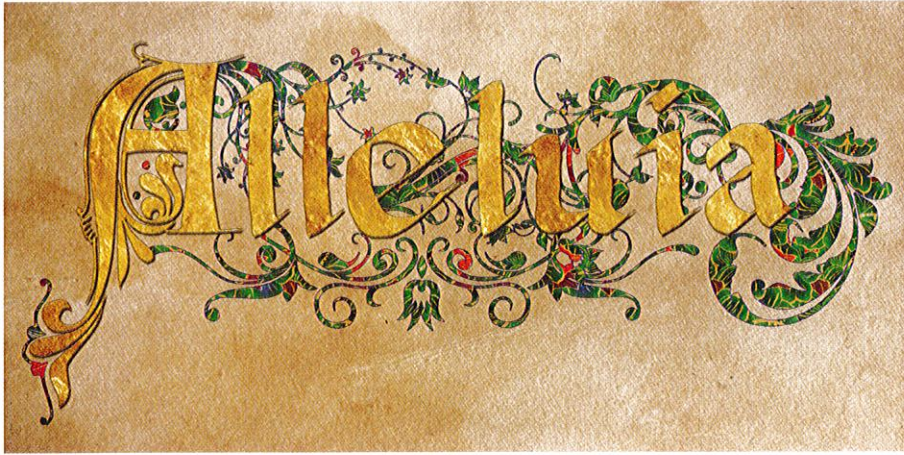


Pure joy



Lord Jesus Christ, alive and risen from the dead, you meet us in our need and call us by name. Help us to know the deep joy of resurrection life, to set our anxieties aside, and to sing your praise with laughter in our hearts. Amen.

An Easter meditation through poetry, music and art

by Caroline Hodgson

If you have time today for an Easter meditation, however short, why not make poetry, music and art the theme? For example you might find George Herbert's poem "Easter Wings" online, and reflect on the joyful lines: "With thee / O let me rise / As larks, harmoniously, / And sing this day thy victories." Or you could search for Christina Rossetti's "Easter Carol" and meditate on the words: "Lift up your heads, ye gates, and sing, / The King of Glory enters in." These are taken from Psalm 24 which, in turn, is the title of a

chorus in *The Messiah*, by George Frideric Handel – what a wonderful breadcrumb trail to follow!

Visual art also powerfully captures the magic and mystery of Easter. For example, you could explore the significance of *Resurrection*, by Piero della Francesca, and contemplate its significance for you. You might, of course, conclude that these works have little to say to you right now in your life. Be honest if that is the case – it's all part of the journey and will teach you about your faith. 🍵

“Easter is very important to me. It's a second chance.”

Reba McEntire (born 1955), American country singer and actress

Gillian Cooper *reflects on* John 20:1-18

A fanfare would have been good, she thought later. Or a chorus of angels, perhaps. Something, anyway. If you're going to meet someone who's supposed to be dead, a little warning would be nice. Now she would go down in history as the woman who mistook him for the gardener, which made her look silly. And actually he had always been the silly one, with his sense of the ridiculous, his tendency to poke fun at the pompous and over-religious, his refusal to worry and plan. Perhaps, then, she shouldn't have been surprised. It was typical of him.

She knew he was dead. She'd been there through all the horror, had seen his body and watched as he was put in the tomb. She was not even close to coming to terms with his death. Just like him, then, to pop up in the garden, saying her name. She had to admit it was his best joke yet. She had to laugh, with him and at herself.

Of course there was no fanfare, it wasn't his way. In its place there was joy, deep at the heart of the universe, bubbling up into a laugh, echoing through time and space. 🍵

Things you wished you knew about church history
Part 4 – the date of Easter

by Stephen Backhouse

The second-century Church was faced with a problem. Should Easter be celebrated according to the time of Passover in the lunar Jewish calendar, or according to the solar, Gentile "Julian" calendar? The older traditions of Asia Minor used the Jewish date for Passover (called "Quartodeciman", because it fell on the fourteenth day after the spring full moon). The Gentile Roman Christians held out for celebrating Easter on the Sunday following the spring equinox.

It mattered, because the resurrection of Jesus is so central

to Christian belief. Furthermore, as well as representing the division that existed between Jewish and Gentile Christians since the earliest days of Christianity (for example, Galatians 2:1-21), the conflict also highlighted the emerging differences between the Greek East and Latin West.

Sensing a challenge to Roman authority, the Bishop of Rome, Victor I, threatened to excommunicate the Quartodecimans, a move opposed by Bishop Irenaeus of Lyons. Even today the date of Easter varies between Eastern and Western traditions. 🍵