

Today we are remembering and celebrating
Jesus resurrection

He is risen

He is risen indeed

Let's pray

Father be with us now in our worship.

Come close to us, as we come close to you.

Teach us new things about the Easter story.

Help us to learn new things.

New things about how much you love us.

And help us especially to share those new
things that we learn with people who don't know
you.

Who don't believe in you.

After we look in the empty tomb may we not run
away terrified

But instead run with joy out into the streets
To tell the whole world

Jesus is alive.

(pause)

In his name we pray, **Amen.**

Reading John 20.11-18

Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been taken away from the entrance. 2 She went running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" 3 Then Peter and the other disciple went to the tomb. 4 The two of them were running, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent over and saw the linen cloths, but he did not go in. 6 Behind him came Simon Peter, and he went straight into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there 7 and the cloth which had been around Jesus' head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was rolled up by itself.

8 Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in; he saw and believed 9 (They still did not understand the scripture which said that he must rise from death.) 10 Then the disciples went back home. 11 Mary stood crying outside the tomb. While she was still crying, she bent over and looked in the tomb 12 and saw two angels there dressed in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head and the other at the feet. 13 "Woman, why are you crying?" they asked her. She answered, "They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have put him!" 14 Then she turned around and saw Jesus standing there; but she did not know that it was Jesus. 15 "Woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her. "Who is it that you are looking for?" She thought he was the gardener, so she said to him, "If you took him away, sir, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned toward him and said in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (This means "Teacher.") 17 "Do not hold on to me," Jesus told her, "because I have not yet gone back up to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them that I am returning to him who is my Father and

their Father, my God and their God." 18 So Mary Magdalene went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and related to them what he had told her.

Sermon

We come today to the empty tomb.

We've been on a journey with Jesus.

Throughout the last days of his life,

His journey to the cross.

We've remembered his triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

We've seen him condemned to death.

Stripped and beaten,

Nailed to a cross.

(pause)

We've heard his last words,

Father forgive,

Seen him placed in the tomb.

The stone rolled in front.

And now we come to look in that tomb once more.

We come and see it empty.

(pause)

But what does it mean that it's empty.

How did it come to be empty?

What has happened to Jesus body?

(pause)

the first person we meet in our story is Mary Magdalene.

One of the women who was very close to Jesus.

She would have been devastated by Jesus death.

The death of the man who believed in her.

A man who loved her and whom she loved in return.

(pause)

She's on her own.

All by herself she has gone to visit Jesus grave.

Gone to be near him.

To remember him,

To say goodbye to him.

(pause)

It's still dark when she sets of to visit his tomb.

She's not been able to sleep,

She might as well get up and go to the tomb.

Go and sit there,

Go and be awake there,

Near Jesus,

Rather than continue to lie in bed.

(pause)

And as she approaches the tomb she sees something is wrong.

The stone is rolled away.

And though the reading doesn't say so explicitly here,

She must have gone up to the tomb and had a look.

She must have gone into the tomb to see what she could see.

And what she sees is an empty tomb.

She maybe doesn't notice the linen wrappings lying there.

And she immediately jumps to the conclusion that his body has been stolen.

(pause)

She doesn't seem to remember all that Jesus has said about how the Son of Man will rise from the dead.

She sees an empty tomb and straight away thinks they have taken his body.

No explanation as to who they are but we can guess who she is thinking of.

Jesus' enemies,

The ones who got him killed in the first place,

The chief priests and teachers of the law.

They have stolen Jesus body.

Got rid of it so that his grave doesn't become a rallying point for his followers.

A place where future martyrs will gather.

"They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

(pause)

I wonder why she says 'we'.

Has she spoken to someone else before getting to Peter and the other disciple.

Was she with the other women at the tomb,

As we read of in the other gospels.

(pause)

She went running to Simon Peter.

The minute she saw Jesus body missing she went running to Peter.

The leader of their band.

The chief disciple.

To tell him what had happened.

"They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

(pause)

Peter is with another disciple.

Just one other disciple.

Described as the one that Jesus loved.

This is usually taken to mean John the writer of this gospel and one of the apostles.

See the last part of John 21

But not everyone accepts this.

(pause)

Both of them are shocked to hear this news.

Worried by it.

And they ran to the tomb to see what had happened.

The two of them were running, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and reached the tomb first.

(pause)

This first disciple,

John,

Just looked in.

He didn't seem to dare to enter.

He looked and he saw.

Saw what Mary had missed.

He saw the linen cloths.

Saw the cloth which had been around Jesus' head.

Lying rolled up, by itself.

And he must have got to thinking.

(pause)

Peter ran straight into the tomb when he got there.

Wanted to see for himself what had happened.

He saw the linen cloths lying there and the cloth which had been around Jesus' head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was rolled up by itself.

But we're not told he believed what he saw.

Maybe he thought like Mary – someone has stolen the body.

Maybe he thought something strange is going on here but I don't know what.

We are not told that he believed.

We are not told that he knew in his heart that Jesus had risen from the dead.

It's only the beloved disciple that we are told believed at this point.

Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in; he saw and believed

(pause)

What do we believe?

What do we know about Jesus?

What do we think has happened to the body?

(pause)

Look in the empty tomb.

What does it mean to you.

What do you think as you look inside it.

Do you think like Mary Magdalene that someone has stolen Jesus body?

Do you look and wonder like Peter.

Not sure what it's really all about.

Or do you believe like the other disciple.

Do you believe like the disciple that Jesus loved.

Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in; he saw and believed

(pause)

Mary didn't believe at first.

But she came to believe.

She came to believe when she encountered the living Jesus.

(pause)

Peter didn't believe at first.

He came to believe when Jesus appeared to him.

(pause)

Only the beloved disciple believed when he stood in the empty tomb

And saw the folded grave-clothes.

Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in; he saw and believed

(pause)

We come together today to encounter the living Jesus,

We come to look into the empty tomb.

To go in and see for ourselves.

To see the linen cloths lying there.

And we too can come to believe as the disciple whom Jesus loved did.

Amen.

Let us pray

I invite you in your imaginations to go and look
in the tomb.

To see the linen wrappings lying,

The cloth which had been around Jesus' head.

(pause)

Do you,

like the disciple whom Jesus loved,

believe,

(pause)

Or are you like Peter, still not quite sure.

Still not understanding the scripture which said
that he must rise from death.

(pause)

Stand in that space and know God's peace.

(long pause)

Father we come this Easter morning wanting to believe.

We stand in that empty space,

We stand in the place where Jesus body was laid.

(pause)

We stand with Mary Magdalene and question,

"They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have put him!"

(pause)

We stand with Peter and look and think.

Not really understanding all that has happened,

Not really knowing what it means that the tomb is empty.

(pause)

We stand alongside the other disciple,

The one whom Jesus loved,

The one who reached the tomb first,

And we believe.

We know that Jesus is alive.

(pause)

We look in the empty tomb.

We see the linen wrappings lying there,

The cloth for Jesus head.

And we believe.

(pause)

We believe that Jesus rose from the dead,

We believe that Jesus is alive now,

We believe that he is our Saviour.

(pause)

Father on this Easter Sunday,

When we re-affirm our faith in the risen Jesus,

Help us to share our faith with those who don't yet believe.

Help us to tell one person today that Jesus is alive.

That he has risen from the dead,

Hallelujah.

(pause)

Help us Father to go from here as people of the resurrection,

Living resurrection lives.

Renewed in our faith,

Filled with love for you and all of your creation.

(pause)

In Jesus name we pray, **Amen.**

Benediction

Today we see Jesus, our risen Lord.

Hallelujah!

As God's Easter people, let us go

and celebrate a new beginning,

filled with the presence of our risen Lord.

And let us take that presence to those whom

we meet,

And declare loudly and boldly,

Jesus is alive.