

## **Cycle C Easter Sunday**

### **The Resurrection of the Lord**

Reading 1, Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Peter proceeded to speak and said: “You know what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem.

They put him to death by hanging him on a tree. This man God raised on the third day and granted that he be visible, not to all the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.”

Responsorial Psalm, Ps 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

R. (24) This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever. Let the house of Israel say, “His mercy endures forever.”

R. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.

“The right hand of the LORD has struck with power; the right hand of the LORD is exalted. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.”

R. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.

The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. By the LORD has this been done; it is wonderful in our eyes.

R. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.

Reading II, I Cor 5:6b-8

Brothers and sisters: Do you not know that a little yeast leavens all the dough? Clear out the old yeast, so that you may become a fresh batch of dough, inasmuch as you are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us celebrate the feast, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Gospel, Jn 20:1-9

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, “They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don’t know where they put him.” So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.

*“This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.”*

This year we are embracing Easter in a year of celebrating extraordinary traditions of unity in the Church...2025 is a year where unusually most of Christianity celebrates Easter on the same Sunday, and 2025 is the 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the momentous Council of Nicaea, and it's our Roman Catholic Jubilee year 2025. The great Council of Nicaea is where early Christians agreed upon their shared beliefs with the Nicene Creed.

Today, April 20, the alignment of lunar cycles that determine Christianity's primary Feast of Christ's Resurrection are the same in both the Julian and Gregorian calendars, so Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox and most Protestants celebrate Easter today. Since 1582 however when the Roman Catholics adopted the Gregorian calendar, in most years the date of Easter varies widely between the Roman and Eastern Orthodox Churches.

Our Catholic Jubilee tradition was started in the year 1300 by Pope Boniface VIII at a time when throughout the Christian world there was great suffering from wars and plagues, and a deep desire to return to a more holy way of living. When he announced Jubilee 2025 Pope Francis asked *“how can we fail to recall the various ways by which the grace of forgiveness has been poured out upon God's holy and faithful people?”* And so, this Easter morning, we join in the great celebration and joyous victory of eternal life over death.

We know well the Easter story of Christ's Resurrection and yet can we ever fully grasp its meaning? Long ago someone said, *“we view Easter through the lens of Good Friday.”* The struggles and pain in our own lives, especially death of a loved one, in many ways are more real and allow us to more easily identify with the cross of Christ. Intellectually we know death is the fate of all of us. Yet when it strikes, especially when it happens suddenly, it can crush us with sadness. Grief is the most solitary emotion I think we will ever have ...it makes islands of us all. Even Jesus wept. We are helpless to rise up out of

the death that afflicts us. It looks like death won. For this very reason, we need to reflect on God loving us so much that He alone transforms death into life.

The Resurrection, in light of that death that afflicts us, isn't so easily understood is it?...it makes things right, but how? I think, this is the dilemma that the closest friends of Jesus had in today's Gospel seeing the empty tomb. "*While it was still dark,*" they were still in shock from witnessing His death, and then they discovered His body was gone and the burial cloths were left behind. Life is so precious and death seems so final it was hard for them to process what the empty tomb really meant. Even when we have the faith that eternal life after death is a blessing, it is not very easy to comprehend ...or embrace with joy.

The reality is that God loves us so much, Christ passed through death to Resurrection's eternal life so that all mankind also would pass through its suffering and death to the glory of a new life. There is no room for despair. Our faith does not rest on proof of what we see in death...it rests in our hearts with what we know is true. Our Easter faith shows us how God raises us up and renews our lives. He doesn't make us wait. Rather He showers us with the Holy Spirit to enable us to share His love here and now. His love never died, in fact, His love endures...forever.

The words of Pope Francis from his homily in 2020 are more meaningful and hopeful for me today. He said, "*If we want to be disciples of Christ, if we want to call ourselves Christians, [there] is only [one] way; there is no other. Having been loved by God, we are called to love; having been forgiven, we are called to forgive; having been touched by love, we are called to love without waiting for others to love first; having been saved graciously, we are called to seek no benefit from the good we do...*"

So you see, as Easter people when we refuse to surrender to the power of suffering and death, it's because our faith is in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ! As Easter people we respond to people in need because the Holy Spirit enables us to share God's love.

Together, everything we do adds up...we make a difference in people's lives, in fact we change the world!...it's who we are! As a friend told me, *"Real love is not about emotions; it's about acting for the good of all people."*

In his proclamation Hope Does Not Disappoint opening Jubilee 2025, Pope Francis calls us *"Pilgrims of Hope"* and called on us pilgrims *"to discover hope in the signs of the times that the Lord gives us and to recognize the immense goodness present in our world, lest we be tempted to think we are overwhelmed by evil and violence."* Pope Francis gave us 8 ways we can be agents of hope including: to *"desire for peace in our war-torn world."* ...to be *"open to life and responsible parenting"* ...to be signs of hope *"for our brothers and sisters who experience hardships of any kind"* ...to *"restore hope to prisoners"* ...to be signs of hope *"to the young, the elderly, the sick, the migrants"* ...to be hope *"for the billions of poor who lack the essentials of life" ....*

Today's Gospel is not so much about the disciples interpreting the empty tomb, but rather it's about God's gift of faith by which we leave the darkness and enter the light, the truth, the life, and the love of Jesus Christ's Resurrection. If we live and die in that belief that we come to life in the love of Jesus, nothing of His goodness and grace will be lost and forgotten in a grave somewhere. Death didn't win.

And so we rejoice today on this Easter because our faith tells us that Christ passed through death to Resurrection's eternal life so all mankind also would pass through its suffering to the glory of a new life. God raises us up and renews our lives with His love! There is no room for despair on this Easter morning...let us join in the great celebration and joyous victory of eternal life over death.

*"This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad."*

Jesus Christ is risen!! Alleluia! Alleluia!