



St Marylebone
Parish Church

Easter in the Lord's Resurrection

Wherever Christians gather today to celebrate Easter they will do so with some very basic, elemental 'stuff'.

Yes, there will be grand vestments and beautiful flowers; fine music, the best silver and gilt plate - but in and among all this 'ephemera' will be basic "stuff" - fire and water, bread and wine.

We take bread and wine in obedience to Christ's command so that we might enter into the great mystery of the Creator God who in flesh and blood gives himself for the life of the world.

We do this, to enter into his Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension, so that, until he comes again, we might become one with him who became one with us.

In taking bread and wine we, the Church, become his body and his blood, his wounded hands and his feet, his lips and his sacred heart with which we are to love the world.

But we also 'play with fire' today as we welcome the Resurrected Christ, the uncreated eternal light, into our midst, and we dice with death in the waters of the font.

Some of you might have seen the video artist Bill Viola's work in St Paul's Cathedral, or in his recent powerful exhibition at the Royal Academy - water - fire - flesh - blood - portrayed with all their

inherent dynamic force, conjuring up powerful images of birth and death, challenge, consummation and even resurrection.

In the waters of baptism, we enter into, take part in, the birth and rebirth of creation; on them we are carried safely in the ark through the raging world-obliterating torrents of the Flood; we pass safely through them as the waters of the Red Sea part around us and we journey from slavery to freedom; we step into the swirling waters of the River Jordan and we share Christ's baptism, and, as we stand at the foot of the cross, we are bathed in the waters which flow from Christ's pierced side.

The light we bear is Christ's light. The Easter Light, the Light that dawned at the first Easter never to be extinguished; the Light from which all light derives.

This is the light, which Rufus Jones, the Quaker Philosopher and Theologian, described as the light that "reaches deep into other men's darkness, revealing their condition to them, making them aware of evil, checking them in the pursuit of it, giving a vision of righteousness, attracting towards goodness, pointing infallibly toward the Christ from whom the Light shines".ⁱ

Fire, water, bread and wine - symbols of the new life to which we are called in the risen Christ Jesus; the new life we are invited to live by discovering for ourselves what Mary Magdalene, Peter and John, the disciples on the road to Emmaus, discovered on that first Easter morning - that the Christ who had died on Calvary, was hastily buried in a borrowed nearby tomb, is alive and that in him and through him they too now live in a way that no-one could ever have imagined, even in their wildest dreams.

Easter Day is God's invitation to us to life, life in its fullest, richest, most glorious possibilities – Life with a capital 'L': the life of Christ's Resurrection; Life not just for an hour or a day or even a life-time, but Life for all of eternity,

Christ has died! Christ is Risen! Christ will come again!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

ⁱ Rufus Matthew Jones (1863 – 1948), *The Inner Life*, 1916