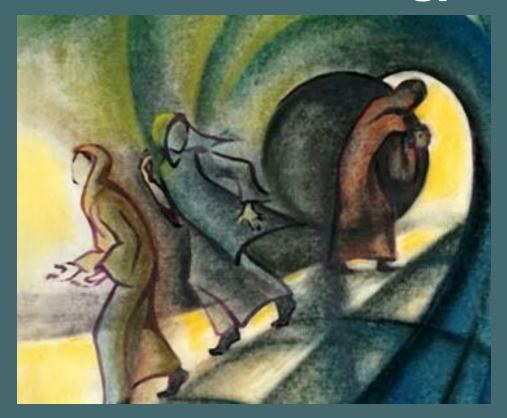




The Easter Liturgy



The Service of Light, the Liturgy of Initiation and the First Eucharist of Easter

Easter Sunday, 31st March 2024

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Welcome to Coventry Cathedral

We are delighted that you have come to worship with us to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This Easter Liturgy is a modern form of ceremonies which date from the very beginning of the life of the Church.

Today's service is in three sections:

The Service of Light takes place in the Ruins. The Easter Candle is lit, symbolising the Light of Christ which even death was not able to put out. A version of the traditional Exsultet is sung: an ancient Easter song of praise to the risen Christ.

<u>The Liturgy of Initiation</u> recalls the early centuries of the Church's life, when new converts came for baptism at Easter. We welcome candidates for baptism and confirmation from the entire diocese, and also renew our own baptism vows, recalling Paul's teaching that, as in baptism we died with Christ to sin, so we will rise with him to new life. (Romans 6:3-5)

<u>The Eucharist</u> is always a celebration that the Lord is risen, and none more so than the Eucharist of Easter. The risen Lord Jesus comes among us, and we receive his life in order to live for him in the world.

Please pray for the candidates for baptism and confirmation from the parishes of:

Coventry All Saints, St. Anne's Church

Coventry Cathedral

St. Giles, Bubbenhall

St. Martin's, Finham

St Paul's, Foleshill

The Service of Light

Before the service, the candidates for baptism and confirmation meet Bishop Ruth Worsley, Acting Bishop of Coventry, at the West Screen of the Cathedral whilst the congregation gathers in silence in the Ruins facing the Dais. The clergy and ministers enter the Ruins, escorting the Bishop and the candidates.

Bishop Ruth greets the people and then says,

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light.

Genesis 1:1

The Bishop says,

Eternal God, who made this most holy night to shine with the brightness of your one true light: set us aflame with the fire of your love and bring us to the radiance of your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Easter Candle

The Reverend Su McClellan, Cathedral Curate, presents the Easter Candle to the Bishop, who traces on it a cross, the Greek letters alpha and omega, and the year 2024.

Christ yesterday and today, the beginning and the end, Alpha and Omega; all time belongs to him and all ages; to him be glory and power through every age and for ever.

Amen.

The Bishop inserts five grains of incense into the Easter Candle, saying,

By his holy and glorious wounds may Christ our Lord guard and keep us.

Amen.

The Presentation of the Candidates

The Bishop invites Noah's parents and godparents to step forward. She asks them,

Is it your wish that Noah is baptised? It is.

The Bishop invites the candidates for confirmation who have been baptized to step forward. She asks,

Have you been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit?

I have.

Are you ready with your own mouth and from your own heart to affirm your faith in Jesus Christ?

I am.

The Bishop addresses the whole congregation:

Faith is the gift of God to his people. In baptism the Lord is adding to our number those whom he is calling. People of God, will you welcome Noah and uphold him in his new life in Christ? With the help of God, we will.

The Decision

Standing before the Easter Candle, the Bishop says to Noah's parents and godparents, and to all who wish to renew their baptism vows,

As we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, we remember that through the paschal mystery we have died and been buried with him in baptism. To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him. Therefore I ask:

Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God? I reject them.

Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil? I renounce them.

Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?

I repent of them.

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The Bishop lights the Easter Candle and says,

May the light of Christ, rising in glory, banish all darkness from our hearts and minds.

The Bishop says,

In baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light. Therefore I ask:

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour? I turn to Christ.

Do you submit to Christ as Lord? I submit to Christ.

Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life? I come to Christ.

Signing with the Cross

The Bishop makes the sign of the cross on Noah's forehead.

Noah Elijah, Christ claims you for his own. Receive the sign of his cross.

The Bishop says,

Do not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified. Fight valiantly as a disciple of Christ against sin, the world and the devil, and remain faithful to Christ to the end of your life.

May almighty God deliver you from the powers of darkness, restore in you the image of his glory, and lead you in the light and obedience of Christ.

Amen.

The Easter Candle is raised, and the deacon says and everyone responds:

The light of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

This dialogue is repeated several times, rising in volume each time, as the deacon, bearing the Easter Candle, leads everyone into the New Cathedral to STAND amongst the rows of seats facing the font.

The Reverend Mary Gregory, Canon for Arts and Reconciliation, begins to sing the Exsultet, during which the ministers light their candles from the Easter Candle and then share the light with the congregation. We join in the singing as indicated in bold.

The Exsultet

Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angels! O Universe, dance around God's throne! Jesus Christ, our King, is risen! Sound the victorious trumpet of salvation!

Rejoice, O earth, in glory, revealing the splendour of your creation, radiant in the brightness of your triumphant King! Christ has conquered! Now his life and glory fill you!

Darkness vanishes for ever!
Rejoice, O Mother Church! Exult in glory!
The risen Saviour, our Lord of life, shines upon you!
Let all God's people sing and shout for joy.

Canon Mary continues, and everyone replies:



It is right and good that with hearts and minds and voices we should praise you, Father almighty, the unseen God, through your only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who has saved us by his death, paid the price of Adam's sin, and reconciled us once again to you.



For this is the Passover feast, when Christ the true Lamb of God is slain, whose blood consecrates the homes of all the faithful.



This is the day when you first saved our ancestors, freeing Israel from her slavery, and leading her safely through the sea.



This is the day when Jesus Christ vanquished hell, broke the chains of death, and rose triumphant from the grave.



This is the day when all who believe in him are freed from sin, restored to grace and holiness, and share the victory of Christ.



This is the day which gave us back what we had lost; beyond our deepest dreams you made even our sin a happy fault.



Crowning glory of all feasts! Evil and hatred are put to flight and sin is washed away, lost innocence regained, and mourning turned to joy.



Feast truly blessed, when hatred is cast out, peace and justice find a home, heaven is joined to earth and all creation is reconciled to you.

Therefore, heavenly Father, in this our Easter joy accept our sacrifice of praise, your Church's solemn offering; this wax, the work of bees and the hands of your ministers. As we gaze upon the splendour of this flame fed by melting wax conceived by mother bee, grant that this Easter Candle may make our darkness light.





Christ is risen from the dead and his flame of love still burns with-in us!



Christ sheds his peace-ful light on all the world!



Christ lives and reigns for ev-er and ev-er! A - men.

The Easter Acclamation

After a short period of silence, the Bishop says,

Alleluia! Christ is risen! Alleluia! Christ is risen! Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Everyone responds:

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

At this point, the organist plays a paean of praise, the Peace Bell is rung continually, and the Cathedral is flooded with light. After extinguishing your candles, please clap, cheer, dance, sing and let off party poppers with all the enthusiasm you can muster to celebrate the risen Christ!

The Collect

When the organist has concluded, and the Bell ceases to be rung, the Bishop says,

God of glory, by the raising of your Son you have broken the chains of death and hell: fill your Church with faith and hope; for a new day has dawned and the way to life stands open Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

Old Testament Reading

We SIT to hear the Old Testament reading, read by the Very Reverend John Witcombe, Dean of Coventry.

A reading from the Book of Exodus.

As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back, and there were the Egyptians advancing on them. In great fear the Israelites cried out to the LORD. They said to Moses, 'Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, "Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians"? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.' But Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the LORD will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to keep still.'

Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Why do you cry out to me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. But you lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the Israelites may go into the sea on dry ground. Then I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them; and so I will gain glory for myself over Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots, and his chariot drivers. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I have gained glory for myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his chariot drivers.'

The angel of God who was going before the Israelite army moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from in front of them and took its place behind them. It came between the army of Egypt and the army of Israel. And so the cloud was there with the darkness, and it lit up the night; one did not come near the other all night.

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea. The LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and turned the sea into dry land; and the waters were divided. The Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

The Egyptians pursued, and went into the sea after them, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and chariot drivers. At the morning watch the LORD in the pillar of fire and cloud looked down upon the Egyptian army, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. He clogged their chariot wheels so that they turned with difficulty. The Egyptians said, 'Let us flee from the Israelites, for the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt.'

Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the sea, so that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots and chariot drivers.' So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at dawn the sea returned to its normal depth. As the Egyptians fled before it, the LORD tossed the Egyptians into the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the chariot drivers, the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. But the Israelites walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great work that the LORD did against the Egyptians. So the people feared the LORD and believed in the LORD and in his servant Moses.

Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. And Miriam sang to them:

'Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.'

Exodus 14:10 - end, 15:20 - 21

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

We STAND to sing:

Jesus Christ is risen today, Alleluia! our triumphant holy day, Alleluia! who did once, upon the cross, Alleluia! suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia!

The deacon says,

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark. Alleluia! Glory to you, O Lord!

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?' When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.' So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Mark 16:1 - 8

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Alleluia! Praise to you, O Christ!

We sing:

Hymns of praise then let us sing, Alleluia! unto Christ, our heavenly King, Alleluia! who endured the Cross and grave, Alleluia! sinners to redeem and save. Alleluia!

CP 147 Easter Hymn Lyra Davidica 1708 and others

The Sermon

Bishop Ruth prays, and then we SIT. Silence is kept at the end for reflection.

The Liturgy of Initiation

The Bishop and other ministers move to the Font. The Bishop invites everyone to STAND.

Prayer over the Water

The Bishop says,

Praise God who made heaven and earth; who keeps his promise for ever.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give thanks and praise.

The Bishop stretches her hands over the water and says,

Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ was baptized in the river Jordan: we thank you for the gift of water to cleanse and revive us. **Saving God, give us life!**

We thank you that through the waters of the Red Sea you led your people out of slavery to freedom in the promised land.

Saving God, give us life!

We thank you that through the deep waters of death you brought your Son, and raised him to life in triumph. Saving God, give us life!

Let this water remind us that in our baptism we have been made one with Christ in his death and in his resurrection, and have been cleansed and delivered from all sin.

Saving God, give us life!

Grant that we who have been brought to new birth by water and the Spirit may be raised with Christ to full and eternal life; for all might, majesty, authority and power are yours, now and for ever.

Saving God, give us life! Alleluia! Amen!

Profession of Faith

The Bishop says to everyone,

Do you believe and trust in God the Father? I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ?

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe and trust in the Holy Spirit? I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Amen.

Baptism

The Bishop pours water on Noah's head, saying,

Noah Elijah, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Then the Bishop and deacon sprinkle the whole congregation with water as a reminder of the sacrament of baptism in which all Christians share.

Everyone then says:

Almighty God, we thank you for our fellowship in the household of faith with all who have been baptized into your name. Keep us faithful to our baptism, and so make us ready for that day when the whole creation shall be made perfect in your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Confirmation

The candidates for confirmation come forward and stand in front of the Bishop, and are joined by those presenting them. The Bishop says,

Our help is in the name of the Lord who has made heaven and earth.

Blessed be the name of the Lord now and for ever. Amen.

The Bishop extends her hands towards those to be confirmed and says,

Almighty and ever-living God, you have given these your servants new birth in baptism by water and the Spirit, and have forgiven them all their sins. Let your Holy Spirit rest upon them: the Spirit of wisdom and understanding; the Spirit of counsel and inward strength; the Spirit of knowledge and true godliness; and let their delight be in the fear of the Lord.

Amen.

Members of the congregation are encouraged to pray quietly for all the candidates.

The Bishop goes to each candidate in turn and anoints them with holy oil, saying,

N, God has called you by name and made you his own.

She then lays hands on each candidate and continues,

Confirm, O Lord, your servant with your Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The Bishop then leads the congregation in this prayer:

Defend, O Lord, these your servants with your heavenly grace, that they may continue yours for ever, and daily increase in your Holy Spirit more and more, until they come to your everlasting kingdom.

Amen.

Welcome

The Bishop says,

There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism: by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body. We welcome you into the fellowship of faith; we are children of the same heavenly Father; we welcome you.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Peace

The Bishop introduces the Peace:

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said, 'Peace be with you.'

Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia.

The peace of the risen Christ be always with you and also with you. Alleluia.

The deacon says,

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

Everyone shares an appropriate sign of peace.

Hymn

We remain STANDING to sing. During the hymn we follow the cross to the front of the Nave, taking our places amongst the rows of seats at the front.

See, what a morning, gloriously bright, with the dawning of hope in Jerusalem; folded, the grave-clothes, tomb filled with light, as the angels announce Christ is risen!

See God's salvation plan, wrought in love, borne in pain, paid in sacrifice, fulfilled in Christ the Man, for he lives, Christ is risen from the dead!

See Mary weeping, 'Where is he laid?' as in sorrow she turns from the empty tomb; hears a voice speaking, calling her name; it's the Master, the Lord raised to life again! The voice that spans the years, speaking life, stirring hope, bringing peace to us, will sound till he appears, for he lives, Christ is risen from the dead!

One with the Father, Ancient of Days, through the Spirit who clothes faith with certainty; honour and blessing, glory and praise to the King crowned with power and authority! And we are raised with him, death is dead, love has won, Christ has conquered; and we shall reign with him, for he lives, Christ is risen from the dead!

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The Eucharistic Prayer

The Bishop says,

The Lord is here.

His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give thanks and praise.

We give you thanks and praise for the Gospel we have received. Christ died for our sins. Alleluia!

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Death comes to all through Adam, and sin reigns for a time.

New life without end comes through Christ, and he reigns for ever. Alleluia!

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting? Death is swallowed up in victory, the victory you give us in Christ. Alleluia!

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

We have been crucified with Christ, and live his risen life, to praise you for ever with angels and archangels:

Everyone sings:



The Bishop continues,

Lord, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness; grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit, and according to your holy will, these gifts of bread and wine may be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; who, in the same night that he was betrayed, took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them, saying: Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

The deacon says,

Praise to you, Lord Jesus.

and everyone responds:

Dying you destroyed our death. rising you restored our life: Lord Jesus, come in glory.

The Bishop continues,

And so, Father, calling to mind his death on the cross, his perfect sacrifice made once for the sins of the whole world; rejoicing in his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, and looking for his coming in glory, we celebrate this memorial of our redemption.

As we offer you this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, we bring before you this bread and this cup and we thank you for counting us worthy to stand in your presence and serve you.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people and gather into one in your kingdom all who share this one bread and one cup, so that we, in the company of all the saints, may praise and glorify you for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord:

Everyone says:

Alleluia! Amen!

The Lord's Prayer

The Bishop says,

Rejoicing in God's new creation, as our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

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.

The Breaking of the Bread

The Bishop breaks the consecrated bread.

Lord, we died with you on the cross.

Now we are raised to new life.

We were buried in your tomb.

Now we share in your resurrection.

Lord, our hearts hunger for you.

Give us this bread always.

The Invitation to Communion

The Bishop says,

Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us:

Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!

The Giving of Communion

Please wait in your seat to be directed by a churchwarden or steward. Those who do not intend to receive Communion, but would prefer to receive a blessing, are asked to carry this booklet with them as an indication of your preference. If you wish to receive gluten-free bread, please ask and we will be happy to accommodate you.

The Dismissal

Commission

The Bishop says to those who have been baptized and confirmed and invites members of the congregation to join them in their response:

Those who are baptized are called to worship and serve God.

Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

With the help of God, I will.

Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord? With the help of God, I will.

Will you proclaim by word and example the good news of God in Christ?

With the help of God, I will.

Will you seek and serve Christ in all people, loving your neighbour as yourself?

With the help of God, I will.

Will you acknowledge Christ's authority over human society, by prayer for the world and its leaders, by defending the weak, and by seeking peace and justice? With the help of God, I will.

May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith, that you may be rooted and grounded in love and bring forth the fruit of the Spirit.

Amen.

Each of the newly baptized and confirmed are invited to come and receive a lighted candle.

The Bishop says,

God has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and has given us a place with the saints in light. You have received the light of Christ; walk in this light all the days of your life. Shine as a light in the world to the glory of God the Father.

Hymn

We STAND to sing:

Love's redeeming work is done; fought the fight, the battle won: lo, our Sun's eclipse is o'er, lo, he sets in blood no more.

Vain the stone, the watch, the seal; Christ has burst the gates of hell; death in vain forbids his rise, Christ has opened Paradise.

Lives again our glorious King; where, O death, is now thy sting? Dying once, he all doth save; where thy victory, O grave?

Soar we now where Christ has led, following our exalted Head; made like him, like him we rise; ours the cross, the grave, the skies.

Hail the Lord of earth and heaven! praise to thee by both be given: thee we greet triumphant now; hail, the Resurrection thou!

Words by Charles Wesley (1707-1788)
Tune CP 150 Savannah melody from Herrnhut collection (c.1740)

The Blessing

The Bishop introduces:

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The Bishop says,

God the Father,

by whose love Christ was raised from the dead, open to you who believe the gates of everlasting life.

Alleluia! Amen!

God the Son,

who in bursting from the grave has won a glorious victory, give you joy as you share the Easter faith.

Alleluia! Amen!

God the Holy Spirit, whom the risen Lord breathed into his disciples, empower you and fill you with Christ's peace.

Alleluia! Amen!

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

Alleluia! Amen!

The deacon says,

With the risen life of Christ within you, go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

The Organ Voluntary

Please do stay and enjoy the organ voluntary, performed today by Rachel Mahon, Director of Music at Coventry Cathedral.

Carillon de Longpont from 24 Pièces en style libre, Op. 31 by Louis Vierne (1870-1937)

After the service, breakfast is served in the John Laing Centre. Everyone is welcome!

If you would like to make a one-off donation to the Cathedral via your phone, or set up a recurring donation, please use the QR code below. There are also contactless donation points and collection boxes near the entrance.

Thank you for your support.



You are warmly invited to join us at our other services taking place today to celebrate the risen Christ:

Easter Day Eucharist

Sunday 31st March, 10:30 – 11:45am in the New Cathedral All are welcome to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ at this special Easter Eucharist service.

Festal Evensong

Sunday 31st March, 4 – 5:15pm

Join us for this Festal Evensong service, with beautiful music to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ, a perfect way to end this holy day.