

LENT 2024

JOURNEY to FREEDOM

EASTER DAY 31ST MARCH

READ: Matthew 28:1-10

'He has been raised from the dead...' Matthew 28:7

Easter Day has dawned. And today we know for sure that all God's promises have been richly fulfilled.

The finest chefs, magicians and entertainers use the same trick. They save the best until last. The show may be amazing, but wait until the end when you see the showstopper. Then you'll really be blown away by their skill.

That is what God does today. He saves the best until last. But on an infinitely greater scale and to an eternal effect.

When the people of Israel passed through the waters of the Red Sea, their salvation was astonishing. By God's mighty hand, the sea was held back as they passed through, but then returned to discomfort and destroyed Pharaoh's army. Through water, the people of Israel passed from slavery in Egypt to the freedom and safety of the promised land.

But God was saving the best until last. Although those events were stunning and miraculous, they were merely a sign, an anticipation, of a far greater gift still to come.

Today, Easter Day, that promised gift has come. Jesus has passed through the waters of death as He went to the cross. Jesus has sent off Pharaoh's army as He defeated sin. And now He has conquered once and for all. Through His rising from the dead, those who once were slaves to sin can delight in the eternal freedom of the children of God.

On Easter Eve and Easter morning, many churches will be using water as a reminder of the freedom we find in Jesus's dying and rising. In the waters of the font, we die with Christ in order to rise with Him to the new life of eternity. Our sin is drowned out by the power of the cross and we are set free.

That freedom is there for you to delight in. So this Easter Day, with the whole church shout out those words from the promises of Baptism, 'I turn to Christ!' Give your life afresh to the one who has laid down his life for you.

For Christ is Risen! We have passed through water from slavery to freedom. And what awaits us now is the perfect joy of eternity.

The Rt Revd Philip North, Bishop of Blackburn