

Worship Material
Easter Sunday
With fear and great joy
Materials from Roots Bible Study

Begin with an opening prayer

Risen Lord, we bask in the knowledge
of the amazing love you have for us.
Easter is special.
We know it in the core of our beings,
in the depths of our souls.
The spirit witnesses within us;
our salvation is assured;
your love conquers all fear.
Mighty risen Lord,
we fall at your feet in wonder.
We worship and adore you for all time.
Amen.

Read Matthew 28.1-10

Bible notes

Of the small group of women who stood by Jesus and watched him dying in agony on the cross, only 'Mary Magdalene and the other Mary' are consistently named in the first three Gospels as observing carefully where Jesus was buried (Matthew 27.61; Mark 15.47), and as coming again on the Sunday to see the tomb (Matthew 28.1; Mark 16.1; Luke 24.10). The community of John's Gospel seems already to have forgotten 'the other Mary', since only Mary Magdalene is said to have met Jesus in the garden (John 20.11-18). 'The other Mary' is identified as the mother of two sons, 'little James and Joses' (Mark 15.40; Matthew 27.56), and as one of the women who provided for Jesus when he was in Galilee (Mark 15.41), the place where he is now calling his disciples to meet him once more. We do not hear any more about this other Mary and her two sons, but their presence in the Gospel narratives suggests that all three were known as members of the early Christian movement. The man who recognised only his disciples as 'my mother and my brothers' (Matthew 12.49) has led this other Mary to the fearful place of his torture and execution, and into the tomb into which the soldiers had sealed his broken body. Now, in an earthquake, the two Marys see an angel in the lightning and hear his voice in the thunder. With all that has happened, no wonder there is fear as well as joy as they run to proclaim the news that 'he has been raised'.

Their courage and their perception are rewarded as they suddenly encounter their risen Lord. But even as they take hold of his feet to worship him, he urges them forward as his messengers to his brothers, renewing the reassurance he had given those disciples when their boat was battered by the wind and waves: 'Do not be afraid' (14.27).

A prayer of thanksgiving

Lord God, we thank you for today's experience
of your amazing resurrection.
We want to take our response into our everyday.
We have to get out there, and live.
In the fear, in the joy,
in the rollercoaster moments,
as well as when the path runs smoothly -
wherever you call us, whatever you ask us to do,
we trust you, Lord.
You are always with us - thanks be to God.
Amen.

A prayer to conclude

Father God,
we have come with the women to your tomb
and we have felt their reactions.
We have shared their dawning realisation that Jesus is alive.
We have experienced their joy at your living presence.
Send us out,
with your love in our hearts, and your praise on our lips
that those we meet might share our joy too.
In the name of Jesus, who lives for evermore.
Amen.