

## Easter: He is Risen Indeed

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### *A Morning of Listening*

#### **Getting Started**

Thank you for joining us for this morning of listening. Our desire is to create a space for God to speak to us through the Scripture and by his Spirit. If you have never done anything like this before, don't panic. Settle into this time of quiet and meditation. The information here will serve as a guide for your time.

This time is meant for just you and God. Please go to a quiet space by yourself as you take time to listen to Him.

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"Do not abandon yourselves to despair. We are the Easter people and hallelujah is our song."

— Pope John Paul II

#### **Settling In**

Now is a time to slow down. Set aside any guilt from not having slowed down prior to this moment. This is why you are here. You have given yourself a gift by being present in this moment. Receive it. Breathe, feel the space around you, notice the life that surrounds you, breathe.

We are coming to the end of the season of Lent and are looking forward to Easter. Let this period be a time of conversion as you turn your heart from fear to trust, from anxiety to peace, from death to life.

#### **Letting Go**

As you sit down and begin to open your heart to what God has to say to you today, begin letting go of the tasks and concerns that are clamoring for your attention today.

**What's on your mind today?**

## Reading

Read the following passages. Feel free to linger over the ones that speak to you this morning. Let yourself ponder words that feel meaningful or challenging. As you sit here and read, you are giving God space in your life to speak and to act.

As the soldiers led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him.

**Luke 23:26-27**

Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left.

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is God's Messiah, the Chosen One."

The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself." There was a written notice above him, which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!"

But the other criminal rebuked him, "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

**Luke 23:32-43**

It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

**Luke 23:44-46**

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them,

"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!

**Luke 24:1-6**

Jesus's resurrection is the beginning of God's new project not to snatch people away from earth to heaven but to colonize earth with the life of heaven. That, after all, is what the Lord's Prayer is about."

— N.T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church*

Words and phrases that stand out and are meaningful to me today:

As you think about your life circumstances right now, how is God speaking to you through these verses?

Where do you see yourself in this story? Do you identify with any of the people you read about here?

How does Jesus in his suffering meet you where you are today?

What does death mean for you right now?

What hope is God awakening in you as you remember the story of his death and resurrection?

What does this story change for you today?

## **Listening and Prayer**

Take time to listen. Easter is about God's action in the world, regardless of which part of the story you find yourself. He is moving in your life now, even if it does not feel immediately apparent. Listen. Wait. Hope. Remember what he has done and look forward to what he will do.

**Write your response in the form of a prayer here.**