**Easter Eve – *the Easter vigil***

**Saturday 11th April 2020**

**Gathering**

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ, on this most holy night, when our Lord Jesus Christ passed from death to life, the Church invites her children throughout the world to come together in vigil and prayer. This is the Passover of the Lord. We remember his death and resurrection by hearing his word and celebrating his mysteries, confident that we shall share his victory over death and live with him for ever in God.

*A candle is lit.*

May the light of Christ, rising in glory,

banish all darkness from our hearts and minds.

The Light of Christ.

*All* **Thanks be to God.**

**The Vigil**

As we await the risen Christ, let us hear the record of God’s saving deeds in history, recalling how he saved his people in ages past and in the fullness of time sent his Son to be our Redeemer; and let us pray that through this Easter celebration God may bring to perfection in each of us the saving work he has begun.

**First Reading *– Genesis 1.1-2.4a* (the Creation)**

Christ is the image of the unseen God;

*All* **through him all things were made.**

Almighty God,

you have created the heavens and the earth

and made us in your own image:

teach us to discern your hand in all your works

and your likeness in all your children;

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

*All* **Amen.**

**Second Reading *– Exodus 14.10-15.18* (crossing the Red Sea)**

The Lord is my strength and my might.

*All* **He has become my salvation.**

Lord God our redeemer,

who heard the cry of your people

and sent your servant Moses to lead them out of slavery:

free us from the tyranny of sin and death

and, by the leading of your Spirit,

bring us to our promised land;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All* **Amen.**

**Third Reading *– Ezekiel 37.1-14* (the Valley of Dry Bones)**

Christ is the resurrection and the life.

*All* **Those who believe in Christ will never die.**

Lord God of our salvation,

you speak the word to your scattered people,

and bring up our life from the valley of death:

breathe your Spirit upon your Church,

that we may live and stand before you

confident in your risen Son,

Jesus Christ, our Lord.

*All* **Amen.**

**Fourth Reading *– Zephaniah 3.14-end* (Jerusalem praises God)**

Where, O death, is your victory?

*All* **Where, O death, is your sting?**

Almighty God,

who called your Church to bear witness

that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself:

help us to proclaim the good news of your love,

that all who hear it may be drawn to you;

through him who was lifted up on the cross,

and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

*All* **Amen.**

The Sabbath is ending and the women are approaching the tomb of their crucified teacher and friend. Let us hear what happens next...

**Gospel Reading *– Matthew 28.1-10***

Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the first and the last, says the Lord, and the living one;

I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.

*All* **Alleluia!**

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

*All* **Glory to you, O Lord.**

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.”

So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

**Easter Acclamation**

*(Whispered)*

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

*All* **He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

*(Louder)*

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

*All* **He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

*(Louder still)*

Alleluia. Christ is risen!

*All* **He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

*You can celebrate! Ring bells, use the instrument you’ve got, make noise, cheer, etc.*

**Collect**

*All* **God of glory,**

**by the raising of your Son**

**you have broken the chains of death and hell:**

**fill your Church with faith and hope;**

**for a new day has dawned**

**and the way to life stands open**

**in our Saviour Jesus Christ.**

**Amen.**

**Affirmation of Faith**

*All* **I believe in God, the Father almighty,**

**creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,**

**born of the Virgin Mary,**

**suffered under Pontius Pilate,**

**was crucified, died, and was buried;**

**he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;**

**he ascended into heaven,**

**he is seated at the right hand of the Father,**

**and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,**

**the holy catholic Church,**

**the communion of saints,**

**the forgiveness of sins,**

**the resurrection of the body,**

**and the life everlasting.**

**Amen.**

**Final Prayer**

May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith,

that you may be rooted and grounded in love

and bring forth the fruit of the Spirit.

*All* **Amen.**

Alleluia. Christ is Risen!

*All* **He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**