

The Second Sunday of Easter 12th April 2026



This Sunday is commonly known as Low Sunday. But it is probable that 'low' comes from *laudes*, the Latin word for praises. Our praises are to be continued on the first Sunday after Easter and indeed on every Sunday of the year and on every day of our lives.

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with you.

HYMN

1 The strife is o'er, the battle done,
the victory of life is won;
the song of triumph has begun.
Alleluia!

2 Death's mightiest powers have done their worst,
And Jesus hath his foes dispersed:
Let shouts of praise and joy outburst.
Alleluia!

3 On the third morn he rose again,
Glorious in majesty to reign:
O let us swell the joyful strain.
Alleluia!

4 He brake the age-bound chains of hell,
the bars from heaven's high portals fell;
let hymns of praise his triumphs tell!
Alleluia!

5 Lord! by the stripes which wounded thee,
from death's dread sting thy servants free,
that we may live and sing to thee.
Alleluia!

Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed for us.
Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all malice and evil
and confessing our sins with a sincere and true heart.

Like Mary at the empty tomb,
we fail to grasp the wonder of your presence.
Lord, have mercy.
Like the disciples behind locked doors,
we are afraid to be seen as your followers.
Christ, have mercy.
Like Thomas in the upper room,
we are slow to believe.
Lord, have mercy.

The Lord absolve you from your offences,+
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Amen.

Absolution

The Collect

Let us pray for a closer union with Christ in his suffering and in his glory.

Almighty Father,
you have given your only Son to die for our sins
and to rise again for our justification:
grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness
that we may always serve you
in pureness of living and truth;
through the merits of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
All Amen.

The first reading from Scripture
Acts 2. 14a, 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.

Psalm 16

Song of Trust and Security in God

1 Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge.
2 I say to the Lord, ‘You are my Lord;
I have no good apart from you.’
3 As for the holy ones in the land, they are the noble,
in whom is all my delight.

4 Those who choose another god multiply their sorrows;
their drink-offerings of blood I will not pour out
or take their names upon my lips.



5 The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup;
you hold my lot.
6 The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
I have a goodly heritage.
7 I bless the Lord who gives me counsel;
in the night also my heart instructs me.
8 I keep the Lord always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
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 your right hand are pleasures for evermore.

The second reading from Scripture
1 Peter 1. 3-9

A Living Hope

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.

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

HYMN

1 Alleluia, alleluia!
Hearts to heaven and voices raise:
sing to God a hymn of gladness,
sing to God a hymn of praise.
He, who on the cross a victim,
for the world's salvation bled,
Jesus Christ, the King of glory,
now is risen from the dead.

3 Christ is risen, we are risen!
Shed upon us heavenly grace,
rain and dew and gleams of glory
from the brightness of thy face;
that we, with our hearts in heaven,
here on earth may fruitful be,
and by angel hands be gathered,
and be ever, Lord, with thee.

2. Christ is risen, Christ, the first fruits
of the holy harvest field,
which will all its full abundance
at his second coming yield:
then the golden ears of harvest
will their heads before him wave,
ripened by his glorious sunshine
from the furrows of the grave.

4. Alleluia, alleluia!
Glory be to God on high;
Alleluia! to the Saviour
who has gained the victory;
Alleluia! to the Spirit,
fount of love and sanctity:
Alleluia, alleluia!
to the Triune Majesty.

The Gospel
John 20. 19-end

Alleluia, alleluia.

Jesus said, 'All who see the Son and believe in him may
have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.'
Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John
All Glory be to thee O Lord

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,^[e] the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

This is the gospel of the Lord
Praise to you O Christ

Reflection

Did you notice in today's reading that the disciples are in hiding, with all the doors *locked, frightened* that their link with Jesus would get them arrested or even killed. They certainly would not have opened the door to anyone. They are locked in not just by physical doors but also by fear, anger, and disappointment. They are unaware that the story has not ended.....

It seems that Jesus just cannot be locked out. I have heard some people who are exploring the Christian faith, say a sort of, "Oh bother!" or words to that effect. They become aware of faith in Jesus 'nibbling away' at them, – or they keep 'bumping into it'. Its all rather like the 'Hound of Heaven' coming after us. It is both affirming and rather unsettling. It seems doors are ineffective, so maybe we do not have the control we think we do.

C S Lewis writes: 'There comes a moment when people who have been dabbling in religion - man's search for God - suddenly drawback. Supposing we really found him? We never meant it to come to that! Worse still supposing he found us! So it's a sort of Rubicon - one goes across or not. But if one does there's no manner of security against miracles. One may be in for *anything*.'

Today we read Jesus comes and stands among them – uninvited – unexpected – unimagined.

Jesus' disciples are at their lowest point, yet Jesus speaks only words of peace which address all their unspoken thoughts and feelings. Their fear, shock, shame about how they had behaved in deserting him. Perhaps they were frightened about what he might say. All this mixed, with joy, disbelief.

But Thomas was not with them and we don't know why. How must he have felt every time he heard them going over it again and again – in ones and twos, maybe in whispers – and he is left out. It doesn't matter how many times they tell him Jesus is risen – it's not the same.

Did he feel disappointed, sad, perhaps? Maybe he felt frustrated and angry. Did he resent the others, is he angry with himself – is he even angry with Jesus? Why did Jesus come when he was not there, what does this say about their relationship – why would Jesus leave him out? He is deeply hurt. Does this help us understand his words "I won't believe unless I see for myself, unless I touch him".

It is in Thomas' character to have things clear and straightforward; he is not moved by emotion but by clear knowledge and decisions. For example, when Jesus decides to return to Judea to the home of Lazarus who had died, it meant entering dangerous territory where Jesus was a wanted man. The disciples do not want to go. It is Thomas who makes the decision for them all. Clear and dispassionate, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

When Jesus explained that he was going away to prepare a heavenly home for his followers, and that one day they would join him there. Thomas asks for clear directions. "Lord, we know not where you are going and how can we know the way? So nothing but living proof is going to convince him Jesus is alive. This is a man who thinks deeply and clearly. Now, eight days later, with Thomas present Jesus enters the locked room.

There is great tenderness in all Jesus' appearances to his friends after his resurrection. He does not do anything spectacular; he quietly calls Mary by her name for she is blinded by her tears; he cooks breakfast for his friends and asks Peter three times to confirm his love to help him overcome the three times when, through fear, he denies Jesus. Now he gives Thomas just what he needs. "Thomas, look, look at my hands and side, touch me it is really me."

Disciples locked in through fear, Thomas locked in through doubt, Mary at the tomb locked in through grief, Peter who betrayed Jesus, locked in through failure. And what locks us in? What rooms are there that we think Jesus will not, or cannot, or must not enter, for we are ashamed, or want to keep back 'something for ourselves'?

What in our lives closes and bolts the doors and prevents us from believing differently to be open to change and newness. What self-confidence and pride prevent this? Or is it uncertainty and doubt. Or perhaps we just cannot imagine what difference it might make, or even if 'God would recognise 'little me''

Do we even have any desire or belief that we could be healed and helped and to begin to become the person we feel we could be in our best moments, the person we want to be? How hard is it to 'open the door' – just to ask – "Jesus come and help me."?

Jesus is not bound by time and space, so his words to Thomas are also for us, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet come to believe”. We are blessed by Jesus because we believe and, in our acting on that belief – in our *having* faith in him. We experience the same Jesus who calls us by name and knows us, all our hurts and failures, all our guilt and shame, all our hopes and longings. In truth, no door can keep him out.

I guess Thomas could have decided never to go back to that meeting room, he could have stayed away hurt and separated, or angry and sceptical. It isn't easy to push past disappointment, embarrassment or pride but he did it.

Jesus is always waiting for our invitation to enter our lives, and every day is a fresh opportunity to begin again to ask him to be with us. But he is also already ahead of us, vibrantly and dazzlingly present. Here he meets our faith with his healing power, if only we, like Thomas, will stretch out our hands.

Risen Christ,
for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred:
open the doors of our hearts,
that we may seek the good of others
and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace,
to the praise of God the Father. Amen

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
For the church worldwide – those in freedom and
Those isolated and persecuted
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, to comfort and strengthen them ...

That God according to his promises will bring
all who have died in the faith of the resurrection
to be raised on the last day ...

That God may send afresh the power of the Holy Spirit upon his people,
so that we may bear faithful witness to the resurrection of Jesus
and the hope that is set before us.

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.
so we pray
Father, hear our prayer. Amen.

In the compassion of God we 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.
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.

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

HYMN

1 This joyful Eastertide away with sin and
sorrow!
My love, the crucified, hath sprung to life this
morrow

Refrain:

*Had Christ, who once was slain,
ne'er burst his three-day prison,
our faith had been in vain.
But now hath Christ arisen, arisen,
arisen*

2 My flesh in hope shall rest and for a season
slumber
till trumpets east to west shall wake the dead in
number. [Refrain]

3 Death's flood hath lost its chill since Jesus
crossed the river.
Lover of souls, from ill my passing soul deliver.
[Refrain]