

Reflecting  
**on Easter Sunday**



Archdiocese of  
**Liverpool**

Alleluia Christ is Risen! – this is the message of Easter. What will it be like when we can all travel freely from our homes and gather in our churches? I am sure Alleluia will be our song.

Until then let us reflect on the power of the resurrection in our lives.



**Sit comfortably and light a candle or tealight.**



**Listen to ‘*Surrexit Christus Alleluia*’ from the Taizé Community.**

It would be good to use imaginative contemplation while praying with today's Gospel. Imagine yourself in the situation, the women and the apostles would be traumatised they had just seen their friend and hero killed in the most brutal way and for some of them they feel they let him down.

Read the passage slowly and imagine the sounds and smells, maybe you can imagine the empty feeling and pain of the apostles.

- Where do you find yourself, are you watching or are you one of the people in the scene?

**Allow the story to unfold like a video.**

As you finish your prayer hold a conversation with the Risen Jesus.

- What will you say, what does the resurrection mean for you on this day?

*From the Gospel according to Matthew 21: 1-11*



Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.' Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went towards the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

The Gospel of the Lord.





## Fr Chris Thomas reflects...

For several years I was involved in a homeless project in the parish where I was priest: feeding people, clothing people, getting people off the streets and into accommodation. One of the men who came regularly to our door was Billy. Billy was an alcoholic who was often very sad. I remember one day when I was rushing to try and find him T shirts and food and he was sitting being very maudlin about his life and complaining about the way people looked at him when he was staggering around the town centre. He looked up and said to me 'You know people should look beyond the mess and see what's really inside.' It brought me up sharp and made me realise that I seldom stop and take a real long look at those around me and see the risen Lord.

What was Mary of Magdala looking for in the garden that first Easter day that she couldn't quite see and recognise the risen Jesus? She was looking for a dead body, and the truth is that we only really see what we're looking for. If you're looking for the risen Lord, you'll see him. So, Mary couldn't see the truth that Jesus was present, maybe in the flesh and blood of a gardener, because she wasn't looking for him there.

It's John's way of saying to us that this risen Lord is present in a new and very real way, but we have to open our eyes and see him. We have to allow this risen Jesus to break through the petty limitations that we put on him and reveal his presence. Mary of Magdala is told to let go of what she thought she had, to discover what she really had.

It's a powerful illustration of what life is about, the process of letting go to discover the real. We all have to do it, let go of our image of God, of our presumptions about where we'll find God and look again with fresh eyes. Richard Rohr the American Franciscan says that God comes to us disguised as our life, but we're so busy looking for something else that we miss the risen Lord. When we open our eyes, we discover the risen Jesus with us. Every step of the way, he's there revealing himself in the unexpected and sometimes in the extraordinary but there with us none the less.

So many of us think we only find the risen Christ in the things we call holy, in the celebrations of the Eucharist, in the times of prayer. Maybe the gift of these times of isolation and reflection have been to help us see the risen presence of Christ everywhere.

The Christ we've been given is bigger than anything we care to imagine. He's there in those moments that we call holy but also in those we call secular. He's there in the midst of brokenness and pain and vulnerability as well as in the good times and the times of celebration. Never presume that you know, always look with fresh eyes for the one who is with us. Don't cling because in clinging to what you thought you knew you don't have eyes to see again.

Mary of Magdala heard her name called in the depth of her heart and then she began to see with the eyes of faith, and she ran and proclaimed the truth that he's alive and with us. We remind ourselves at Easter that Jesus is risen from the dead but let's not presume that we know where we'll find him. Let's look at every brother and sister with eyes of faith and see that the risen Jesus is there.

Let's look at the trees and the flowers and the mountains and the sea and know the truth that he's there. And knowing that he is present let's treat every aspect of God's creation with the love and respect that it deserves, because in the words of Gerard Manley Hopkins 'the world is charged with the grandeur of God', the glory that is the risen Lord present within us and amongst us.



## **Intercessions**

We pray for Pope Francis may he continue to lead us in prayer and draw all religions together in unity, bringing comfort and support to those who are fearful at this time.

**Lord of the resurrection transform our lives.**

We pray for the church today, though we are not gathering in our buildings, may we proclaim a message of hope for the future.

**Lord of the resurrection transform our lives.**

We pray for political leaders throughout the world, may they lead us with the good of all at the centre of everything that they do in this time of great challenge.

**Lord of the resurrection transform our lives.**

We pray for ourselves at this time that as we pray with the Easter stories we may recognise the power of the resurrection in our lives.

**Lord of the resurrection transform our lives.**



## Final prayer

Look upon your church, O God,  
with unfailing love and favour,  
so that, renewed by the paschal mysteries,  
she may come to the glory of the resurrection.  
Through Christ our Lord.



## Listen to '*Christ the Lord is risen today*'.

Let this hymn ring in our ears especially during this time  
with the challenges that COVID-19 brings.