

# 21<sup>st</sup> November 2021

## The paper-version Service



**To Begin:** Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's

Service set out below.

**Opening Prayer:** Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Song:**

*Thine be the glory  
Risen conquering Son  
Endless is the victory  
Thou o'er death hast won*

Angels in bright raiment  
Rolled the stone away  
Kept the folded grave clothes  
Where Thy body lay

*Thine be the glory...*

Lo! Jesus meets us  
Risen from the tomb  
Lovingly, He greets us  
Scatters fear and gloom  
Let the church with gladness

Hymns of triumph sing  
For her Lord now liveth  
Death hath lost its sting

*Thine be the glory...*

No more we doubt Thee  
Glorious Prince of life  
Life is naught without Thee  
Aid us in our strife  
Make us more than conquerors  
Through Thy deathless love  
Bring us safe through Jordan  
To Thy home above

*Thine be the glory...*

**Read: John 20:1-23**

***God is Alive-*** a summary of the talk given by Rev. Jonathan Rooke.

Have you had a day when you woke up and the world was arranged one way and by the end of the day you knew life was never going to be quite the same?

Mary's day was like that. It started one way with her looking backwards and ended in a new way, with her looking forwards. She moves from hope-lost to hope-found, from darkness in her life to light filling her mind and spirit and soul. She moves from old knowledge to new knowledge, from fear to joy. A movement from little faith to great faith.

The day before, she saw Jesus, in whom she had put her faith, die. The following day, Mary wakes up and decides to take herself to the tomb. It is still dark, before dawn, probably between 3-6am. She is alone. As well as being dark outside it is dark inside for her. Jesus the light of the world had gone out of her spiritual life. But, in the darkness, despite her hopes and faith being dashed, Mary is drawn towards Jesus.

Even in her grief and her inner darkness, she walks towards where she thinks Jesus is located and she tries to find him. Even when she has lost hope, feels abandoned, she

walks towards Jesus and is drawn to him.

Mary Lingers at the tomb, she waits, she persists. There is an intensity in the way she seeks after Jesus. The passage suggests she is alone. She wants to find Jesus so she looks into the empty tomb and she sees the linen and two angels. She tells them that she is distressed because she can't find Jesus and she wants to find him. There is a sense of the depth of her love here.

Then Jesus turns up. At first, she doesn't recognise him. She thinks he is the gardener. Jesus can choose to whom he will reveal himself and when. He asks her, 'Who are you looking for?' This is the question the risen Jesus asks us. Before in John 1 Jesus asked the disciples, 'What are you looking for?' Now, the risen Christ asks, 'Who are you looking for?' When we encounter Jesus, are we looking for Jesus who calls us friend and, later in this passage, brothers and sisters? We are not encountering an idea, or an intellectual approach, or a moral framework, or a political solution. That limited understanding of Jesus belongs to a time before the cross. When we seek out Jesus, like Mary did, we encounter someone who we can increasingly come to know.

From this, other things will follow, but first and foremost we are seeking out and knowing Jesus. We often call this a relationship.

Jesus calls her by name and her world changes because she recognises the living Christ. As the day unfolds, and light pushes out the dark and she gains new spiritual understanding that will change how she lives. God is alive.

I think Jesus calls us by name. How do you look for Jesus and where do you hear the risen Jesus say your name so light can enter your life? Perhaps through prayer. Mark Thibodeaux, SJ, says there are 4 stages of prayer:

- Talking at God (reciting rote prayers, confident that God hears you).
- Talking to God (Speaking to God in your own words).
- Listening to God (being attentive to the ways that God communicates with you, not only in your prayers, but in your daily life).
- Being with God (simply being in God's presence is enough).

How do we arrange our lives so that we might be available to hear

Jesus, let his light into our lives and see our world and circumstances in a new and hopeful way as Mary did?

Mary has to move on to a new understanding of a living God, let go of the past and allow the risen, living Jesus to transform her life. After her encounter with Jesus at the tomb, as the sun rose and light filled the sky, Mary is now full of hope and she can go to the apostles and announce to them the Good News. She can say, 'I have seen the Lord.'

Isn't that what we are meant to say? Not just I know what this theologian, or that public speaker says or even, I know what Jesus says. We are invited to be able to say 'I know Jesus. He is like this with me. Through knowing him, this was transformed.' We can say, 'I have seen the Lord.'

Dear God, help us to arrange our lives so that we can encounter Jesus and he can find us ready to listen and to be moved on in our faith.

Amen

**Prayers:** Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. (Philippians 4:4-6)



- Pray for this day, and the coming week.
- Pray for justice, mercy, peace, and hope.
- Pray for individuals, for neighbours, for family and friends.
- Pray for the Church.

**Collect: Next Before Advent:** God the Father, help us to hear the call of Christ the King and to follow in his service, whose kingdom has no end; for he reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, one glory. **Amen.**

**The Lord's Prayer:** Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.



Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

**Blessing** to be declared over yourselves, COGS, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

**The Notices:** We are now holding services in the building on Sundays at 8am, 9.30am & 7pm and are live streaming the 9.30 service. This Paper Service will continue for the moment and is available the week after the service.

The 'Mission of the Month' is Beyond the Streets which works to end the exploitation of women ([www.beyondthestreets.org.uk](http://www.beyondthestreets.org.uk)).

Christmas Tea and Praise is on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December at 3pm. A traditional Christmas celebration for our more mature folk with carols and readings followed by a delicious tea and refreshments. Lifts can be arranged for the service.

For more information please contact Debbie (01420-84534) or Gilly (01420-544404).