**Alleluia. Christ is Risen A short service of readings, reflection and prayers for the Sunday after Easter.**

**The Gathering**

**The Easter Anthems**

Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us, so let us keep the feast.

Not with the old leaven of corruption and wickedness but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Christ once raised from the dead dies no more, death has no more dominion over him.

In dying he died to sin for all, in living he lives to God.

See yourselves therefore as dead to sin and alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who sleep.

For as by man came death, by man has come also the resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

A reading from the Gospel of John

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

**19**When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ **20**After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. **21**Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ **22**When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. **23**If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’

Jesus and Thomas

**24**But Thomas (who was called the Twin[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+20&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-26881c)]), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. **25**So the other disciples told him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ But he said to them, ‘Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.’

**26**A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ **27**Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.’ **28**Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ **29**Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.’

The Purpose of This Book

**30**Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. **31**But these are written so that you may come to believe[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+20&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-26888d)] that Jesus is the Messiah,[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+20&version=NRSVA" \l "fen-NRSVA-26888e" \o "See footnote e)] the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

**Reflection**: Rt Revd Jonathan Rhumuliza

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer. Amen.

**Good morning! The peace of the Lord be with you.**

**Lockdown is not to knock us down or pin us down.** The disciples were in lockdown when Jesus appeared to them after the resurrection, only a week after Easter Day.

Our lockdown is due to the corona virus outbreak. The virus can enter our bodies and damage them; however, it cannot enter or destroy the Body of Christ. Fear is as deadly a killer as corona virus is.

Jesus is standing in our midst in this lockdown; and more than anything else in the world, Jesus says to us, ***“Peace be with you”*.** He is ready to breathe the Holy Spirit on us and bring us new life and a fresh start - a new beginning.

The Easter story is an act of re-creation. It is as Jesus takes us back to the Garden of Eden and says “It’s not too late. Be re-newed in the image of God”, and we become the people God longs for us to be.

Our Gospel reading gives us **an account of a manifestation of great faith out of doubt and questions**! We can have the same experience, as most of us have doubts and questions about what is now happening in our world.

Thomas stood on his feet and said, *“Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, I will not believe”*. Many of us had the same experience until we saw, felt and interacted with Jesus, and from that time we call him: “*My Lord, My God, My Saviour, My friend.”*

This encounter of Thomas with Jesus, serves as one of the most convincingly authentic reasons to believe that Jesus really rose from the dead. Though nicknamed Doubtful, Thomas is a man of courage and action, willing to ask questions, to risk the potential embarrassment of admitting that he does not understand. He cares more about understanding, more about making real sense of things in his own heart and mind, so that he can better follow the path that Jesus is describing.

When we have good will, to have doubt is to admit the possibility that there is more to learn. It is to be honest about the state of the world and the state of your heart. It is to leave oneself open to seeking, to the experience of context and relationship; and being in favour of a heart of exploration and openness.

This kind of doubt does not undermine faith, it is at the service of faith. Faith is something you put into practice, a way of living and a way of knowing. It is engagement in the life of the Spirit; trusting that God is there to be found in midst of that which is good and that which is terrible - like this deadly virus.

Our trust and faith in the Lord can be felt and demonstrated. Spiritual realities, such as love and one’s relation to God, cannot be seen by our physical senses. Yet love is no less real simply because it cannot be seen. For love can be felt, shown, lived, manifested and experienced.

Dear Brethren, the Lord invites us to seek practical proof of his presence in our lives, by recognising our need for his sustaining presence, and by turning to him for guidance and insight, to help us follow his principles, in our daily life in this physical world. The Risen Lord offers each of us new life through the power of His resurrection.

May faith be an active process of continually turning us toward God’s mercy, God’s joy, God’s love, God’s justice and God’s inner peace.

May we stay safe and keep well in God’s hands. Amen.

A setting of Psalm 23 by Toki Miyashina

The Lord is my Pace Setter, I shall not rush,  
He makes me stop and rest for quiet intervals,  
He provides me with images of stillness,  
Which restore my serenity.  
He leads me in ways of efficiency,  
through calmness of mind; and his guidance is peace.  
Even though I have a great many things to accomplish each day,  
I will not fret, for his presence is here.  
His timelessness, his all-importance will keep me in balance.  
He prepares refreshment and renewal in the midst of my activity,  
by anointing my head with his oils of tranquility,  
My cup of joyous energy overflows.  
Surely harmony and effectiveness shall be the fruit of my hours,  
For I shall walk in the pace of my Lord,  
and dwell in his house for ever.

**Collect**

Risen Christ,

for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred:

open the doors of our hearts,

that we may seek the good of others

and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace,

to the praise of God the Father.

**The Lord’s Prayer**

With Christians north and south, east and west, Protestant, Orthodox and Catholic, as our saviour taught us so we pray.

Please join me in praying the Lord’s Prayer in its traditional form.

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

We are raised to new life with Christ. Let us continue in our pilgrimage in his peace. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia. Alleluia.