

## Closing Prayer

God of all the prophets,  
you fulfilled your promise of old  
that your Christ would suffer  
and so rise to glory.

Open our minds to understand the Scriptures  
and fill us with joyful wonder in the presence of the risen Christ,  
that we may be his witnesses  
to the farthest reaches of the earth.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, the first-born from the dead,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God for ever and ever.

*Opening prayers · Easter 3B<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> *Opening prayers : scripture-related collects for the years A, B and C from the sacramentary* / International Commission on English in the Liturgy. – Norwich : Canterbury Press, 1999.

## The Third Sunday of Easter

### Principal Service readings

[Zephaniah 3.14-20]

Acts 3.12-19

Psalm 4

1 John 3.1-7

Luke 24.36b-48

Peter summarises his faith

An evening prayer

We are God's children now; we shall become like him

Resurrection appearance of Jesus to the disciples

### Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, speak to our hearts in the stillness,  
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,  
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;  
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

### Gospel Reading

#### *The risen Jesus appears to his disciples*

<sup>36</sup>While the eleven and their companions were talking about what they had heard, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.'  
<sup>37</sup>They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost.  
<sup>38</sup>He said to them, 'Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?'  
<sup>39</sup>Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.'  
<sup>40</sup>And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.  
<sup>41</sup>While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?'  
<sup>42</sup>They gave him a piece of broiled fish,  
<sup>43</sup>and he took it and ate in their presence.

<sup>44</sup>Then he said to them, 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you – that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.'  
<sup>45</sup>Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures,  
<sup>46</sup>and he said to them, 'Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day,  
<sup>47</sup>and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.'  
<sup>48</sup>You are witnesses of these things.'

Luke 24.36b-48 NRSV<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *New Revised Standard Version Bible* is copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

## Comments and Questions

This Sunday's gospel follows the appearance of the risen Jesus when he appeared to two disciples on the way to Emmaus. Having realised that their companion was Jesus, Jesus immediately disappears, and the two disciples decide to make their way back to Jerusalem to share what they have discovered. When they arrive they share their news with the other disciples. It is at this moment, that Jesus joins them, and says, 'Peace be with you' (24.36).

Jesus appears suddenly and unexpectedly and the disciples think he is a ghost. Jesus wants to show he is real and he invites the disciples to touch the marks of his wounds. They are still unsure, so he asks them to give him something to eat. They give him a piece of fish, which he eats in front of them.

The disciples are slow to understand what must happen. So Jesus sets about explaining to them. He refers to the teaching of Moses (the law), the prophets, and the Psalms (the writings), the three sections of the Hebrew scriptures, and shows them that these scriptures say that the Messiah is to die and rise again. He says that they cannot stay put, for the message about 'repentance and forgiveness' (24.7) must break out and be shared with 'all nations' (24.47). The proclamation begins from Jerusalem. They are 'witnesses of these things' (24.48).

We also sit at the eucharistic table of Jesus, and we share in the same urgent mission to tell the world about the repentance and forgiveness that we ourselves have experienced, have witnessed.

## Quotations

**1**

The same message had to be preached to all nations, beginning with Jerusalem, Jesus' passion-resurrection transformed the table of Jesus the prophet into that of Jesus Christ the Lord and made it the springboard for the church's universal mission. Jesus' message at this point in his final discourse looks directly to the story of the church on mission in the Act of the Apostles

*Dining in the kingdom of God: the origins of the Eucharist according to Luke / Eugene LaVerdiere. 1994*

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**2**

And he departed from our sight and we might return to our heart, and there find Him. For He departed, and behold, He is here  
St Augustine of Hippo, 354–430

**3**

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is one of the best attested facts on record. There were so many witnesses to behold it, that if we do in the least degree receive the credibility of men's testimonies, we cannot and we dare not doubt that Jesus rose from the dead.

The resurrection is a fact better attested than any event recorded in any history, whether ancient or modern.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon. 1834–1892

**4**

I know the resurrection is a fact, and Watergate proved it to me. How? Because 12 men testified they had seen Jesus raised from the dead, then they proclaimed that truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Every one was beaten, tortured, stoned and put in prison. They would not have endured that if it weren't true. Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world – and they couldn't keep a lie for three weeks. You're telling me 12 apostles could keep a lie for 40 years? Absolutely impossible.

Charles Colson, 1931–2012

## Related topics

*For further study:*

Paschal mystery; eucharist; reconciling mission of Christ; ecumenism; soteriology; evangelisation; faith; Christ present in the liturgy; community, Word, sacrament, president; sacraments; discipleship; sacramentality; grace

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