easter celebrates now the perfect joy waiting for us when we and all creation are reborn with our resurrected Lord into the everlasting love of God. This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Eleonore Stump <http://liturgy.slu.edu/>

## GETTING READY TO PRAY

We have been preparing more specifically this past week for the celebration of the spirit and liturgy of this great event. Last evening we renewed our own baptisms as well as welcomed those who entered the community through their Baptisms or Profession of Faith.

This liturgy can be one of those at which or within which, we are oriented to experience joy, relief, unity, peace, more faith and hope, and always more closeness to God through Jesus.

**The joy is that we are the found by the Divine Finder.**

We can pray with whatever spirit is ours at any one time.

There are no expectations, no “suppose-tos” in the spiritual life. There are wants, longings, emptiness’s and fullness, but we pray always with where we are.

These next days we will hear of how Jesus was meeting his friends where ever he could find them. Some were lost some disappointed, and he met them and resurrected their spirits.

We pray to be found and that just might take the grace of accepting that we are lost at times and disappointed.

We pray for the grace of Easter joy. It is given so that we might find peace in being found and sent to untomb others by the One who was untombed.

The joy is that we are the found by the Divine Finder.

Larry Gillick, SJ

## JESUS IS ALIVE



When Jesus’ disciples went to his burial place, they found an empty tomb. Through the message the angel gave to them at the tomb, and through Jesus’ appearances to various disciples, God revealed that Christ was risen. Two Scripture stories played an especially significant role in the faith of the early Christians: the account of Thomas demanding proof that it was Jesus who had appeared to them and the story of Paul’s transformation from persecutor to apostle through an encounter with the risen Jesus. The New Testament makes it clear that new life in Christ is based on the belief that Jesus rose from the dead. It is the risen Jesus who is Lord, and when Christians are baptized, they enter into the experience of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The Resurrection of Jesus was a resurrection into divine life. This is different from a renewal of human life as had been experienced by Lazarus when Jesus brought him back from the dead. The fact that a number of Jesus’ closest disciples had difficulty recognizing him demonstrates that Jesus’ Resurrection was more than just a return to life; it was an entry into the full glory of divine life.

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## EASTER BLESSINGS

A little over a month ago I attended a food and wine festival. It was sunny and thousands of people crammed the site, visiting the food trucks and enjoying the music over the two-day weekend. Since then there have been a dizzying number of changes to our lives. We’ve gone from unrestricted movements to no gatherings of more than 500, 100, 10; and now we’re asked to stay at home unless it is absolutely necessary. It’s been a worrying and confusing time.

Perhaps these changes, however, can help us prepare for the experience of Holy Week. On Palm Sunday there was the triumphant entry into Jerusalem. Jesus was feted with hennas and palms. The disciples must have been smiling broadly, happy to be associated with such an important figure as Jesus.

On Thursday evening there was a dinner with friends and, while there were tensions, it passed relatively peacefully. However, by the end of the evening there was violence, fear, denial of what was happening. On Friday there was worse to come with the brutal death of a beloved son and friend. It must have seemed incredible that things could turn so fast. The disciples locked themselves away from others wondering what was going to happen to them. Then on Sunday there was the incredible news of the resurrection. Such joy and hope. As we experience the emotions of this Holy Week and relate it to our time of isolation and fears, let us hold on to the sure knowledge of God’s love for us, and know that our times of trial will pass and we will share in the resurrection.

Michele Frankeni *Australian Catholics* assistant editor



# HE IS RISEN

## THE DAY OF THE RESURRECTION

Even though Easter is not the *beginning* of the Roman Catholic liturgical year, it is the highpoint of the year. Easter is the celebration of the paschal mystery, coming from the word *Pascha*, which means “Easter.”

There are a number of aspects of the paschal mystery incorporated into the celebration of Easter that makes it so embracing. One of these aspects, and perhaps the one that comes to the minds of most Christians when they think about Easter, is the memory of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Another aspect of the Easter mysteries is the presence of the risen Christ beyond the time of his human journey. The Resurrection—indeed the whole of the paschal mystery—is not a past event that we merely commemorate. It is part of our lives today, part of the life of the Church since the days of the community that was formed around Jesus of Nazareth, continuing and being built up in love as you stand in your assembly each Sunday at your own parish.

In the Gospels we do not find Sunday as a day for assembling the followers of Jesus, but we discover in all four Gospels that the Resurrection took place on a Sunday. (See Matthew 28:1-7, Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24:1-8, and John 20:1-18.) In addition to being the day on which Jesus had been raised from the dead, the first day of the week was also the day on which Jesus appeared to the disciples after the Resurrection....

We cannot, on the one hand, think of the Resurrection as merely an event in the life of the historical Jesus. That is wholly true, yet the Resurrection continues in the life of the Church. We experience the Resurrection when we celebrate the initiation of new members into our communities at the Easter Vigil. We experience the Resurrection when we celebrate the baptism of infants. We experience the Resurrection whenever we celebrate the sacraments. And we experience the Resurrection whenever we bond with those we love because they are gifts of God. Yet these experiences are only one side of the coin.

The Resurrection also was part of the experience of Jesus, the Son of God who shared his human life with us by his incarnation. And so the Resurrection also was part of the experience of the paschal mystery in the life of Jesus two millennia ago. That is the other side of the coin that is the Christian faith.

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## THE MISSION OF THE RESURRECTION

For forty days Jesus stayed among the people, until he was taken up to heaven in a cloud.

During this time, he laid the foundations for his church to continue his presence and work on earth. He gave final instructions to his twelve handpicked apostles, the patriarchs of this new extended family of God.

He had instructed them privately throughout his ministry and given them powers to heal and cast out demons in his name. In those last forty days, he taught them how to interpret the Scriptures and preach. He breathed his Spirit into them, confirmed their authority to forgive sins in his name.

He gave them a mission—to preach the good news of his salvation to the ends of the earth, to celebrate the breaking of the bread in his memory, to teach what he had taught them, to baptize all nations and make them one family in God. He promised he would remain on earth through his church - present in the sacraments, living signs that truly bring people into contact with his saving presence.

Jesus ascended to heaven in his glorified, risen body. He took his place in heaven in all the fullness of his humanity, bearing for all time the marks where the nails had been, the signs of his passion carved forever into his precious skin. From that day forward, we could never think of God without thinking of humankind. The very being of God - the Trinity of Father, Son, and Spirit - now contains One who is one of us.

Jesus is now “seated in glory at the right hand of the Father.” He is “King of kings and Lord of lords.” He will come again one day to render a final judgment on the living and the dead and to usher in the never-ending kingdom that Israel's prophets proclaimed, the new Jerusalem that will come down from heaven. Until that day, Jesus will remain our high priest in the precincts of heaven, hearing our prayers and sending us his Spirit. He is the one mediator between our Father and us, the only one who can save us from the sin of the world.

Until Christ comes again, Catholics live as the first apostles did - as witnesses to his resurrection, trying by his grace to testify with our entire being to the salvation he won for us.

We live by faith in all that he revealed about God. We experience our lives as people born of the water and blood that flows from his sacred heart. We call God our Father and love all men and women as our brothers and sisters. We live by hope in the promise that the kingdom is coming, growing and spreading under the Father's watchful eye in the church of his Son, empowered by his Spirit. And we live by love, in imitation of Jesus, with the love of God in our hearts giving meaning to everything we do. By his grace, we live as he did, as living “Eucharist's,” as offerings of praise and thanks giving.

And we see miracles every day, not only at the altar where bread and wine become his body and blood. We see lives changed by the encounter with the risen Jesus, and we believe that no person stands beyond the pale of his love. We have seen with our own eyes the truth of what he said, that with God all things are possible.

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May the Word of God lead you, guide you,  
and forever keep you safe in His care.

**The stone was rolled away from the door,  
not to permit Christ to come out,  
but to enable the Disciples to go in.**



### Easter Sunday

*Fr Gregory OP explains how the exclamation 'Alleluia' is a basic reaction in joy to the Risen Lord.*

Alleluia! If there's one word that characterises our Easter celebrations, it's this. We've been holding off from using it for the whole of Lent just so that we can apply it with renewed intensity to our celebration of Christ's Resurrection. It gets sung back and forth three times by the priest and congregation at the Easter Vigil as we take it up again, and it's stuck on the end of various parts of the Mass of the Day, from the Introit on the way in to the dismissal at the end. This 'Alleluia' permeates the whole of our Easter celebration – it gives it its character, its mood.

But just what does it mean, this 'alleluia' that expresses our celebration of Jesus' resurrection from the dead? The word does have a meaning – it comes from a Hebrew word that means 'praise the Lord' – but Christian tradition hasn't translated it, leaving instead the sound that obviously lies behind the Hebrew word for 'praise': the sound of cheering, or, to use a technical term which reproduces the same kind of noise, ululation. This great cry of 'alleluia' is like the roar of a crowd at a football match when a goal is scored: it says something more basic and more immediate than the explanation of its significance that comes in the post-match analysis which puts into words what happened in the match. A supporter of Manchester City can explain all the significance for Liverpool of this or that goal, but only a Liverpool supporter could have cheered when the goal was scored.

And today, when we celebrate the fact that Jesus, whose death on the cross we commemorated on Friday, has risen again, we cry 'alleluia' because we are cheering the fact that he's won. He has proved stronger than death, that final, common enemy of the whole human race, and so, in Christ, our "team" – the whole human race – has won. We can spend the rest of the year thinking about all the implications of that victory for us – of how exactly we relate to Jesus and his victory, of the love and power of God it reveals, of the life with God it promises.

Indeed, that is what we do, for, as Christians, it is our belief in the Resurrection of Jesus that lies at the foundation of all that we believe. As St Paul tells the Romans (10:9), 'if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.' And of course, the deeper our understanding, the more we will be able to appreciate the significance of the victory we celebrate. Today, though, we don't get that far. In fact, in our Gospel reading, we don't even get as far as encountering the risen Jesus: the empty tomb and the folded grave-clothes are enough to prompt this outburst of joy.

Joy, though, is not the only emotion the sight of the empty tomb could prompt. For Mary Magdalene, in today's Gospel, it was a source of distress. What she saw was simply an absence: 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.'

The difference in the case the nameless 'other disciple' whom we understand to be the evangelist John himself is that he didn't just see the empty tomb, but 'he saw and he believed'.

The joy which our Easter alleluias express is the joy of believing, that joy in the Gospel of which Pope Francis has written so powerfully in his recent Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*. And in that text, the Pope has reminded us that our joy in believing is a powerful force, impelling us to want to go out and share the good news with others, and also a way of attracting them to share in that belief and that joy: to come back to the football match, the cheering of the crowd is something it's enjoyable to join in with.

So as we celebrate today Christ's Resurrection, his victory on behalf of all humanity over death itself, we renew that joy which lies at the heart of the Christian message with a cry that sums up the whole of that message:

Alleluia!

*Fr Gregory OP* <http://english.op.org/torch>

### TOMB'S EMPTINESS MIRRORS HEARTS OF DISCIPLES

'Mary does not understand what the empty tomb means. How could she? Her conclusion that his body has been stolen makes the best sense of what she sees, and so her love seems to be frustrated; it has reached a dead end. But we know what will happen next - she will encounter the risen Christ in the garden, and he will call her by her name, and she will understand. When this happens, she will know that her love for Christ is not blocked but re-directed.'

It is not that Jesus' body no longer matters. On the contrary, it matters all the more, for now it is not only a living but a life-giving body, a glorified body that must be served in new ways. The oils and spices can be left behind, for the loving service that Mary Magdalene must offer to the body of Christ is one that will impel her far from this garden of the dead, to serve Christ in the new garden of Eden which is the Church.'

*Richard J. Ounsworth OP* <http://torch.op.org/>

## PRAYING IN RESURRECTION JOY

'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.'... So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy...'

—Matthew 28:7–8



How perfectly Matthew captures the essence of our encounter with the empty tomb! We are fearful yet overjoyed. Through the season of Lent we were invited to unite our sufferings with the suffering of our Lord. The old self had to die, like the grain of wheat in the parable, so that it could yield a rich harvest (John 12:24). The Easter season is the time of reaping. Our tears turn to joy as we see that the stone has been rolled away, the tomb is empty, the wrappings of burial and death are left behind, the Master is risen, and he is inviting us to share his resurrected life.

But isn't it also true, as Matthew intimates, that our resurrection joy is tinged with a sort of fear? What does it mean for us to step out of the tombs in which we have been lain—or into which we may willingly have entered? What are the death wrappings we have discarded through our Lenten practices of almsgiving, fasting, and prayer? We may be tempted to look behind and grieve the loss of the old. But St. Paul in 2 Corinthians implores us to look ahead: "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!" (5:17). That is God's Easter promise to us!

Throughout the 50 days of the Easter season, we are invited to celebrate the reality of new creation in our own lives, our re-creation as the children of God, having moved through Baptism from death to new life in Christ. Even as we may fear entering into this new world, uncharted but for the fact that our Risen Lord goes always before us, how might we pray our resurrection joy?

- Easter comes in the midst of spring. How can the new life rising out of the earth—green shoots and crocuses, lilies, and daffodils—inspire us to prayer? What newness is springing forth in your soul?
- The Risen Christ bears in his resurrected body the scars of his crucifixion (John 20:27). We too may bear the scars of our former life of sin and death. We can ask the Lord in prayer to show us how he might use our scars to lead others to share in our trust that our God can make all things new. How do you best experience a sense of praise and gratitude toward God? Do you feel called to sing and dance like David? To create works of art? To keep a gratitude journal?

What is one practice you could continue or add to your life of prayer that celebrates the truth that God is renewing creation in you?

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## ARCHDIOCESAN TRIBUNAL

With the pressures of modern life marriage breakdown affects many Australian families. For many in our community there can be a sense of isolation or even exclusion from the Church because of their marital status. The Tribunal can assist people who have experienced a marriage breakdown and establish whether they are free to enter a new union within the Catholic Church. Further information is available on the Archdiocesan website at [www.cg.catholic.org.au](http://www.cg.catholic.org.au) under "Agencies & Services" or contact the: **Tribunal Office** Tel: 6201 9802 Email: [tribunal@cg.catholic.org.au](mailto:tribunal@cg.catholic.org.au)

**In Your Prayers please remember those in our community who are ill:**

Alexia Harris, Maria Martiniello, Greg O'Neill, Una Bell, Mary Martin, Barbara Wilson, Mary Bui, Anne Corver, Fr Ellis Clifford, Maureen Dawes, Edith Jensen, Awny El-Ghitany, Fr Joe McGeehan, Joe Schimizzi, Elsie Laughton, June Pollard, Paul Neddrie, Beth Delos Santos, Margaret Sullivan, Rosa Maria Santos, Pamela Sandy, Frank Zobec, Zelma McManus, Elizabeth Webster, Philip Bailey, Mimma Giampietro, Catherine Feehan, Maureen Blood, Charlotte Woolner,

**Our recently Deceased: May they find peace and comfort in the embrace of the Lord.**

Bernard Slammon

## CHRISTIAN MESSAGE

If the Christian message is about anything, it is about hope. At Easter, when the Church marks not only the death of Jesus on the Cross, but also his Resurrection three days later, the power of hope is most prevalent. Death has been vanquished; it is no longer the end.

By dying to introversion and self-preservation, we – as members of the Church – can roll away the stones that keep our faith locked inside. When we bring our faith out into the light, we can impact on the hearts of others, in the same way Jesus touched the hearts, minds and souls of Mary and his beloved disciples.

