

ANGLICAN CHAPLAINCY OF ALL SAINTS' MARSEILLE
WITH AIX-EN-PROVENCE AND THE LUBERON
Sermons - April 2026

1/ Easter Day 5th April 2026 All Saints' Marseille

The Revd Roxana Tenea Teleman, Assistant Chaplain

2/ Second Sunday of Easter 12th April 2026

All Saints' Marseille *Jane Quarmby, Licenced Lay Reader*

3/ Third Sunday of Easter 19th April 2026 All Saints' Marseille

The Revd Roxana Tenea Teleman, Assistant Chaplain

4/ Sermon – Fourth Sunday of Easter 26th April 2026

All Saints' Marseille

The Revd Roxana Tenea Teleman, Assistant Chaplain

1/ Easter Day 5th April 2026 All Saints' Marseille

The Revd Roxana Tenea Teleman, Assistant Chaplain

The first Easter began not in light, but in darkness.

Before the alleluias, before the running feet of the disciples, before the astonished recognition—there was silence. A garden, still and heavy with grief. The world, as far as anyone could tell, had ended in loss. The hopes that had gathered around Jesus have been sealed away with him in the tomb.

And yet, it is precisely there—in the darkness and the silence—that the resurrection began.

We so often imagine resurrection as something immediate, obvious, overwhelming: light breaking in, certainty replacing doubt, joy sweeping everything else away. But the Gospel tells a different story. Mary Magdalene comes to the tomb while it is still dark. She does not yet understand what has happened. Peter and John look into the

empty tomb and see—but do not yet fully see. Even when Jesus stands before Mary, she does not recognise him at first.

Resurrection is real. Yet we need time to learn to see the risen Christ. Perhaps that is part of the grace of Easter. God does not overwhelm us with a triumph that erases all confusion, all grief, all questions. Instead, God meets us gently, patiently, allowing our sight to adjust. Like eyes learning to see in a new light.

Mary Magdalene mistakes Jesus for the gardener. It is only when he speaks her name that recognition dawns. Something shifts. Not in the outward appearance, but in the relationship. She knows him, because she is known.

The question for us is not only, “Do we believe that Christ is risen?” but also, “Where do we see him? How do we learn to recognise him?” We are not standing at the empty tomb in quite the same way as Mary and the disciples. But we are invited into the same discovery. Where, then, do we see the risen Christ?

We see him wherever love proves stronger than hatred. Wherever reconciliation begins to take root in the midst of division. Wherever courage rises in the face of fear. Wherever hope refuses to be extinguished, even when the world seems dark.

We see him in the quiet, persistent work of grace: in forgiveness offered and received; in communities that choose compassion over indifference; in lives that are opened outward, rather than closed in upon themselves.

Resurrection is not simply about what happened to Jesus. It is about the kind of life that is now set loose in the world. A life without restriction.

Jesus didn't simply resume where he left off. Resurrection is something altogether new. The risen Christ is no longer bound by the limitations that once defined human existence—no longer confined by death, or by fear, or by the barriers we so often construct.

And this is the life that is offered to us.

Not that we escape the realities of this world—not that suffering, or tension, or disappointment simply disappear—but that we are drawn into a deeper reality, a “world within the world,” where love and reconciliation are ceaselessly at work.

On that first Easter morning, it was as if the veil was drawn back, just for a moment. As if, to borrow the language of Scripture, “the fountains of the great deep” were broken open.

Peter and John looked into the tomb and saw emptiness—but an emptiness that spoke. A darkness that was no longer simply absence, but possibility. The place where death had seemed to have the final word was revealed as the place where something new has begun.

The world was turned upside down. Joy became possible. Not because everything was suddenly resolved, but because everything was now held within a greater hope.

This is the joy that Easter offers to the world. It is not a superficial happiness. It doesn't promise a life free from struggle. It doesn't deny the unpredictability of the world—sometimes wonderfully unpredictable, sometimes horribly so. But it affirms that whatever happens, there is a deeper level of reality in which God is at work. A hidden current of grace that continues to flow, even when the surface of life is troubled. A divine life that cannot be extinguished.

The joy of Easter is not an escape from reality. It is an invitation—to see more deeply, to live more courageously, to love more freely.

To live, in fact, as people of the resurrection. People who know that darkness is real—but not final. People who know that grief is real—but not without hope. People who know that love, in the end, is stronger than death.

And so we are sent out, like Mary Magdalene, as witnesses. Not because we have everything neatly understood. Not because we can explain the mystery of the resurrection in full. But because we have glimpsed something—something that has changed us. We have heard our name spoken. We have begun, however tentatively, to recognise the risen Christ. And that is enough to begin.

This Easter Day, we stand again at the threshold: between darkness and light, between silence and proclamation, between not seeing and beginning to see.

We are invited to look again into the places that seem empty, the places marked by loss or uncertainty—and to dare to believe that even there, God is at work. That even there, life is stirring. That even there, Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

2/ Second Sunday of Easter 12th April 2026

All Saints' Marseille *Jane Quarmby, Licenced Lay Reader*

Agatha Christie wrote a book called "Witness for the Prosecution" many years ago, which had such a twist in the plot that it has been repeated not only in reprints of her book, but in films and stage plays too. In it, a wife turns against her husband in his murder trial court and testifies strongly against him, only for her evidence to be proven false. She sacrifices her reputation, and her husband walks free. Only afterwards does his defence lawyer discover that she was a consummate actress and knew her husband was guilty.

Such is the power of a witness in a court. An eyewitness has great influence on us whether in a legal situation or not. We are more swayed by the account of someone who was actually at an event than we are by many other forms of evidence. But can we believe the evidence of our own eyes? If you sit through a trial and hear all the witnesses one after another you may come out of it more confused than before. A person will be described as tall and slender, medium height and stocky, with fair hair, brown hair, dark hair, wearing light coloured clothes, dark clothes etc. It's the same person but different people remember them in different ways. Witnesses will give slightly different accounts of a traffic accident for example, depending on where they witnessed it from. A good, clear, accurate witness is invaluable to reaching the right verdict in a trial.

As it is in all other occasions in our lives. We are much more likely to watch a film or go to a show if someone we know has recommended it. We are more likely to visit another country if we see the photos of a friend who has been there.

But not everyone. Some people believe nothing unless they see it, hear it or touch it themselves. And the most famous of these, whose name has passed down through history, is Doubting Thomas.

One of the innermost circle of Jesus, Thomas has been faithful, loyal and brave in his following of his leader. He only crops up in the New Testament in John's Gospel and crops up three times there. After Lazarus has died, and Jesus says to his disciples, "Let's go and see him" – which meant a journey into the dangerous territory of Jerusalem where Jesus was likely to be killed, Thomas said to the others "Let's go too – and die with Jesus". He wasn't afraid to go where-ever his leader went or to face real danger with him.

Later on, in chapter 14 of John's gospel it's Thomas who confesses he has no idea what Jesus is talking about when Jesus tells them – "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. And you know the way to where I am going." And Thomas pipes up "No, we don't know, Lord. We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?". He opens the way for Jesus to tell him and his fellow disciples, "I am the way, the truth and the life."

Every group needs a Thomas, someone who isn't afraid to say "Hold on, I don't get it. Explain it again." Often people are too afraid to admit that they're lost and it's a group sigh of relief when someone does have the courage to pipe up and admit they haven't a clue what the leader is talking about.

The last time we encounter Thomas is after the horrific events of the crucifixion, when the disciples are in hiding, frightened of reprisals

from the authorities for being followers of Jesus. They still meet up but behind closed doors, without their leader, in shock from the barbaric end he met, and grieving for the man they knew and loved, taken from them all too soon.

Needing to make a living, Thomas went back to fishing, his trade before being recruited by Jesus. So, he wasn't with the other disciples when Jesus appeared to them the first time when they were meeting behind locked doors. This was such a significant event, turning their despair into delight and no doubt incredulity. This was no ghost, but a real man with a real body, still with the signs of the nails and the spear. They receive their commission to go out into the world and bring his teaching to all, and they are empowered with the Holy Spirit. They were being equipped for the job they were being given. They are also being entrusted with the power to forgive sins – that is an enormous responsibility – but they would be doing it on Christ's behalf, aided by the Holy Spirit. What an emotional roller coaster.

And Thomas missed it! He wasn't there. When he met them later, he was having none of it – far from believing the witness testimony of his friends, he demanded the same experience that they said they'd had before he would budge. And it was a lot to take in when you stop and think about it. The Jews believed the resurrection would come at the end of time, and Thomas would have seen enough dead people to know that when someone died, they stayed dead. Although we don't know what he made of seeing Lazarus come back to life - he must have realised then that Jesus was no ordinary man. He had grieved with the others when Jesus was crucified, he had hit rock bottom emotionally, and perhaps he just couldn't face any more pain.

Perhaps we'll never know just what was going through Thomas's mind. Nick Fawcett, in his book of reflections on Jesus's life imagines Thomas's state of mind like this: "I wanted to know, that's all, to see for

myself if it could possibly be true – was that so awful? Remember, we'd *all* doubted at first, when the women came back that morning, dismissing their story of the empty tomb as so much nonsense, so why point the finger at me, as though I questioned and they didn't? All right, the situation had changed since then, I accept that, for they all claimed to have seen him in the meantime, and not just them, but others, each adamant the Lord had risen, yet much as I wanted to believe it, I simply couldn't, not unless the proof was spelt out for me in black and white."

Thomas was lucky – Jesus appeared to him, challenged him to touch the wounds, to touch him and realise that he was real. He wasn't angry, but faced Thomas with his doubts and dealt with them head on. As quick to believe as he was to disbelieve, Thomas exclaims "My Lord and my God!". He is perhaps the first to state it so clearly and absolutely – Lord and God.

Belief doesn't come easily or instantly to many people. Jesus understood the doubt and met it with grace and patience, appearing to Thomas in person. Millions of people after Thomas would come to believe in Jesus partly due to his witness, his evidence, but also that of many others without the benefit of a visit from Jesus. Doubt is part of faith; honest doubt, brought into the presence of the risen Christ, can lead to a deeper faith. We have the evidence of so many other believers, freely available through prayer, meditation, study of scripture and real-life experiences of others. Not all of us will have an instant revelation, we may have to plod on asking our questions and looking for answers. Jesus has no problem with that, is happy to guide us, as long as we remain open to him. Spiritual growth is dynamic; it changes as we mature and experience more of life. God is thankfully, endlessly patient with us and will answer our questions, perhaps not in the way we expect, but the more we question and admit our

ignorance, the more we will learn. Christ is always with us; we only have to face our doubts and let him into our lives.

Thomas became a strong witness. Legend has it he took Christianity to India although no-one knows for sure. He was lucky, in that Christ appeared to him and he was able to see for himself that he was real, touchable, not a ghost or a mirage. Millions afterwards have accepted the witness testimony of all the disciples and gospel writes through the centuries without such proof. Now it's our turn – we who call ourselves Christians. We too must be witnesses to Jesus as Lord and God – to all those around us – testifying every day to him through how we live our lives, answering questions, helping others to find their way to Christ. Thankfully we are not alone, we too have the Holy Spirit available to us to help us find answers to questions, doubts, and disbelief.

Let's not be afraid to confess Jesus as our Lord and God too .

3/ Sermon – Third Sunday of Easter 19th April 2026

All Saints' Marseille

The Revd Roxana Tenea Teleman, Assistant Chaplain

A walk and a meal can transform a life. A long conversation on the road can clarify what had seemed confused. Bread shared at a table can restore what sorrow had broken.

The walk to Emmaus is such a story. It is filled with disappointment and longing, with nostalgia for what has been lost, with the ache of hopes that seemed to die. Yet it is also graced with small and vivid details: two disciples walking away from Jerusalem, speaking of all that had happened; a stranger drawing near; bread taken, blessed, broken, and given. Somewhere between the walking and the eating, between the telling of their grief and the sharing of the bread, their lives are changed.

The Emmaus road is familiar to many of us this side of heaven. It is a road marked by disappointment, shadowed by questions, and strewn with stones of disbelief. Some seasons of life make the journey steeper; some losses make it longer; some sorrows make it lonelier. Most of us, sooner or later, know this road.

It is on this road that four words are spoken which may be among the most honest and heartbreaking in all Scripture: “But we had hoped...”

What depth of sorrow lies in that sentence. What pain, bewilderment, and yearning. It is the language of hopes undone, expectations shattered, promises that seemed certain but have slipped through our fingers. It is what we say when the future we imagined has died. There are few griefs heavier than the grief of a dead future.

So Cleopas and his companion speak not only for themselves, but for all of us.

“But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.” This was the One in whom they had placed everything: the One who spoke with authority, healed the broken, lifted the poor, welcomed the outcast, and awakened ancient promises. This was the One for whom generations had waited. And now he has died — publicly, brutally, shamefully. How could it end like this? How could God’s promise come to nothing? How could hope itself be crucified?

It is precisely there, in that place of disappointed hope, that Christ comes near. Not with trumpet blast or blaze of glory to silence every doubt. Not with vengeance against his enemies. He comes as a fellow traveller. It is one of the great surprises of Easter is that the risen Lord does not overwhelm us.

Cleopas and his companion encounter a stranger, an outsider, one who simply draws near and walks beside them. How striking that the risen Christ should appear as one who seems to come from elsewhere: unrecognised, unassuming, easily dismissed. He comes under the sign of otherness. How would this story have ended had they refused to walk with the stranger? Had they turned away the outsider on the road?

For often the risen Lord comes to us in forms we do not expect. We imagine resurrection should look dramatic. We expect certainty, spectacle, irresistible power. Rowan Williams once described Easter as standing in the midst of a second “Big Bang,” a tumultuous surge of divine energy as fierce as the first creation itself.

Yet in the Gospel story, resurrection is quiet. The One who has trampled down death does not storm the road; he joins it. He does not dazzle their eyes; he attends to their sorrow.

The living God still comes to us like this: alongside us in loss, beside us in confusion, near us in those hours when despair feels close. Often we do not know who walks with us. Often only later do we understand that grace had drawn near. Christ meets us not only at the destination, but on the road itself.

As he walks beside the disciples, the risen Christ begins a quiet work of healing. He does so first by inviting them to speak, to pour out the sorrow they have been carrying: their shattered expectations, the horror of the cross, the confusion of the empty tomb, the ache of not knowing what remains.

There is mercy in being allowed to tell the story. Christ gives them that mercy. He listens. He lets grief find words. He allows pain to be spoken aloud. Then, having heard their story, he gathers the fragments of their disappointment and places them within the larger purposes of God. He restores context where they had known only chaos, promise where they had known only loss, meaning where they had seen only an ending. They thought the story was over. Christ shows them it was larger than they knew.

Is this not often our need as well? We become trapped inside the narrow narratives of fear, failure, regret, or grief. We mistake one chapter for the whole book. We cannot imagine how any good may yet come. The risen Lord comes alongside us still: to hear the story we tell in pain, and then to retell it in the light of grace.

“But we had hoped the story was bigger.” And it is. “But we had hoped it would end differently.” And it will.

At last, the moment of recognition comes at a table. Notice the simplicity, the ordinariness of it all. They sit down to eat. Jesus takes bread. He blesses it, breaks it, and gives it to them. In the breaking of bread, their eyes are opened.

There is a precious lesson here: God often chooses the ordinary as the place of revelation. The living Christ is met on a quiet evening walk. He is known at supper in the sharing of bread. He is present in the gestures, rhythms, and rituals that fill our days.

How often we look for God only in the dramatic, the exceptional, the extraordinary. Yet Easter teaches us to look also in the humble and the near: in hospitality offered, in bread shared, in kindness given, in companionship received, in hearts strangely warmed.

Saint Augustine wrote: *“Because they offered hospitality, the one whom they had not recognised in the explanation of the Scriptures, they came to know in the breaking of bread.”* Wherever room is made, the risen Christ comes. We may fail to see him in our striving, yet find him in the simple gifts already before us.

The story of Emmaus tells us that our relationship with the risen Christ is one of roads travelled, sorrows spoken, wounds reframed, Scriptures opened, bread broken, and hearts awakened.

Here, too, is an invitation to trust the slow God. The disciples are not hurried into recognition. The risen Christ walks at the pace they can bear. He listens before he speaks. He teaches before he reveals himself. He allows understanding to dawn slowly, gently, almost tenderly.

And that may be good news for many of us. For some truths do not come all at once. Some healings take time. Some revelations arrive not

in an instant, but through companionship, prayer, patience, and the quiet faithfulness of ordinary days.

So this Gospel is also an invitation to slow our steps enough to notice the One who already walks beside us. Look for him. Listen for him. And when he seems ready to pass by, honouring your freedom to ask him in, yet longing to feed you, say the words the Church has always needed to say: Stay with us, Lord.

4/ Sermon – Fourth Sunday of Easter 26th April 2026

All Saints' Marseille

The Revd Roxana Tenea Teleman, Assistant Chaplain

Doors and gates mean more than wood, stone, or iron. In every age they have marked a boundary: between what is safe and what is threatening, between what is familiar and what is unknown, between those within and those without.

In the ancient world, the city gate was more than an entrance. It was the place of security, of judgement, of negotiation, of public life. At the gate, decisions were made and the life of the community was shaped. The front door of a home may speak of hospitality and belonging, or sometimes of distance and exclusion. Great ceremonial doors—of cathedrals, of holy years, of places of memory—remind us that some thresholds are crossed with reverence.

A door may welcome or refuse. It may shelter or expose. It may unite or divide. It may mark departure or homecoming.

Because doors matter so deeply in human life, it is no surprise that Christ takes this ordinary image and says in today's Gospel: "I am the door." Or, as many translations render it, "I am the gate."

Those words carry a depth that would not have been lost on those who first heard them. In the Book of Exodus, when Moses asked the name of God, the Eternal answered from the burning bush: "I am who I am." So when Jesus speaks these words in John's Gospel, he is not merely offering a metaphor. He stands before them not simply as a teacher of wisdom, but as the living presence of God among his people.

What kind of divine presence is he?

Sometimes the image of a gate can sound narrow or forbidding, as though Christ were chiefly concerned with shutting people out. But here, the emphasis falls elsewhere. The gate exists in order to open. It is the place where a wall gives way, where what was closed becomes accessible, where a path is made. Christ is not a line drawn to keep humanity at a distance, but the place of passage from fear to peace, from estrangement to belonging, from death to life.

Christ is saying: in me, the way to the Father stands open. In me, true safety is found. In me, there is a home for the lost. In me, salvation is not an abstract system or belonging to an institution, but a living relationship with the God who knows us and calls us by name.

And more than that, Jesus says that those who enter through him “will come in and go out and find pasture.” There is movement, freedom, and life here. Christ receives us into safety, and leads us into the wide places of grace.

Once we pass through that door, we do not step into emptiness. We step into a flock, a household, a communion shaped by his risen life.

That is what we see in the reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Luke gives us a glimpse of the first Christian community, and in many ways he shows us what lies beyond the gate.

Those who had entered into Christ’s life “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” They gathered around truth, around worship, around the table of the Lord, around lives shared with one another. They were marked by generosity, holding their possessions lightly and attending to the needs of others. They were marked by gladness, praising God

with joyful hearts. They were marked by a quality of life so real, so radiant, that others were drawn towards it.

The ancient writer Tertullian tells us how the early Christians were spoken of by their neighbours: *See how they love one another*. That was their witness: love made visible.

Perhaps this is a question for every church, every congregation, every Christian household: if Christ is the gate of abundant life, does our life together look like the place beyond that gate? Do people encounter among us something of the kindness of Christ? Do they find prayer, truth, welcome, patience, mercy? Do they glimpse a joy the world cannot manufacture? Do they see lives turned outward in generosity?

The community of Acts was neither perfect, nor free of struggle. But it was learning, day by day, how to live in the light of the Resurrection, trusting the Spirit to form them into something new. That remains our calling still: that every part of who we are, what we do, and what we hope for may be filled with the Spirit of the risen Christ.

And then we come to the great promise with which this passage reaches its height: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." Christ comes to enlarge life, to renew the human spirit; not merely to rescue us from loss, but to lead us into fullness.

There are many things that steal life: fear, bitterness, isolation, injustice, despair. Sin itself wounds and impoverishes life. These are the thieves and bandits that still prowl around the human heart. But Christ comes to give - not sparingly, but abundantly.

Too often the meaning of salvation has been narrowed, as though it were only the cancellation of guilt or the settling of an account. Certainly, Christ saves us from sin. Certainly, he forgives and restores.

But he also saves us *for* something: for life renewed, life reconciled, life awakened to grace, life made fruitful in love. The Gospel is not only the promise that our past can be healed. It is also the promise that our future can be opened.

Abundant life does not look the same in every circumstance. For the man born blind in John's Gospel, whose story is told just before our passage, it meant sight, dignity, and freedom. For one weighed down by loneliness, it may mean companionship. For one burdened by anxiety, it may mean peace. For the wounded, healing. For the forgotten, recognition. For the weary, rest. For those who have lost direction, purpose, and hope.

Psalm 23 reminds us that the shepherd leads not only through green pastures, but also through the valley of the shadow of death. Abundant life does not deny the valley; it means that even there we are not abandoned. Even there goodness and mercy pursue us. Even there a table may be prepared.

Christ's promise is an invitation to enter and to share. If Christ has come that all may have life in abundance, then we must become a people who cherish life, defend life, nurture life, and carry hope wherever life is diminished. For we are sent out through this gate not only to receive the Shepherd's gifts, but to become signs of his generosity in the world.

Christ calls us into his resurrection life: to let every part of who we are, what we do, and what we desire be filled with his Spirit; to live generously, knowing that it is more blessed to give than to receive; to become a people of praise, trusting that in him all things shall finally be made well.

And from the altar he gives us the pattern of abundant life: generous, self-giving love. 'This is my body, given for you. Take and eat.'

Let us not remain outside the joy prepared for us. Jesus the gate stands open. Unbarred. Inviting. Free. May we have eyes to see him, hearts to trust him, and courage to enter.