

**Sunday 5 April 2026**  
**Easter Sunday**

**Liverpool Parish Church**

**NT: Acts 10:34-43**

**NT: Colossians 3:1-4**

**Gp: John 20:1-18**

I have two younger siblings. My brother is the youngest, and as children, my sister and I used to talk about the time before he was born, as, 'when you were dead'. This irritated him, which was the point, of course. But, according to St Paul's way of looking at things, actually my siblings and I all died together on the same day, in 1985, when I was five years old, the day I was baptized, along with them both, my parents having decided to have all us all done together. It was a fairly low-key celebration, but because I was 5, I remember it. I had a sketchy idea of what it was that had happened to me, except that it happened around the same time that my mother began taking us to church, and I began to understand that I was now a member of this community that originates in those encounters between the disciples of Jesus and the risen Lord, in the garden, outside the empty tomb, on Easter Day.

It isn't the approved official language, to describe being baptized, as being 'done', because baptism is supposed to be a covenant, a promise, between the person baptized, and God, a declaration of faith. But our assent, or enthusiasm, is always the junior partner in that deal – God does the heavy lifting, And as we emerge from Lent, and the darkness of Good Friday, the light and joy and mercy of Easter morning are dazzling. Like Mary Magdalene, we're not sure of what we're looking at. But as at our baptism, so in the garden, God addresses each of us by name, with saving love. We are not alone, forsaken to work out the meaning of life by ourselves. The Teacher, the Gardener, the Carpenter, the Saviour, is with us, and gives us our identity, gives us the freedom of an invincible rock of love, rooted forever, by grace, in the love of God, so that we are hidden with Christ in God. It's a beautiful metaphor.

Last night we celebrated the Resurrection with the baptism of men and women who are discovering, as we all are, what it means to be united to Jesus Christ. Mary instinctively reached out to hold Jesus, as she came to recognize him in the garden, but for all of us the challenge is to let him take hold of us, to reinvigorate our imaginations, to shape the way we live, to be Lord of our bank balances, and to give us the divine love that often manifests itself as faithful patience with one another. Mary found herself having to display exactly that quality within hours of meeting Jesus, when she returned to the male apostles, and the gospels make it clear, they didn't believe her account. How could Jesus appear first to this woman, rather than to them – perhaps because she had gone looking for him, perhaps because in the Kingdom of God that has been dawning ever since that morning, the oppression of women would be revealed to be one of the works of the devil that Christ had come to cast down. His risen life, our life in him, is the power of one who has been crucified, has drunk the poison of all our sin, and has broken the curse of vengeance, by a grace we are evidently still struggling to comprehend, as we look at world affairs, and our own selfishness. Today is his great feast. Be fed by him, and ask that at the end of Lent's fast, we would find our life in him.

**Fr Philip Anderson**