



## Easter Sunday

April 4, 2021

### Introduction

*Christ is risen! Jesus is alive, and God has swallowed up death forever. With Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, we may feel astonished and confused, unsure of what to make of the empty tomb. But this is why we celebrate Easter: to proclaim, witness, praise, and affirm the liberating reality of Christ's death and resurrection. Alleluia!*

### Thanksgiving for Baptism

*You may want to have a small bowl of water available to remind you of your baptism!*

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Refreshed by the resurrection life we share in Christ,  
let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We thank you, risen Christ,  
for these waters where you make us new,  
leading us from death to life, from tears to joy.  
We bless you, risen Christ,  
that your Spirit comes to us  
in the grace-filled waters of rebirth,  
like rains to our thirsting earth,  
like streams that revive our souls,  
like cups of cool water shared with strangers.

Breathe your peace on your church when we hide in fear.  
Clothe us with your mercy and forgiveness.  
Send us companions on our journey as we share your life.  
Make us one, risen Christ.  
Cleanse our hearts. Shower us with life.  
To you be given all praise, with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Hymn of the Day ELW # 365 / LBW # 151**

***Jesus Christ Is Risen Today***

*Listen and sing along [here](#).*

## Prayer of the Day

O God, you gave your only Son to suffer death on the cross for our redemption, and by his glorious resurrection you delivered us from the power of death. Make us die every day to sin, that we may live with him forever in the joy of the resurrection, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## Psalm: Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24

<sup>1</sup>Give thanks to the LORD, for the LORD is good; God's mercy endures forever.

<sup>2</sup>**Let Israel now declare, "God's mercy endures forever."**

<sup>14</sup>The LORD is my strength and my song, and has become my salvation.

<sup>15</sup>**Shouts of rejoicing and salvation echo in the tents of the righteous:**

**"The right hand of the LORD acts valiantly!**

<sup>16</sup>The right hand of the LORD is exalted! The right hand of the LORD acts valiantly!"

<sup>17</sup>**I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.**

<sup>18</sup>The LORD indeed punished me sorely, but did not hand me over to death.

<sup>19</sup>**Open for me the gates of righteousness;**

**I will enter them and give thanks to the LORD.**

<sup>20</sup>"This is the gate of the LORD; here the righteous may enter."

<sup>21</sup>**I give thanks to you, for you have answered me**

**and you have become my salvation.**

<sup>22</sup>The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.

<sup>23</sup>**By the LORD has this been done; it is marvelous in our eyes.**

<sup>24</sup>This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

## Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

*The core of the Christian faith and Paul's preaching is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. As the crucified and risen Christ appeared to the earliest of his followers, so we experience the presence of the Risen One in the preaching of this faith.*

*Read the complete text [here](#).*

## Gospel: Mark 16:1-8

*The resurrection of Jesus is announced, and the response is one of terror and amazement.*

*Read the complete text [here](#).*

## Reflection on the Text

Imagine that you are with Mary and Mary and Salome – early that morning – on the first day of the week – the day after the Sabbath – the very first opportunity that you had to go to the tomb.

Imagine the fear – the surprise – the shock – at arriving and the stone is rolled away – the tomb is empty. That would be enough for most anyone - but wait – there is more – there is a stranger waiting for you, telling you that Jesus – the one whom you are looking for - is not there.

Which is harder to believe – that he is not there? Or that this stranger knows who you are looking for? Can you even begin to imagine how Mary and Mary and Salome must have felt? How afraid they must have been? Can you blame them for not saying anything? I cannot even imagine what that morning must have been like for them.

This account of the resurrection that we read today from the Gospel of Mark leaves us wondering about so many things. Who is this young man in the tomb? We are not told. Where is Jesus? Other than not here, we are not told. What happens after? We are only told that they are afraid and say nothing to anyone.

The ending of this gospel is much debated. Where our reading ends today is where most authorities believe the gospel account of Mark originally ended. The extra verses we find in our Bibles were added later, by a different author, for reasons unknown to us. This ending leaves us wondering, but not without clues.

We **know** – for we are **told** – that Jesus has been raised from the dead. We do not know how, or exactly when, or where he is now – but we do know that the resurrection has taken place.

We do not hear about any resurrection appearances, other than the promised meeting in Galilee. We do not really know that they met there, at least according to this ending of the text. We do not know how the story was spread – for according to this text, they were afraid and told no one what they had seen or been told.

The Gospel of Mark leaves us in the dark – wondering what really happened. We are not told, and therefore, we really do not know. But we do know the rest of the story, for we are part of it. 2000 years later, we still celebrate that resurrection – early on the first day of the week, even though Mary and Mary and Salome did not tell anyone.

What we do know is that someone told the story – maybe not right away, or maybe Mary and Mary and Salome never told, but Peter and the others figured it out. We do know that someone told the story – and 2000 years later we are still telling it.

This Gospel does not tell us of resurrection appearances, but even without the other Gospels, we still have Paul's account of his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus.

We know that somehow the disciples still believed and that they told the story of Jesus and his ministry – ending with his death and resurrection.

For us – we are probably much like Mary – or Mary – or Salome. We may not understand. We may be filled with fear. We may be afraid to tell anyone. We may run in fear. **But** – we **do** know the story – we **do** know what happened on that Sunday morning. We **know** that Jesus was raised from the dead. We **know** because we have other accounts. We **know** because we are sitting here on Easter morning 2000 years later – proclaiming Jesus as our risen Lord and Savior.

Even with the short and abrupt ending of our text today, we know the story. We know that even with this text that does not really end – it just stops – we **know** that the story continues – and continues on today.

We might be filled with fear, but we tell the story – over and over for all who will listen. We tell the story because when we tell it, we are filled with joy – and the joy overcomes our fear – the joy of proclaiming that Christ is Risen! All throughout the Gospel of Mark, Jesus kept telling the disciples not to tell what they have seen and heard. Now, the stranger in the tomb has told them – and us – to tell the story.

We may not have proof. We may not have anything to go by other than the words of the stranger in the tomb, but we still tell the story. We know in our hearts that the stranger is telling the truth; all through these 40 days of Lent, we have known how it would end. We have put away the Alleluias, we have looked within, we have examined our lives, we have repented of our sins, we have waited and prayed through the Three Days, and today – today we proclaim with all other Christians in the world – Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia! Amen.

**Hymn of the Day ELW # 366/ LBW # 135    *The Strife Is O'er, the Battle Won***

*Listen and sing along [here](#).*

## **Nicene Creed**

*We profess our faith with the whole church in all times and places:*

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary  
and became truly human.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,\*  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

### **Prayers of Intercession**

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

*A brief silence.*

Praise to you for your power revealed in the resurrection! Fill your church with the power of your love that is stronger than death. Send us to tell the good news wherever death holds sway. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Praise to you for your life at work in the resurrection! Fill all of creation with your life. Bring it to blossom and flourish; use it to remind us of your persistent grace. Cultivate our care for what you have made. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Praise to you for the peace made possible in the resurrection! Fill the nations with your peace. Draw together people of all nations and languages; reveal new possibilities and inspire new beginnings. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Praise to you for the hope of the resurrection! Fill all in need with hope: those who are afraid or confused, those who are sick or suffering, those who are dying, and those who grieve, especially those we name now. Assure them of your promises. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Praise to you for the joy of your resurrection! Fill this assembly with joy as we are called your beloved in baptism. Multiply that joy so that we share it at home, at work, and in our community. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Praise to you for your faithfulness revealed in the resurrection! Fill us with trust, that we join with all who have gone before us in proclaiming: “your mercy endures forever!” Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Lord’s Prayer**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

**Closing Hymn ELW # 376 / LBW # 145**

*Thine Is the Glory*

*Listen and sing along [here](#).*

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Today’s reflection was written by Pastor Ray Sipe.