

Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home**

**Sunday 20 April 2025
Easter Day**

Welcome to our Prayers and Reflections for Easter Day. The sun is rising on a new day; empty is the tomb. Well - nearly, as two angels are waiting to offer Mary a hint of what is to come, 'Woman, why are you crying?' She, not the apostles Simon Peter or John, will be the first to see and, perhaps, to touch the risen Jesus. It all starts with her tears.

Enjoy pondering their significance.

Happy Easter!

God bless,

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*As you prepare to enter into the mystery that is the empty tomb,
and join in with Mary's tears, celebrate the love of the risen Jesus,
who will meet with you this Easter morn.*



Now the green blade rises
from the buried grain,
wheat that in the dark earth
many days has lain;
love lives again,
that with the dead has been:
*Love is come again,
like wheat that springs up green.*

John Macleod Campbell Crum (1872-1958)

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Prayers and Reflections
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Tears

PREPARING OURSELVES

Take a moment to be still in God's presence and feel his love. You may wish to light a candle or a lamp as a sign of our Risen Lord's presence with you in your room. You may also wish to have a bowl of water ready to renew your baptism vows. When you are ready, say this Easter greeting.

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Easter Praise

Join your voice to creation's song by saying or singing our Easter hymn "Jesus Christ is risen today". Feel part of this benefice's Easter praise.

Jesus Christ is risen today, alleluia!
our triumphant holy day, alleluia!
who did once, upon the cross, alleluia!
suffer to redeem our loss, alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing, alleluia!
unto Christ, our heavenly King, alleluia!
who endured the cross and grave, alleluia!
sinners to redeem and save, alleluia!

But the pains that he endured, alleluia!
our salvation have procured; alleluia!
now above the sky he's King, alleluia!
where the angels ever sing, alleluia!

Verse 1: Surrevit hodie (14th century)

Verses 2 & 3: J Arnold's Compleat Psalmist (1749)



At this time of the year, the sun rises at 6am. You may have been fast asleep at this time. Even now, there may be signs of this day's dawning. Outside, spring flowers will be turning their faces to the sun, the dew is slowly evaporating in the warmth of its rays... assuming today is as bright and glorious as the first Easter morn! Give thanks to the Lord for the gift of this day of resurrection.

PRAYING TODAY'S PRAYER **(The Collect)**

Across our villages and the worldwide Church, this Easter prayer is being said. Add your voice to this earthly circle of prayer to our loving Father who meets us where we are this Easter morn.

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. **Amen.**

Pause to ponder what are your hopes as Easter dawns. These could be for yourself or your family, for your village or beyond its borders. What seeds of new life would you like to see? Offer these to our risen Lord.



In the grave they laid him,
Love whom men had slain,
thinking that he never
would awake again,
laid in the earth
like grain that sleeps unseen:
Love is come again,
like wheat that springs up green.

JMC Crum (1872-1958)

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

Mary's tears

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!'

So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped round Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. Finally, the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

They asked her, 'Woman, why are you crying?'

'They have taken my Lord away,' she said, 'and I don't know where they have put him.' At this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realise that it was Jesus. He asked her, 'Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?'

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.'

Jesus said to her, 'Mary.' She turned towards him and cried out in Aramaic, 'Rabboni!' (which means 'Teacher').

Jesus said, 'Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."'"

Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: 'I have seen the Lord!' And she told them that he had said these things to her.

John 20:1-18

Tears...

As you prepare to enter into Mary's story of that first Easter morn, think of a time when you have shed tears of deep, deep sadness; tears which would not stop. It is a sign of your grief and love, your heartache, shock and pain. Tears have the power to free our emotions. Tears also have the power to blur our vision. It is this that inspires this reflection on what was happening for Mary as she encounters the risen Jesus.

Where do you find yourself in her reflection?

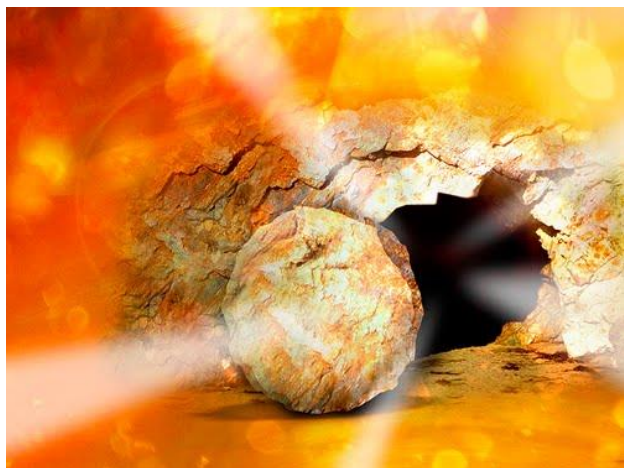
'Why are you crying?' asked the angels. Isn't it obvious. Jesus is gone, dead, missing, and I am heartbroken.

'Why are you crying?' asked the man I could barely see. Perhaps, he isn't aware of what had happened just two long days ago, two dark days ago? Even so, couldn't he see that I am visiting a tomb? I am one who grieves.

Where is he? This thought is all-consuming. I need to know. Blinded by my tears, I couldn't see that the answer was right there before me. But, I knew. I knew as soon as he said, 'Mary!' that somehow he was here. But, given the state that I was in, could I be dreaming? Was my mind playing tricks? Was my grief causing me to hope... to imagine... to hear his voice? So I did the only thing that I could do: I reached out and held him. To my immense relief and utter astonishment, there was someone to hold on to. I hadn't lost him. He had come back to me.

My heart was flooded with joy. And, once again, my tears flowed and flowed and flowed. Jesus is alive! I have seen the Lord! Praise be.

Alleluia!

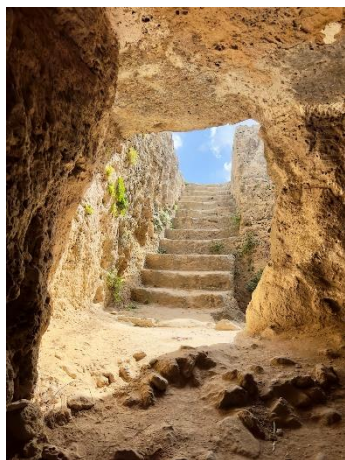


Forth he came at Easter,
like the risen grain,
he that for the three days
in the grave had lain,
back from the dead
my risen Lord is seen:
*Love is come again,
wheat that springs up green.*

JMC Crum (1872-1958)

RENEWING OUR PROMISES

On Easter morning, we celebrate the new life our risen Lord offers to us. A life we received through the cleansing waters of baptism. We have been set free to live as God desires - with love in our hearts - knowing that nothing can ever cut us off from his love. Forgiven through the Son's death on the cross, we will always be clean in God's eyes. He can recall us to life and re-direct our tears.



When our hearts are wintry,
grieving, or in pain,
then your touch can call us
back to life again,
fields of our hearts
that dead and bare have been:
*Love is come again,
like wheat that springs up green.*

JMC Crum (1872-1958)

Before renewing your Baptismal vows, pause to contemplate how God's Spirit can renew your joy in life and your hope in the resurrection of Jesus as a foretaste of your own.

When you are ready, answer these God-breathed questions.

Do you turn away from sin? **I do.**

Do you reject evil? **I do.**

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour? **I do.**

Do you trust in him as Lord? **I do.**



If you have a bowl of water before you on the table, dip your finger in, then make the sign of the cross on your forehead or palm. When you're ready, affirm your trust in God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

God for us, I call you Father.

God alongside us, I call you Jesus.

God within us, I call you Holy Spirit.

You are the One who enables, enfolds, and enlivens my life,
making me who I am and who I will be.

I praise and thank you! **Amen.**

cf. Richard Rohr © 2016

OUR EASTER PRAYERS

Here are some Easter prayers. Feel free to add your own.

Risen Jesus, I sense the shock and surprise of Mary Magdalene as she finds the tomb open then sees that you are not there. She weeps. When I cry tears of loss or sadness or frustration, Lord, come to me.

Risen Lord, hear my prayer.

Risen Jesus, Mary Magdalene reached to hold you in her arms, to prove that you were really there - alive! In the loneliness of loss, when we can feel so very alone, Lord, thank you for those who comfort us...

Risen Lord, hear my prayer.

Risen Jesus, Mary Magdalene rushed to tell the others the great news, 'I have seen the Lord!' Alleluia! Lord, help me to be good news to those who are in need of my love and yours. I lift up to you...

Risen Lord, hear my prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

Gather all of your prayers together by saying the Lord's Prayer.

PRAYER OF BLESSING

A closing prayer of blessing for this Easter week.

Risen Lord, come and meet me where I am,
walk with me in the light and darkness of my life.

Show me how to radiate your love and joy and peace,
each day. Bless me and keep safe my loved ones, Lord, I pray. **Amen.**