

WEST WORCESTER GROUP



## Easter Vigil

Saturday, 11 April 2020 – Sunday, 12 April 2020

For those of you who value the Easter Vigil, either late on Saturday evening, or early on Sunday morning, what follows is an abbreviated form of that service.

I will suggest some readings rather than print them out, so you can find the ones you wish to read in the translation you prefer.

The Easter Vigil marks the end of the emptiness of Holy Saturday, and leads into the celebration of Christ's resurrection.

Although the joyful element will, of necessity, be muted this year, I pray that each of you will nonetheless feel the joy of the Risen Christ in your hearts and draw hope and strength from that.

Sarah.

### The Vigil

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation;  
to you be glory and praise for ever.  
Your steadfast love extends to the heavens  
and your faithfulness never ceases.  
Illuminate our hearts with your wisdom  
and strengthen our lives with your word,  
for you are the fountain of life;  
in your light we see true light.  
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
Blessed be God for ever.

This is the night in which our Lord Jesus Christ passed over from death to life. The Church invites her members, dispersed throughout the world, to gather in vigil and prayer.

As we await the risen Christ, let us read of God's saving deeds in history, recalling how he saved his people in ages past and in the fullness of time sent his Son to be our Redeemer. Let us pray that through this Easter celebration God may bring to perfection in each of us the saving work he has begun.

### **Suggested Old Testament Readings and Psalms**

Genesis 1: 1 – 2:4a    Psalm 104: 1 -7

Genesis 3                      Psalm 51: 1 -7

Genesis 7: 1 – 5; 11 – 18; 8: 6 – 19; 9: 8 – 13

Psalm 36

Genesis 32: 1 – 18              Psalm 16: 6 – end

Exodus 3: 1 – 6                  Psalm 27

Exodus 12: 1 – 24              Psalm 77:11 – end

Exodus 14: 10 –end; 15: 1a.

Ruth 1: 15 – 18; 2: 1 -13; 4: 13 – 17

Psalm 61

1 Samuel 1: 1 – end.

Proverbs 8: 1 – 8: 19 -21; 9: 4b – 6

Isaiah 54: 5 - 15

Psalm 30

Isaiah 55: 1 – 11      Isaiah 66: 6 – 16.

Psalm 113

Jeremiah 31: 31 – 34      Psalm 51: 8 – 18

Ezekiel 36: 24 – 28      Psalm 42: 1 – 7

Ezekiel 37: 1 – 14      Psalm 126

Ezekiel 47: 1 – 12      Psalm 46: 1 – 5

Daniel 3: 1 – 28

Daniel 6: 1 – 24      Psalm 34

Jonah 1: 1 – 2: 10      Psalm 130

Zephaniah 3: 14 – end      Psalm 98.

*End your time of reading by saying this prayer:*

Blessed are you, Lord God of our salvation,  
you are the King who dwells in the midst of the people  
as one who brings victory from the jaws of defeat.

    Heal the sick and gather the outcast  
    and turn our shame into praise,  
    that we may sing aloud and exalt your name,  
    O Lord, our maker and redeemer.  
Amen.

*At this point you may like to light a candle.*

## **The Service of Light**

Eternal God,  
who made this most holy night  
to shine with the brightness of your one true light;  
set us aflame with the fire of your love;  
And bring us to the radiance of your heavenly glory;  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

As we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, we remember that through the paschal mystery we have died and been buried with him in baptism. To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him.

Therefore I invite you to proclaim:

I reject the devil and  
all rebellion against God.  
I repent of the sins that separate me from God and my neighbour.

May the light of Christ, rising in glory, banish all darkness from our hearts and minds as we proclaim:

I turn to Christ as Saviour.  
I submit to Christ as Lord.  
I come to Christ, the way, the truth  
and the life.

## **The Easter Acclamation**

Alleluia, Christ is risen.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

## Gloria in Excelsis

Glory to God in the highest,  
and peace to his people on earth.  
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.  
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father;  
receive our prayer.  
For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
With the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

### Reflection.

Some of the Old Testament readings suggested for today have obvious connections to the situation we face today. Genesis 7 contains the story of the flood and not so long ago our talk and our media was full of the subject of local flooding. Those days of queuing for the shuttle bus to get across the bridge seem a life-time ago and yet it was only last month that the people of St David's were fearing nobody would make it through the floods to our centenary celebration. The passages from Exodus tell of the calling of Moses and his leading of the Israelites out of captivity in Egypt. Between the calling and the leaving, many plagues were suffered and this too, resonates with us today, as must the words of the prayer at the end of those readings: Blessed are you, Lord God of our salvation, ... as one who brings victory from the jaws of defeat. Heal the sick and gather the outcast and turn our shame into praise...

We are in very difficult and challenging times. For many there must seem to be no “light at the end of the tunnel” – no cause for hope. But looking at that list of Old Testament readings, what hope did many of the key characters there see? Abraham being asked to sacrifice the son he never thought he’d have; Naomi, widowed and bereft of both her sons; Daniel thrown to the lions or Jonah thrown overboard and swallowed by a fish. What cause for hope did any of them have? Yet through their stories we have great cause for hope. Their courage and faithfulness are examples to all of us and, even more than this, we see through their experiences, the faithfulness of God.

To follow God is not to be exempt from suffering; indeed, it was precisely because they followed him that many have faced suffering. It was because of his faithfulness that Christ endured the suffering of Good Friday. But it is also because of his faithfulness that we can, today celebrate, even though alone and cut off from one another and our loved ones, the great victory which Christ won for us all.

By God’s grace and faithfulness, we will come through the challenges and sadness of this time. Perhaps not unscathed; perhaps having had to face bereavement and hardships but nonetheless, a church and community that has come together, demonstrating in many practical ways, the love, compassion, hope and provision that comes from God, through his faithful servants, to all his people.

May the hope, joy and peace of the Risen Christ be yours this Easter.  
Amen and Alleluia!

### **Prayers of Intercession**

In joy and hope let us pray to the Father:

That our risen Saviour may fill us with the joy of his glorious and life-giving resurrection.

That isolated and persecuted churches may find fresh strength in the good news of Easter

That God may grant us humility to be subject to one another in Christian love

That he may provide for those who lack food, work or shelter

That by his power war and famine may cease through all the world

That he may reveal the light of his presence to the sick, the weak and the dying

That, according to his promises, all who have died in the faith of the resurrection may be raised on the last day

That he may send the fire of the Holy Spirit upon his people, so that we may bear faithful witness to his resurrection.

Heavenly Father,

You have delivered us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of your Son;

Grant that, as his death has recalled us to life, so his continual presence in us may raise us to eternal joy;

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*You may like to end this time by saying the Lord's Prayer.*

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