

ORDER OF LITURGY FOR SUNDAY 19 APRIL 2020

GATHERING IN GOD'S NAME

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Christ is risen. Alleluia.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Let us pray.
**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.**

'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' Jesus said: 'This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself.'

**Lord, have mercy
Christ, have mercy
Lord, have mercy**

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to God's 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.**

Let us pray.

Almighty and eternal God,
the strength of those who believe
and the hope of those who doubt:
may we, who have not seen, have faith
and receive the fullness of Christ's blessing;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

First reading: Acts 2.14a, 2.22-32

¹⁴ But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: 'Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem let this be known to you, and listen to what I say.

²² 'You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know –

²³ this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law.

²⁴ But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.

²⁵ For David says concerning him,

"I saw the Lord always before me,

for he is at my right hand so that I will not be shaken;

²⁶ therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;

moreover, my flesh will live in hope.

²⁷ For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,

or let your Holy One experience corruption.

²⁸ You have made known to me the ways of life;

you will make me full of gladness with your presence."

²⁹ 'Fellow Israelites, I may say to you confidently of our ancestor David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.

³⁰ Since he was a prophet, he knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would put one of his descendants on his throne.

³¹ Foreseeing this, David spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, saying,

"He was not abandoned to Hades,

nor did his flesh experience corruption."

³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that all of us are witnesses.

Hear the word of the Lord,

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 16

- ¹ Preserve me, O God:
for in you have I taken refuge.
- ² **I have said to the Lord, You are my lord:
and all my good depends on you.**
- ³ As for those who are held holy on the earth:
the other gods in whom people delight,
- ⁴ **Though the idols are many that they run after:
their offerings of blood I will not offer,
nor take their name upon my lips.**
- ⁵ The Lord is my appointed portion and my cup:
you hold my lot in your hands.
- ⁶ **The share that has fallen to me is in pleasant places:
and a fair land is my possession.**
- ⁷ I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel:
at night also he has instructed my heart.
- ⁸ **I have set the Lord always before me:
he is at my right hand, and I shall not fall.**
- ⁹ Therefore my heart is glad and my spirit rejoices:
my flesh also shall rest secure.
- ¹⁰ **For you will not give me over to the power of death:
nor suffer your faithful one to see the Pit.**
- ¹¹ You will show me the path of life:
in your presence is the fullness of joy,
and from your right hand flow delights for evermore.

Second Reading: 1 Peter 1.1-12

¹ Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To the exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, ² who have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood: May grace and peace be yours in abundance. ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, ⁵ who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, ⁷ so that the genuineness of your faith – being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls. ¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that was to be yours made careful search and inquiry, ¹¹ inquiring about the person or time that the Spirit of Christ within them indicated, when it testified in advance to the sufferings destined for Christ and the subsequent glory. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves

but you, in regard to the things that have now been announced to you through those who brought you good news by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven – things into which angels long to look!

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John,
chapter 20, beginning at verse 19

Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁹ When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' ²² When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.' ²⁴ But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.' ²⁶ A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' ²⁸ Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' ²⁹ Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.' ³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. ³¹ But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

For the Gospel of the Lord,
praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

The sermon: from Father Alasdair

Welcome to Low Sunday.

I preached this same Sunday last year, and again, I cannot let the day pass without offering some explanation of its odd name. Here are two common reasons for it being called Low Sunday?

1. That it is "Low" in contrast to the "High" nature of Easter Sunday immediately preceding it.

2. The term “low” is more likely a corruption of the Latin word “laud”, l-a-u-d, which is the first word used in the opening of the Sarum Rite for the day. Sarum is the ancient name for the town of Canterbury where Archbishop Justin Welby now presides.

This makes a little more sense when we remember that the name for Maundy Thursday, in Holy Week, also comes from a corruption of the Latin word *Mandaute*, the first word in the Latin rite for that day.

There are two other alternative names for today:

1. I have long been associated with the Reformed Syrian Orthodox Church of St. Thomas, and, because the gospel for the day is the story of their founder, I have also known it as Thomas Sunday.

2. In some places that still use the Latin language in liturgy, it is also known as “*Quasi modo*” Sunday. In ancient tradition the Catechumens, trained through lent and brought for baptism at Easter, wore white robes all through Easter week and removed them today. In the Latin Rite, the introit for the day begins “*quasi modo geniti infantes*” which translates into “as if new-born babes”, indicating that the newly baptised came to church that day, still like new born babies only a week old.

They must from that day forward assume the role of ordinary rather than new Christians. I like that tradition, because, if you remember, I too, was baptised at the first Eucharist of Easter and spent the first week of Easter as a baby Christian.

“Low” also seems an appropriate name for this Sunday, considering our present circumstances. The whole world seems “low” at the moment, bowed down by the weight of pandemic, and the mounting number of deaths.

But, surprisingly, we in Australia seem to be doing better than many other parts of the world in controlling the spread of the pandemic. The rate of infection seems to have slowed, and the rate of death seems to also be slowing. However, we cannot be complacent. We cannot change the safeguards that are in place for us. But it does seem that there is now a glimmer of hope.

Hope is a strange thing is it not? I can fervently “hope” that dinner will be on the table tonight and it probably will be. I can also “hope” that my next holiday will be a trip to Mars, but that will probably not happen. Hope can involve both unlikely possibilities and high probabilities, but we, as Christians, are unique in that we hold to a sure and certain hope that we, through the death and resurrection of Jesus, will be united with him in the new eternal life. Our hope lies in that promise of God, that through his Son, our existence does not end with our mortal death.

That is an amazing thing.... It is also the central theme of all our readings today.

In Acts 2: 24 St Peter tells us 24 But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.

The Psalmist tells us in verses 9-11, 9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure. 10 For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit. 11 You show me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy;

In St Peter's epistle he again writes, 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

In the Gospel according to St. John we read of Thomas who has lost his hope, because he thinks his teacher is dead. When told by the other Disciples ...“We have seen the Lord.” Thomas, in despair, says ...“Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

But his hope is restored by Jesus showing him his wounds and saying to Thomas, ... “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!”

His faith is restored; his hope in the promise of new life after death is restored in seeing Jesus already in that new life.

Christians, too, hold that hope for we are people of hope. We are not a people grasping at straws, for our hope is sure and certain. Our lives are sustained by our hope, So we understand what it is to have a real hope that allows us to look forward through all the trials and tribulations of life, even through the drastic effects of pandemic, to see the coming light.

We also know what it means to wait in hope. It is not about setting dates and times, but rather enduring through the dates and times, waiting for God's time for the right things to happen. This is where we are today. Waiting. Watching, Persevering. Hoping. Do not let your sense of hope be blanketed in despair. Likewise, do not let your sense of hope lead you to false expectations. Rather, live your life patiently, remembering those words from the Psalmist: 8 I keep the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure. 10 For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit. 11 You show me the path of life.

Remember, too, our Easter declaration of our faith and our hope:

Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed!

Let us together affirm the faith of the Church:

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge
the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the
forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Confident that God hears the prayers of those who cry out in faith, we lift our voices on behalf of those who are most in need.

That those who lead and guide us in the Church will be inspired by the example of the early Christian community of faith:

We pray to the Lord...**Lord, hear our prayer.**

That those entrusted with leadership in nations around the world, will work for peace and justice, casting aside ways of violence and oppression.

We pray to the Lord...**Lord, hear our prayer.**

That those who are entrusted with the care of the sick and the elderly remain faithful in their ministry and find strength in this time of uncertainty from our Saviour, risen from the dead.

We pray to the Lord...**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For those whose faith has been shaken or has been overtaken by doubt in this time of pandemic, that they may see the Risen Lord in our communities and in the way that we treat one another with mercy and compassion.

We pray to the Lord...**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all survivors of abuse and trauma, that they have the courage to tell their story and seek healing; that they may be consoled by the presence of Christ in their dark moments as they process their trauma.

We pray to the Lord...**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all who are on the frontlines of this pandemic, especially our health care workers, for all who are unable to stay at home, but must work to provide for their families, may God continue to protect them and keep them in good health.

We pray to the Lord...**Lord, hear our prayer.**

That all of us gathered in our homes, or wherever we are, watching this mass, may we know the peace of the Lord that banishes all fear.

We pray to the Lord...**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For our sick, especially remembering Miriam, Dianne, Kent, Lorraine, Neville, Nancy, Kate, Russ, Betty, Jessie, Don, Jim, Alma, Muriel, Faye, Eileen, Nola, and Margaret; May the risen Christ visit them with healing power and new hope. For all who have died; and we remember today Jean Senior, Mary Lines, Nancy Flowers, and Doug Mitchell whose anniversaries occur this week: May they live forever with Christ in the glory of the resurrection.

We pray to the Lord...**Lord, hear our prayer.**

For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us be still before the Lord.

We pray to the Lord... Lord, hear our Prayer.

Almighty God, you have promised to hear our prayers.

**Grant that what we have asked in faith
we may by your grace receive,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Jesus said: Come to me all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11.28

Jesus said: I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

John 6.35

Let us pray

**We do not presume
to come to your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ,
and to drink his blood,
that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us. Amen.**

Christ our Passover Lamb has been offered for us, therefore we come to celebrate the festival.

Silence may be kept.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, with a sincere and a true heart.

**Merciful God,
our maker and our judge,
we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,
and in what we have failed to do:
we have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves;
we repent, and are sorry for all our sins.
Father, forgive us.
Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Almighty God,
who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith:
pardon you and set you free from all your sins,

strengthen you in all goodness
and keep you in eternal life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE GREETING OF PEACE

We are the body of Christ.
His Spirit is with us.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation.
Through your goodness we have these gifts to share.
Accept and use our offerings for your glory
and for the service of your kingdom.
Blessed be God for ever.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere,
mighty Creator, everliving God.
We give you thanks and praise for your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who by the power of your Spirit was born of Mary
and lived as one of us.
By his death on the cross,
he offered the one true sacrifice for sin,
and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people.
And now we give you thanks that you raised him to life triumphant,
and exalted him in glory.
By his victory over death,
the reign of sin is ended,
a new day has dawned,
a broken world is restored
and we are made whole once more.
Therefore with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name,

for ever praising you and singing:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Merciful God, we thank you
for these gifts of your creation,
this bread and wine,
and we pray that by your Word and Holy Spirit,
we who eat and drink them
may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.

On the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread;
and when he had given you thanks
he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying,
'Take, eat. This is my body given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper, he took the cup,
and again giving you thanks
he gave it to his disciples, saying,
'Drink from this, all of you.
This is my blood of the new covenant
shed for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'
Therefore we do as our Saviour has commanded:
proclaiming his offering of himself
made once for all upon the cross,
his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,
and looking for his coming again,
we celebrate, with this bread and this cup,
his one perfect and sufficient sacrifice
for the sins of the whole world.

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Renew us by your Holy Spirit,
unite us in the body of your Son,
and bring us with all your people
into the joy of your eternal kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
with whom, and in whom,
in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
we worship you, Father,

in songs of never-ending praise:

**Blessing and honour and glory and power
are yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

As our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are confident to pray,

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.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours

now and for ever. Amen.

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD AND THE COMMUNION

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

We who are many are one body,

for we all share in the one bread.

THE SENDING OUT OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Eternal God, giver of life,

in the breaking of the bread we know the risen Lord.

May we who celebrate this holy feast

walk in his risen light and bring new life to all creation.

Father,

we offer ourselves to you

as a living sacrifice

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Send us out in the power of your Spirit

to live and work to your praise and glory.

The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you what is pleasing in his sight; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**