

Service for Easter Sunday in Zurich Prisons



Halleluja. The Lord has risen. He has risen indeed. Halleluja.

Luke 24, 6.34

Grace be unto you

from God our heavenly father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dear brothers and sisters

Still we aren't able to gather together for Christian service because of Covid Crisis. Therefore, we send these thoughts to you. Be blessed in His holy name. Let his light shine into your world. Still, we are living in hard times and as your Prison Chaplains we feel with you deeply. The power of our Christian belief is never stronger than today: the darkness of this world never wins! Jesus Christ is the mighty symbol of Gods power! This is why the angel said: Be not afraid!

Let's pray

We want to say grace, o Lord, for your love and mercy! Life is so much stronger than death! Bless us and our beloved ones with the joy of Easter. Let your light shine into our world, let us experience new paths of life. Bless us with faith and hope. Let us feel your holy presence in our prayers. Amen.

Gospel of Matthew Chapter 28, 1–10

At the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher. 2 And behold, there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from Heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. 3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. 4 And for fear of him the guards shook and became as dead men. 5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, "Fear ye not, for I know that ye seek Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He is not here, for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. 7 And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and behold, He goeth before you into Galilee. There shall ye see Him. Lo, I have told you." 8 And they departed quickly from the sepulcher with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. 9 And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "All hail." And they came, and held Him by the feet, and worshiped Him.

10 Then said Jesus unto them, "Be not afraid. Go tell My brethren to go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me.

Be not afraid!

At Easter everything changes. For Mary and Mary Magdalene reality changes totally in an instance: what they've expected isn't there anymore. Grief and Death was all they felt and imagined, but life found them instead. Sometimes, when we are forced into some kind of lifeless relations and situations, we experience how the whole situation can change: new energy, hope and force of life is palpable.

The unexpected can be frightening at first. Therefore, as we remember from the Christmas Gospel when the angel announced his birth, an angel told the two women standing in front of Jesus grave: Be not afraid! He asked them to spread the word, not to keep this important message from the others, but to share it with everybody. Go! Tell it to others! Encourage each other! Have faith! Don't stay at the cemetery, but move and you will find Christ who has risen from the dead.

This is what we hope for you, too. This experience when you share good news and hope with your neighbors.

Both Marys were leaving the cemetery immediately, full of joy and feeling frightened at the same time. There is both: Fear, pain and agony are part of life. This is the message of Good Friday. But the joyous promise that Christ is alive, gave those women back their hope, their courage to face life, even if they still felt a little frightened. Step by step they are able to see more than burdening sadness. Even before they have seen Christ face to face, this promise changed their lives forever. New hope and new confidence were part of their mindset. Maybe you have experienced that yourselves already: how fear and hope make a deep impression at the same time, not only in prison.

Have faith into this promise: Jesus has risen from the dead. May this faith change your life, too. The Lord is with you in his Holy Spirit. Jesus lives! May this joy encourage you and help you to deal with this situation of imprisonment and isolation. Stay in contact with your beloved ones as close as possible. Strengthen each other where ever you are right now. Life always wins. Good always beats evil. Be blessed in Jesus name. Amen.

Prayer

God, let your light shine into our world. Pain, need and darkness won't last forever. Thank you for all good things we experience in dark times.

We are praying for ourselves: take away our fear and encourage us.

We are praying for others:

For the people in prisons, nursery homes, homes for elderly and for homeless people: Have mercy on them and send your light!

We are praying for all the people who are serving others with all their energy. Have mercy on them and prevent them from being totally exhausted. Give them strength.

We are praying for all the people who are serving in Church, Politics, Correctional Service or Public Health Service. Have mercy on them and bless them with your wisdom.

We are praying for our families, spouses, friends, parents and children. Have mercy on them and protect them.

Join into our Lord's prayer:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.

Amen.

Blessing

The Lord keep you and bless you

The Lord bless you with his love

The Lord bless you with trust.

The Lord bless you with his peace. Amen.