

COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY, 17 April 2022 – EASTER DAY

COLLECT

God of glory,
by the raising of your Son
you have broken the chains of death and hell:
fill your Church with faith and hope;
for a new day has dawned
and the way to life stands open
in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Psalm 118

- 1 O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; ♦
his mercy endures for ever.
- 2 Let Israel now proclaim, ♦
‘His mercy endures for ever.’
- 14 The Lord is my strength and my song, ♦
and he has become my salvation.
- 15 Joyful shouts of salvation ♦
sound from the tents of the righteous:
- 16 ‘The right hand of the Lord does mighty deeds; the right hand of the Lord raises up; ♦
the right hand of the Lord does mighty deeds.’
- 17 I shall not die, but live ♦
and declare the works of the Lord.
- 18 The Lord has punished me sorely, ♦
but he has not given me over to death.
- 19 Open to me the gates of righteousness, ♦
that I may enter and give thanks to the Lord.
- 20 This is the gate of the Lord; ♦
the righteous shall enter through it.
- 21 I will give thanks to you, for you have answered me ♦
and have become my salvation.
- 22 The stone which the builders rejected ♦
has become the chief cornerstone.
- 23 This is the Lord’s doing, ♦
and it is marvellous in our eyes.
- 24 This is the day that the Lord has made; ♦
we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Acts 10.34-43

34 Then Peter began to speak to them: 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. ³⁷That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; ⁴⁰but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, ⁴¹not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.'

Luke 24.1-12

24 On the first day of the week, at early dawn, the women came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. ²They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they went in, they did not find the body. ⁴While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. ⁵The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. ⁶Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.' ⁸Then they remembered his words, ⁹and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. ¹²But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

Reflection from Peter

It is impossible to do justice to the Resurrection – but we have to try to convey something of the excitement, the hope, the energy it brings to us and to the whole world. You remember those ‘Jack-in-the-box’ toys? The earliest examples date right back to the 16th century, and it doesn’t take much imagination to appreciate why it remained so popular for so long. The classic version involved a musical box, played by winding a handle. Then, at an unexpected moment, the box would fly open and the brightly coloured figure of the Jack would appear. For a child it was an inexhaustible source of pleasure, repeated over and over again. But, in the end, Jack is tethered to his box, only allowed to appear for brief moments.

There are ways in which the sheer surprise of the Resurrection has something of a jack-in-the-box about it. This is Jesus, whom we saw crucified; the same Jesus we saw taken down from the cross and laid in a sealed tomb. Yet here is Jesus, full of life and energy and power. “See, it is I myself” he says to his disciples, as they struggle to understand what is happening.

For us today we need something of the same capacity to be startled into amazed wonder as we realise that Jesus was not simply raised to life some 2000 years ago, a special historical memory to be recalled devoutly. No, God raised Jesus out of time and history into the new creation, the ever-present eternity of God. That new hope that the first disciples experienced is ours too; the fun and surprise that they knew is ours too; the overcoming of the threat of being wiped out through violence, terror, torture, sickness and death – all that too is ours. Yes, like Jesus we shall suffer; like Jesus we shall die. We shall go on being shocked and saddened at the horrors of the world, but we know that this too will pass and in the end God will be God. Alleluia, Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, alleluia!