

# CELEBRATION OF THE WORD

Easter Sunday

*This is a celebration of the Word to aid your worship this Sunday, alone or with family. If possible, place a simple cross or crucifix prominently in the room and light one or more candles. You can also place an image of the Virgin Mary there if possible. As a family, choose the one who leads the prayer, and someone to do the readings.*

*Whoever leads the prayer can say:*

We rejoice today in faith, knowing that Jesus is risen from the dead. Despite our very unusual and difficult circumstances, we believe, as Pope Francis said, that “this message resounds in the Church the world over. He remained two days in the tomb; but his death contained God’s love in all its power, released and made manifest on the third day, the day we celebrate today: the Easter of Christ the Lord. The words heard by the women at the tomb are also addressed to us: *Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.* Death, solitude and fear are not the last word. There is a word that transcends them, a word that only God can speak: it is the word of the Resurrection.” On this day we take heart, confident that Christ has made good on all he promised. He is truly risen, as he said. We entrust ourselves, our families, and especially all those who have died recently, to the Risen Lord.

## **SIGN OF THE CROSS**

*After a moment of silence, let everyone begin by making the Sign of the Cross:*

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## **HYMN**

*Choose an appropriate hymn.*

*We place ourselves before the Lord, beginning with an act of contrition:*

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.

**G**lory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,

Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.  
Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
    have mercy on us;  
you take away the sins of the world,  
    receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
    have mercy on us.  
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.

**Or:**

**G**loria in excelsis Deo  
et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.  
Laudamus te,  
benedicimus te,  
adoramus te,  
glorificamus te,  
gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam,  
Domine Deus, Rex caelestis,  
Deus Pater omnipotens.  
Domine Fili Unigenite, Iesu Christe,  
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris,  
qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis;  
qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram.  
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis.  
Quoniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dominus,  
    tu solus Altissimus,  
Iesu Christe, cum Sancto Spiritu: in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

*The following are the readings of Easter Sunday.*

*We ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.*

**A reading from  
the Acts of the Apostles**

**10:34a, 37-43**

**P**ETER PROCEEDED to speak and said: “You know what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism

that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree. This man God raised on the third day and granted that he be visible, not to all the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.”

The word of the Lord.

— .PSALM 118. —

*R/* (24) This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.

**Or:** Alleluia.

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,  
for his mercy endures forever.

Let the house of Israel say,

“His mercy endures forever.” *R/*

“The right hand of the LORD has struck with power;  
the right hand of the LORD is exalted.

I shall not die, but live,

and declare the works of the LORD.” *R/*

The stone which the builders rejected  
has become the cornerstone.

By the LORD has this been done;

it is wonderful in our eyes. *R/*

*Seek what is above, where Christ is.*

**A reading from**

**the Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians**

**3:1-4**

**B**ROTHERS AND SISTERS: If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory.

The word of the Lord.

**Or:**

*Clear out the old yeast, so that you may become a fresh batch of dough.*

**B**ROTHERS AND SISTERS: Do you not know that a little yeast leavens all the dough? Clear out the old yeast, so that you may become a fresh batch of dough, inasmuch as you are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us celebrate the feast, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

The word of the Lord.

—•SEQUENCE•—  
*Victimæ paschali laudes*

Christians, to the Paschal Victim

Offer your thankful praises!

A Lamb the sheep redeems;

Christ, who only is sinless,

Reconciles sinners to the Father.

Death and life have contended

in that combat stupendous:

The Prince of life, who died, reigns immortal.

Speak, Mary, declaring

What you saw, wayfaring.

“The tomb of Christ, who is living,

The glory of Jesus’ resurrection;

bright angels attesting,

The shroud and napkin resting.

Yes, Christ my hope is arisen;

To Galilee he goes before you.”

Christ indeed from death is risen, our new life obtaining.

Have mercy, victor King, ever reigning!

Amen. Alleluia.

**Or:**

*Victimæ paschali laudes*

*Immolent Christiani.*

*Agnus redemit oves:*

*Christus innocens Patri*

*Reconciliavit peccatores.*

*Mors et vita duello*

*Confluxere mirando:*

*Dux vitæ mortuus regnat vivus.*

*Dic nobis Maria,*

*Quid vidisti in via?*

*Sepulcrum Christi viventis,  
Et gloriam vidi resurgentis  
Angelicos testes,  
Sudarium, et vestes.  
Surrexit Christus spes mea:  
Præcedet suos in Galilæam.  
Scimus Christum surrexisse  
A mortuis vere:  
Tu nobis, victor Rex, miserere.  
Amen. Alleluia.*

**Alleluia, alleluia.** Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed;/ let us then feast with joy in the Lord. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

**At an afternoon or evening Mass, another Gospel may be read: Luke 24:13-35—*Stay with us since it is almost evening.***

**The Gospel from the Easter Vigil may also be read in place of the following Gospel at any time of the day.**

*He had to rise from the dead.*

**A reading from  
the holy Gospel according to John**

**20:1-9**

**O**N THE FIRST day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, “They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don’t know where they put him.” So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Allow for a few minutes of silence and meditation. In a family, the leader could offer some words of consolation at this moment, such as: “Jesus, you have risen from the dead. You have conquered sin, death, and all that would separate us from eternal life and eternal happiness with you in heaven. Today, on this Easter, we unite ourselves to you in the firm belief that in you we rise too! Your Resurrection is our resurrection, for by grace we already live a new life, *your life*. With Mary Magdalene and the disciples, we confess our belief in your Resurrection, and we seek to share this saving truth with all we know.”**

### *The Heartbeat of the Risen Lord*

*After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. We can picture them as they went on their way. They walked like people going to a cemetery, with uncertain and weary steps, like those who find it hard to believe that this is how it all ended. We can picture their faces, pale and tearful. And their question: can Love have truly died?*

Unlike the disciples, the women are present—just as they had been present as the Master breathed his last on the cross, and then, with Joseph of Arimathea, as he was laid in the tomb. Two women who did not run away, who remained steadfast.... *And suddenly there was a great earthquake. Unexpectedly, those women felt a powerful tremor, as something or someone made the earth shake beneath their feet. Once again, someone came to tell them: Do not be afraid, but now adding: He has been raised as he said!...*

The heartbeat of the Risen Lord is granted us as a gift, a present, a new horizon. The beating heart of the Risen Lord is given to us, and we are asked to give it in turn as a transforming force, as the leaven of a new humanity. In the resurrection, Christ rolled back the stone of the tomb, but he wants also to break down all the walls that keep us locked in our sterile pessimism.... That is what Easter calls us to proclaim: the heartbeat of the Risen Lord. Christ is alive! That is what quickened the pace of Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. That is what made them return in haste to tell the news. That is what made them lay aside their mournful gait and sad looks. They returned to the city to meet up with the others.

Now that, like the two women, we have visited the tomb, I ask you to go back with them to the city. Let us all retrace our steps and change the look on our faces. Let us go back with them to tell the news.... In all those places where the grave seems to have the final word, where death seems the only way out. Let us go back to proclaim, to share, to reveal that it is true: the Lord is alive! He is living and he wants to rise again in all those faces that have buried hope, buried dreams, buried dignity.... Let us go, then. Let us allow ourselves to be surprised by this new dawn and by the newness that Christ alone can give. May we allow his tenderness and his love to guide our steps. May we allow the beating of his heart to quicken our faintness of heart.

*Pope Francis*

*His Holiness Pope Francis was elected to the See of Saint Peter in 2013.*

## **INTERCESSIONS**

*The leader can begin with these words:*

Basking in the light of the Paschal candle, and enlivened by the joy of our Easter Alleluia, we turn to our heavenly Father:

*R* Lord, hear our prayer!

That the Resurrection of Jesus Christ will endow the Church with new life, and draw many people to conversion: Let us pray to the Lord. *R*

That the light of Christ will strengthen and direct all civil leaders, especially during this time of great suffering in our nation: Let us pray to the Lord. *R*

That Christ, risen from the dead, will bless our parish, and our families, and all those who are continue to be on the front lines of the coronavirus pandemic. Let us pray to the Lord. *R*

For the grace to be faithful in living our Catholic faith, and to be able to return to Mass and receive the sacraments again soon. Let us pray to the Lord. *R*

For the suffering and the dying, that, aided by Mary's intercession, they will be given the grace to persevere in hope. Let us pray to the Lord. *R*

For all of the faithful departed, that they may rise to eternal and glorious life with Christ and all the saints in heaven. Let us pray to the Lord. *R*

That each of us will experience the power of the Resurrection in the areas of our lives where we need it most. Let us pray to the Lord. *R*

Loving Father, Christ your Son is risen from the dead. Bless us, with the assurance of his presence in our lives, for Jesus is our Lord, now and for ever. *R*

**Personal intentions**

Our Father....

*An Act of Spiritual Communion:*

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You.

*May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and lead us to everlasting life. And may the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen. Alleluia, alleluia.*

*To conclude the celebration, you can sing one of the following antiphons, or another hymn. Turn and face an image of Mary, if you have one.*



**Q**ueen of heaven, rejoice, alleluia.  
The Son whom you merited to bear, alleluia,  
has risen as he said, alleluia.  
Pray for us to God, alleluia.

*U* Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary,  
alleluia!

*R* For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia!

**Or:**

*R*egina caeli, laetare, alleluia,  
quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia,  
resurrexit sicut dixit, alleluia;  
ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.

*U* Gaude et laetare, Virgo Maria, alleluia.

*R* Quia surrexit Dominus vere, alleluia.

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