**Morning Praise @ Home 9th April**

**Easter Sunday**

**Opening prayer**

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and**

**repent.** **Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us**

**from our sin.** **Renew a right spirit within us** **and restore us to the joy of your salvation,** **through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image

to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Bible Readings Colossians 3: 1 – 4 John 20: 1 – 18

**Reflection from John Coyne**

***How the Resurrection Changes Everything***

Philippa is the 20 year old daughter of a Christian Minister and had completely turned away from Christianity and Church. She is bright and full of initiative. She decided not to go to university but to work overseas as a teaching assistant. Whilst there she hit a crisis and it emerged that she had been taking drugs for a few years. To everyone’s surprise Philippa joined a Christian community and in addition she freely came to a personal faith in Christ and has been baptised. She is flourishing.

Her life has been truly turned around.

Trevor is a skilled musician who went to church principally for the music. When his Church had a period of Easter outreach Trevor volunteered to help with the music. Then it dawned on him that in spite of being at home in a Church he had no relationship with God. This dawned on him quite suddenly and he approached the minster who led him into a genuine relationship with the Risen Lord Jesus – on Easter Sunday afternoon.

What about you? It’s great that you are here but do you actually know the risen Lord Jesus this Easter?

You might come from a Christian home or love Christian music but do you know the Lord who himself conquered death and lives for evermore. He’s Alive! You can know him!

Because we have regular communion services we think about the death of Jesus often, but what about the history-changing resurrection of Jesus. It’s not just for Easter!

For Christians all over the world, every Sunday is Resurrection Sunday. We meet each week, among other things, in order to celebrate the glorious, wondrous fact that Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus’ resurrection really did change everything.

It changed the cross from a tragedy into a triumph, and it changed the Roman Empire from a place where Christians lived for centuries under persecution into a place which allowed Christians to flourish. This was the most powerful divine event in the history of creation, and it ushered in a new age of God’s Spirit’s activity and power in saving and transforming lives.

Let me offer you a life changing perspective.

If Jesus was not fully and irreversibly raised from the dead, I recommend that you leave today and never return. If you are the last out the door, lock it and let this building fall down. It counts for nothing.

Beautiful architecture is no substitute for a living faith in the risen Christ.

**That’s how much the truth of the resurrection matters**

When considering if Christianity is true, it all boils down to whether Jesus rose from the dead. The lives of Christians today are to be a living - walking demonstration that the resurrection is still changing people.

* It changes fear into love, despair into joy.
* The resurrection changes people from being spiritually dead to being alive to God.
* It changes guilt and brokenness into a celebration of forgiveness and freedom.
* It changes anxiety into a hope that goes beyond the grave. It can transform our sinful lives so that we want to follow the Lord Jesus. Because we neglect to emphasize this truth, many Christians have a meagre expectation of the extent to which we can today experience resurrection life and victory over sin. The resurrection is far from being something we only benefit from in the future!

*The resurrection is far from being something we only benefit from in the future!*

John MacArthur claimed:

The Resurrection is the ground of our assurance, it is the basis for all our future hopes, and it is the source of power in our daily lives here and now. It gives us courage in the midst of persecution, comfort in the midst of trials, and hope in the midst of this world’s darkness.2

The Resurrection and the Holy Spirit who came at Pentecost turn the resurrection from a historic event two millennia back into a lived experience today. It is no accident that many of these things that MacArthur credits to the resurrection are elsewhere also attributed to the activity of God the Holy Spirit—namely assurance – Romans 8: 16-24, a source of power and inspiration in our daily lives – Romans 8:4 and a comfort – John 14: 16, 26.

Through his resurrection Jesus now comes to us through his “life-giving Spirit” 1 Corinthians 15:45. We become a whole new kind of human being, and it enables us to share in this new life. What the Spirit does for believers today is only possible as a result of the resurrection. Not only that, but Paul tells us in three places that Christians have already been raised with Christ:

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Colossians 3:1.

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. Romans 6:4.

God . . . made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him. Ephesians 2:5-6.

The future with God has already begun. There is more to come but by the resurrection of Jesus we can start that future now.

Christians are therefore already being changed by Jesus’ resurrection. Jesus really is alive today. Because of this Christians are also alive in a whole new way.

That is a vital reality for Individual Christians and the Church as a family.

The same power that raised Christ from the dead is living in every true Christian. God wants us not just to believe in Jesus’ resurrection but to be transformed by it and to receive the power we need to live the way that Jesus made gloriously possible. **Amen**

**Affirmation of faith**

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

**We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

**Prayers of intercession led by Sue Coyne**

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, and that we may corporately and individually experience more of God’s reviving Spirit, encouraging us to trust and to step out beyond what is familiar,

as he leads us into new life:

*we pray to the Father.* **Hear our prayer.**

We pray that isolated and persecuted churches may find fresh strength in the good news of Easter, especially remembering before him the Christian communities in Nigeria and Sri Lanka who are subject to intimidation and persecution.

*we pray to the Father.* **Hear our prayer.**

We ask that God may grant us humility to be subject to one another in Christian love, particularly remembering the conflicted communities of Northern Ireland as, 25 years on, they develop the positive legacies of the Good Friday Agreement:

*we pray to the Father.* **Hear our prayer.**

Father God, please provide for those who lack food, work or shelter. We raise before you those refugees who are being moved from hotels to ex-military accommodation, and who have been held back from integrating into the workforce or pursuing their education:

*we pray to the Father.* **Hear our prayer.**

We pray to our Creator that by his power war and famine may cease through all the world. Especially we think of the increasing tension between Israelis and Palestinians and ask for your peace to quell the anger. We also ask that you are a solace to Ukrainians weary from continual bombardment and desecration:

*we pray to the Father.* **Hear our prayer.**

We pray that our Father God reveals the light of his presence to the sick, the weak and the dying,

to comfort and strengthen them.

In silence our hearts remember those we know personally …. :

*we pray to the Father.* **Hear our prayer.**

Lord of life, defeater of death, we ask that you may send the fire of the Holy Spirit upon us, your people,

so that we may bear faithful witness to your resurrection to this community and all those we meet via work and social contacts:

*we pray to the Father.* **Hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father,

By the Cross and Resurrection 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.**

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

**The Lord’s Prayer** As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

***Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come,******Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be, that you may live and work to his praise and glory, and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen**