

ANGLICAN PROVINCE OF AMERICA

PRESIDING BISHOP'S EASTER MESSAGE 2023

Dearly beloved in Christ,

*CHRIST our Passover is sacrificed for us: * therefore let us keep the feast,*

*Not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; * but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

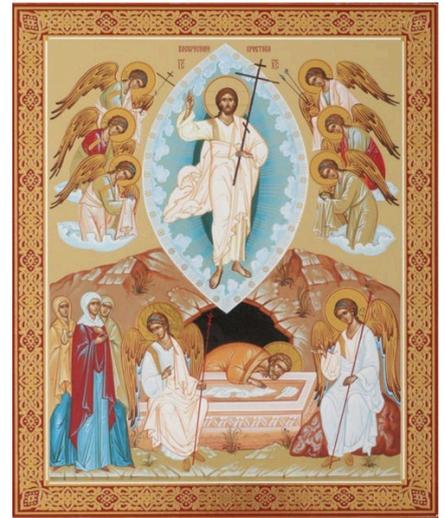
*CHRIST being raised from the dead dieth no more; * death hath no more dominion over him.*

*For in that he died, he died unto sin once: * but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.*

Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*CHRIST is risen from the dead, * and become the first-fruits of them that slept.
For since by man came death, * by man came also the resurrection of the dead.
For as in Adam all die, * even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, * and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, * world without end. Amen.*



As we prepare to celebrate together the Feast of Feasts and Queen of Feasts, the Christian Passover, the glorious Third-Day Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ from the dead on Easter Day, let us turn to contemplate one of the greatest liturgical treasures in Anglicanism, and yet one of the least familiar and utilised, the beautiful Easter Canticle found on page 162 in the Prayer Book.

What does the Easter Canticle teach us about the mighty Resurrection of Our Lord? In I Corinthians 5.7-8, Saint Paul illustrates Our Lord's triumphant conquest of death as the fulfilment of the Jewish feasts of Unleavened Bread and Passover: as every Jewish family cleansed its home of leavened bread before the feast (Exodus 12.14-20), so Christians are urged to remove sin from their midst and to celebrate the Liturgy in purity and holiness of life. Christ is our Passover, our Paschal Sacrifice, the revelation of the true meaning of the day of preparation for the Old Testament Passover. On the day of preparation, unblemished lambs were slaughtered in the Temple for the ensuing feast, as simultaneously all leaven in Israel was discarded. The two feasts of Unleavened Bread and Passover coincided. The old Passover was celebrated by eating the Paschal Lamb of the sacrifice, and the old feast of Unleavened Bread was celebrated by eating only unleavened bread for seven consecutive days. The Lord Jesus is both the new and true Passover, whose passion and resurrection liberate us from slavery to sin, evil, and death, and the new and genuine Unleavened Bread, the Bread of Life, whose perfect and all-sufficient Sacrifice is made present and pleaded in the Eucharist and whose precious Body and Blood are received in Holy Communion. The Blessed Sacrament is Christ our Passover, Christ our Feast, Christ the Priest and Victim of the new and eternal covenant.

In Romans 6.9-11, we are reminded that Our Lord's real human death is unrepeatable and has resulted in His ultimate physical glorification and immortality: because Christ destroyed death by His own death, to which He was freely and voluntarily subject, His risen humanity, body and soul, is forever victorious over death. Now for all eternity Christ lives, Christ conquers, Christ reigns – and we shall live, conquer, and reign because of Him, in Him and through Him and for Him. Christ has destroyed the power of sin through death, and, thus united to Him in His death, we shall overcome sin and live forever in Him.

In I Corinthians 15.20-22, Saint Paul uses the ancient Jewish liturgy to explain the mystery of the Resurrection. In ancient Israel, the first portion of a crop was offered to God in the Temple as a consecration of the entire expected harvest to come (Leviticus 23.10-14); so the Lord Jesus is the first of many to be raised in glory, and His resurrection Body is an offering that ensures a whole harvest of believers will be raised to eternal life as He was. The contrast of Adam and Christ demonstrates the power and impact of Our Lord's Resurrection. Death is the result of sin. Sin began with and in Adam, and because of Adam's transgression, the totality of the human race since has been destined to enter the world alienated from God and to die. Christ saves us from death, because His victory over sin reverses the disobedience and consequences of Adam's fall and provides us with the promise that our fallen and mortal bodies, once broken by sin, will be raised to eternal glory and new life. Christ, the New Man, the New Adam, the New Creation, restores us to communion with God by His glorification and healing of our human nature. Adam was the head of a wounded and corrupted humanity; Christ is the Head of the New Creation, the Church.

Alleluia! Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia! May the Lord Jesus Christ, our True God, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world and risen from the dead, bless you and all you love in the coming Eastertide.

God bless you!

+ Chandler Holder Jones SSC

The Most Reverend Chandler Holder Jones, SSC
Presiding and Diocesan Bishop

