

Sibyls Service – Easter Thursday 8th April 2021

An evening service with a time of reflection on the experiences of the three women, Mary Magdalen, Mary the mother of James, and Salome who came to Jesus' tomb early on the first Easter morning.

This service uses material from the Iona Community's "A Wee Worship Book" ©1999 Wild Goose Resources Group, from the Celtic Resource Book © Martin Wallace, from the Celtic Daily Prayer book of the Northumbria Community, and by David Adam who was for many years vicar of Lindisfarne.

Words in italics will be read by the service leader.

Everyone is invited to join in the words in bold print.

Opening responses

*Come, Lord Jesus,
you too were tired
when day was done;
you met your friends at evening time.*
COME, LORD JESUS.

*Come, Lord Jesus,
you too enjoyed
when nights drew on;
you told your tales at close of day.*
COME, LORD JESUS.

*Come, Lord Jesus,
you kindled faith
when lamps were low;
you opened scriptures,
broke the bread,
and shed your light
as darkness fell.*
COME, LORD JESUS, MEET US HERE.

Music *Words from Celtic Daily Prayer, Northumbria Community.
Music by Keith Duke.*

Here am I, Lord,
I've come to do your will;
Here am I, Lord,
In your presence I am still.

Praise

READER A:

You opened our eyes,
to see how the hands of the rich were empty
and the hearts of the poor were full.
You dared to take the widow's mite
the child's loaves,
the babe at the breast,
and in these simple things
to point out the Path to your Kingdom.
You said, 'Follow me!',
for on our own we could never discover
that in Christ
there is neither Jew nor Gentile,
neither male nor female:
**ALL ARE ONE IN JESUS CHRIST
AND FOR THIS WE PRAISE YOU.**

READER B:

You gave us hands to hold:
black hands and white hands,
gay hands and trans' hands,
the clasping hands of lovers,
and the reluctant hands of those
who don't believe they are worth holding'
And when we wanted to shake our fist,
you still wanted to hold our hand,
because in Christ
there is neither Jew nor Gentile,
neither male nor female:
**ALL ARE ONE IN JESUS CHRIST
AND FOR THIS WE PRAISE YOU.**

READER C:

Here in the company
of the neighbour whom we know
and the stranger in our midst,
and the self from whom we turn,
we ask to love as Jesus loved.
Make this the place and time, good Lord,
when heaven and earth merge into one,
and we in word and flesh can grasp
that in Christ
there is neither Jew nor Gentile,
neither male nor female:
**ALL ARE ONE IN JESUS CHRIST,
AND FOR THIS WE PRAISE YOU.**

A reflection on the Resurrection

During Holy Week, the days and leading up to Easter the church reflects deeply on Jesus' death. Easter Day arrives, we celebrate and then go home. And so it is, that we proclaim the miracle of Resurrection but seldom meditate on the events of that first Easter morning.

Each Gospel tells us that it was women who were the first to believe. This evening I invite you to reflect with me on the emotions they may have experienced.

Compassion

READER A:

Mark, in our earliest account of the Resurrection, tells us:

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalen, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go and anoint Jesus' body. Very early, on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb.¹

Despite the tragedy and disappointment of the previous days the women are filled with compassion and face danger and uncertainty.

Can we recall a time when in the face of disappointment and uncertainty and possibly danger, we acted out of compassion for another?

silence

Anxiety

READER B:

They worried out loud to each other, "Who will roll back the stone from the tomb for us?". Then they looked up, saw that it had been rolled back – it was a huge stone and they walked right in².

The women face the anxiety and uncertainty which so often accompany death as they approach Jesus' tomb.

Are there times we can recall when we have been anxious or uncertain?

Silence

¹ Mark 16 vs 1-2 (New International Version)

² Mark 16 vs 3-5 (The Message by Eugene H. Peterson)

Fear and bewilderment

READER C:

They entered the tomb where they saw a young man sitting on the right, wearing a white robe – and they were alarmed.

So, they went out and ran from the tomb, distressed and terrified. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.³

Despite the young man's reassuring words the women are terrified.

Can we recall times in our lives when we were quite literally engulfed by fear and bewilderment

Silence

Waiting, sorrow and loss

READER A:

John's Gospel focuses on Mary Magdalen:

But Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away" she said, "and I don't know where they have put him".⁴

The Mary's agony is beyond words.

There may have been times when we too have experienced such loss.

Silence

Relief and Joy

READER B:

Mary turned away and saw Jesus standing there. But she did not recognise him.

Jesus spoke to her, "woman why do you weep? Who are you looking for?"

She thinking that he was the gardener, said, "Mister, if you took him, tell me where you have put him so I can care for him".

Jesus said, "Mary".

Turning to face him she said in Hebrew Rabboni!" meaning "Teacher!"

Jesus said, " Don't cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go to my brothers and tell them, "I ascend to my Father and your Father, my God and your God".

³ Mark 16 v.5 and v.8 (Good News Bible)

⁴ John 21 vs 11 – 13 (NIV)

Mary Magdalen went, telling the news to the disciples: I saw the Master!" And she told them everything he said to her.⁵

Joy also beyond words

Are there times when have we experienced such joy?

silence

Disbelief

READER C:

Luke who is keen to stress the role of women in his Gospel adds:
But they (the disciples) did not believe the women, because their words seemed like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb.⁶

The women had experienced profound truth, but were not believed.

We may have shared the experience of our truth being disbelieved or disregarded.

MUSIC an Evening dedication words by David Adam and music by Keith Duke

Here are my thoughts, Lord,
here is my mind.
Here are my deeds, Lord,
help me unwind.
Here is my strength, Lord,
here is my will.
Here is my life, Lord,
help me be still.

Here is my heart, Lord,
here is my hope.
Here is my love, Lord,
help me to cope.
Here is my time, Lord,
here is my might.
Here I am thine, Lord,
bless me tonight.

⁵ John 21 vs 14 – 18 (The Message)

⁶ Luke 24 vs 11 – 12 (NIV)

Affirmations

The Lord of the empty tomb
The Conqueror of gloom
COME TO US

READER A:

The Lord in the garden walking
The Lord of Mary talking
COME TO US

READER B:

The Lord of the Upper Room
Dispelling fear and doom
COME TO US

READER C:

The Lord on the road to Emmaus
The Lord giving hope to Thomas
COME TO US

Prayers of Intercession:

(After each category, anyone may offer a name or short prayer for those brought to mind).

Let us say a prayer for those who need to be remembered tonight:

*Those who have made the news headlines today
because of what they have done or said ...*

*Those who have been brought to our attention
through a meeting or conversation ...*

*Those who are in hospital, in care,
or in a place which is strange to them ...*

*Those in whose family, marriage
or close relationship,
there is stress or a break-up ...*

*Those who are waiting for a birth, or a death,
or news which will affect their lives ...*

*For any other person or situation
which is on our minds this evening
and which we offer to God.....*

*Lord, we believe that you hear our prayer
and will be faithful to your promise to answer us.
When our eyes open again,
may they do so
not to end our devotions,
but to expect Your kingdom,
for Jesus' sake.*

Music words by Brian Clark and music by Keith Duke

Let the peace of the Father
be with you this night,
the Son keep you safe,
and the Holy Spirit Guide you in your sleep;
in your sleep, in your sleep.

Closing

We say together

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all now and always. Amen.**