

The Parish of St Paul, Wokingham

The Easter Liturgy

*with the Service of Light
and the First Mass of Easter*



St Paul's
Church
Wokingham

 **DIOCESE of OXFORD**
A Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world

¶ *The Service of Light*

Introduction

The people gather in darkness around the New Fire.

The priest says

Dear brothers and sisters 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.

Blessing of the New Fire

The priest blesses the New Fire, saying

Eternal God,
who made this most holy night
to shine with the brightness of your one true light:
bless this fire,
set us aflame with the fire of your love,
and bring us to the radiance of your heavenly glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Paschal Candle

The priest marks the Paschal Candle, saying

Christ yesterday and today,
the beginning and the end,
Alpha and Omega,
all time belongs to him,
and all ages;
to him be glory and power,
through every age and for ever.

All **Amen.**

The priest inserts grains of incense into the Paschal Candle, saying

By his holy and glorious wounds
may Christ our Lord guard and keep us.

The priest lights the Easter Candle, saying

May the light of Christ, rising in glory,
banish all darkness from our hearts and minds.

The minister bearing the Paschal Candle enters the building, followed by the other ministers, and they pause at the back of the church. The minister bearing the candle says or sings

The light of Christ.

All **Thanks be to God.**

All genuflect towards the Paschal Candle.

The procession moves further into the building and pauses twice more. The response is repeated each time, and the candles of those around are lit from the Paschal Candle.

The Paschal Candle is placed on a stand in the midst of the building.

The Exsultet

A minister sings the Exsultet, the Easter song of praise, standing near the Paschal Candle.

Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angels!
O Universe, dance around God's throne!
Jesus Christ, our King, is risen!
Sound the victorious trumpet of salvation!

Rejoice, O earth, in glory, revealing the splendour of your creation,
radiant in the brightness of your triumphant King!
Christ has conquered! Now his life and glory fill you!
Darkness vanishes for ever!

Rejoice, O Mother Church! Exult in glory!
The risen Saviour, our Lord of life, shines upon you!
Let all God's people sing and shout for joy.

The Lord be with you
All **and also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.
All **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

It is right and good that with hearts and minds and voices
we should praise you, Father almighty, the unseen God,
through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,
who has saved us by his death,
paid the price of Adam's sin,
and reconciled us once again to you.

For this is the Passover feast,
when Christ, the true Lamb of God, is slain
whose blood consecrates the homes of all the faithful.

This is the night when you first saved our ancestors,
freeing Israel from her slavery
and leading her safely through the sea.

This is the night when Jesus Christ vanquished hell,
broke the chains of death
and rose triumphant from the grave.

This is the night when all who believe in him are freed from sin,
restored to grace and holiness,
and share the victory of Christ.

This is the night that gave us back what we had lost;
beyond our deepest dreams
you made even our sin a happy fault.

Most blessed of all nights!

Evil and hatred are put to flight and sin is washed away,
lost innocence regained, and mourning turned to joy.

Night truly blessed, when hatred is cast out,
peace and justice find a home, and heaven is joined to earth
and all creation reconciled to you.

Therefore, heavenly Father, in this our Easter joy
accept our sacrifice of praise, your Church's solemn offering,
this wax, the work of bees and the hands of your ministers.

As we gaze upon the splendour of this flame
fed by melting wax conceived by mother bee,
grant that this Easter Candle may make our darkness light.

For Christ the morning star has risen in glory;
Christ is risen from the dead
and his flame of love still burns within us!

Christ sheds his peaceful light on all the world!
Christ lives and reigns for ever and ever!

All **Amen.**

Easter Acclamation

All stand. The priest says

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

All He is risen indeed. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

A joyful fanfare is played, with the ringing of bells and the clashing of cymbals, announcing the moment of the Resurrection.

Gloria in Excelsis

During the Gloria in Excelsis, all the lights in the church are switched on. Candles throughout the church are lit and the congregation's candles are extinguished.

All Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God in the highest.

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.**

Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God in the highest.

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.**

Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God in the highest.

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.**

Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God in the highest.

Collect

The priest says

The Lord be with you

All **and also with you.**

Let us pray.

Silence is kept.

Lord of all life and power,
who through the mighty resurrection of your Son
overcame the old order of sin and death
to make all things new in him:
grant that we, being dead to sin
and alive to you in Jesus Christ,
may reign with him in glory;
to whom with you and the Holy Spirit
be praise and honour, glory and might,
now and in all eternity.

All **Amen.**

¶ *The Liturgy of the Word*

New Testament reading

All sit.

Romans 6.3–11

At the end of the reading

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Gospel reading

Please stand. A gospel acclamation is sung.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

All Alleluia, 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, alleluia, alleluia.

The deacon or priest says,

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to N.

All Glory to you, O Lord.

After the reading

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

A sermon is preached.

¶ *The Liturgy of Initiation*

All gather around the font.

The priest stands before the font and says

Praise God who made heaven and earth,

All **who keeps his promise for ever.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ
was baptized in the river Jordan,
we thank you for the gift of water
to cleanse us and revive us.

We thank you that through the waters of the Red Sea
you led your people out of slavery
to freedom in the Promised Land.

We thank you that through the deep waters of death
you brought your Son,
and raised him to life in triumph.

Send your Holy Spirit upon the waters of this font
that your servants who are washed in it
may be made one with Christ in his death and in his resurrection,
to be cleansed and delivered from all sin.

Send your Holy Spirit upon them,
bring them to new birth in the household of faith
and raise them with Christ to full and eternal life;
for all might, majesty, authority and power are yours,
now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

Profession of Faith

Brothers and sisters, I ask you to profess the faith of the Church.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father?

All **I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ?

All **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.**

Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit?

All **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.**

Sprinkling with water

The waters of baptism are sprinkled over the people. It is customary to make the sign of the Cross as you are sprinkled.

As the waters are sprinkled, the Vidi Aquam is said or sung

I beheld water,

**All which proceeded out of the temple,
on the right side thereof, Alleluia:
and all they to whom that water came
were healed every one: and they say,
Alleluia, Alleluia.**

The priest says

Almighty God,

we thank you for our fellowship in the household of faith
with all who have been baptized in your name.

Keep us faithful to our baptism,

and so make us ready for that day

when the whole creation shall be made perfect in your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.

All Amen.

¶ *The Liturgy of the Eucharist*

The Peace

The priest says

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said,
'Peace be with you.'

Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia.

The peace of the risen Christ be always with you

All and also with you.

We share a sign of peace. It is traditional to do so with these words

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

and the response

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

The Paschal Candle is returned to its stand and the congregation return to their places.

Preparation of the Altar

A hymn is sung.

Refrain: Alleluya! Alleluya! Alleluya!

O sons and daughters of the King,
Whom heavenly hosts in glory sing,
To-day the grave hath lost its sting. Alleluya!

On that first morning of the week,
Before the day began to break,
The Marys went their Lord to seek. Alleluya!

An Angel bade their sorrow flee,
For thus he spake unto the three:
'Your Lord is gone to Galilee.' Alleluya!

That night the Apostles met in fear,
Amidst them came their Lord most dear,
And said: 'Peace be unto you here!' Alleluya!

When Thomas afterwards had heard
That Jesus had fulfilled his word,
He doubted if it were the Lord. Alleluya!

'My pierced side, O Thomas see;
My hands, my feet, I show to thee;
Not faithless, but believing be.' Alleluya!

No longer Thomas then denied;
He saw the feet, the hands, the side;
'Thou art my Lord and God,' he cried. Alleluya!

Blessed are they that have not seen,
And yet whose faith hath constant been,
In life eternal they shall reign. Alleluya!

On this most holy day of days,
To God your hearts and voices raise
In laud, and jubilee, and praise. Alleluya!

And we with Holy Church unite,
As evermore is just and right,
In glory to the King of Light. Alleluya!

During the hymn, the gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar on behalf of the congregation.

When the altar is prepared and the gifts and people have been honoured with incense, the priest says,

Pray, my brothers and sisters
that our sacrifice may be acceptable
to God, the almighty Father.

All **May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands
for the praise and glory of his Name,
for our good and the good of all his Church.**

Lord of life,
with unbounded joy we offer you our sacrifice of praise.
As we are fed with the bread of heaven
may we know your resurrection power;
through Christ our risen Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Eucharistic Prayer

Please remain standing if you are able. The priest says or sings

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

The priest says or sings the Eucharistic preface, calling to mind the great works of God in bringing about our salvation.

All sing together

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

The priest recalls the Last Supper, when Christ gave us the Eucharist, and says the Words of Institution by which the bread and wine are consecrated for us. The priest then says

Great is the mystery of faith.

All Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

The priest continues in prayer, concluding

by whom, and with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

Please sit or kneel. Silence is kept.

The Lord's Prayer

The priest introduces the Lord's Prayer and all say

All Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

The Breaking of the Bread

The priest breaks the consecrated bread and says

We break this bread
to share in the body of Christ.

All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.

As the bread is broken, all sing

All Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.

The Giving of Communion

The priest holds the consecrated bread and says

Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.
Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

**All Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word and I shall be healed.**

The priest and people receive Holy Communion.

If you normally receive communion in your own church or have done so in the past, you are very welcome to do so here.

If you do not receive Holy Communion, you are welcome to come to the altar rail to receive a blessing. Please bow your head to indicate to the priest that you would prefer to receive a blessing.

During communion a hymn is sung by all.

A brighter dawn is breaking,
And earth with praise is waking;
For thou, O King most highest,
The power of death defiest;

And thou hast come victorious,
With risen Body glorious,
Who now for ever livest,
And life abundant givest.

O free the world from blindness,
And fill the world with kindness,
Give sinners resurrection,
Bring striving to perfection;

In sickness give us healing,
In doubt thy clear revealing,
That praise to thee be given
In earth as in thy heaven.

An anthem is sung by the choir.

Post-Communion Prayer

The priest says the post-communion prayer.

God of Life,
who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son
to the death of the cross,
and by his glorious resurrection
have delivered us from the power of our enemy:
grant us so to die daily to sin,
that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his risen life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

All **Almighty God,**
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out
in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.

¶ The Conclusion

Final hymn

Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
Endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won;
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
Kept the folded grave-clothes where thy body lay.
*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
Endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won.*

Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
Lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
Let the Church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,
For her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting:
*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
Endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won.*

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of Life;
Life is nought without thee: aid us in our strife,
Make us more than conquerors through thy deathless love;
Bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above:
*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
Endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won.*

Blessing

Please remain standing. The priest says

The Lord be with you
All and also with you.

The priest says a blessing, which ends

The God of peace,
who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,
that great shepherd of the sheep,
through the blood of the eternal covenant,
make you perfect in every good work to do his will,
working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

The Dismissal

The deacon or priest says

Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.
All Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia

An organ voluntary is played as the sanctuary party departs.

This service includes material from *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* © The Archbishops' Council 2000 and *Common Worship: Times and Seasons* © The Archbishops' Council 2006.