



**COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION  
SUNDAY 31 MARCH 2024 – EASTER DAY**

**COLLECT**

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 Jesus Christ,  
may reign with him in glory;  
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit  
be praise and honour, glory and might,  
now and in all eternity.

**Psalm 118.1-2, 19.24**

- 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.

A Reading from the Acts of the Apostles (10.34-43)

Then Peter began to speak to them: 'I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how 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. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not 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. He 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. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.'

For the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

***At Morning Prayer, the Gospel is simply the second reading, people sit to hear it and is introduced in the same way as the first:***

The second reading is from Mark, chapter 11, verses 1-11.

***and then at the end:***

For the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

***For Eucharists/ Communion people stand to hear the Gospel and it is introduced with an Acclamation, as below:***

Alleluia!

**Alleluia!**

This is the day that the Lord has made: we will rejoice and be glad in it.

**Alleluia!**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Mark, chapter 16 verses 1-8.

**Glory to you, O Lord**

***And then at the end:***

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?' When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.' So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

## ***A Reflection from Peter...***

So we come to the Paschal Feast, to the summit of the Christian story, to Easter Day. This is, for us, a day of unconditional rejoicing. It is the triumph of life over death, love over fear and joy over despair. But just a moment: did you hear how our Gospel reading ended? "And they said nothing to anyone for they were afraid." This is all wrong. The women are supposed to be full of joy, not desperately afraid. And this was just how Mark's Gospel originally ended. Had no-one come up with a better story, then, as one New Testament scholar observed, we should never have heard of the resurrection at all! But look at the other Gospels. Think of St Luke. There we see the women being convinced by what they had heard and seen. They go back to tell the disciples – but it is the disciples who don't believe them, thinking it to be 'an idle tale'.

That we have four very different Gospels is such a blessing. We can never forget that God's ways are not our ways; never forget that it is a struggle for us to embrace the truth of God. The resurrection is no different. Just as many people couldn't believe that human beings had actually landed on the moon, so it is contrary to all our experience to believe that God raised Jesus from the dead. But it is true. Each of us needs a lifetime to be able to know it in the depth of our being. God understands. God is infinitely patient, allowing us to go on doubting, being fearful, untrusting. What does matter is that we go on being hopeful, open to the joy of God overwhelming us, turning sorrow into joy. Our being hopeful is a tiny but vital contribution to hope for the world. As we, and all baptised into Christ, go on rejoicing in the resurrection, so there is an unstoppable movement of hope, pointing to the light of Christ lightening the darkness of our world. Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, alleluia!