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Easter Sunday - 17 April 2022

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17 April 2022

Easter Sunday

Reflection by Joe Tedesco

Introduction

Today completes the Paschal Triduum and launches the season of Easter. The high point of our Christian faith is experienced in Christ who has conquered death and continues to be experienced among us.

Penitential Act

The sprinkling with water from the Easter Vigil would be an appropriate introductory rite unless this takes place with the renewal of baptismal promises. The introductory rites should not be penitential in tone. (ORDO)

Alternatively, use one of the *Roman Missal* texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you are risen!
Lord, have mercy.

You draw us to the Father.
Christ, have mercy.

You have conquered death!
Lord, have mercy.

Collect

The oration

O God, who on this day,
Through your Only Begotten Son,
have conquered death
and unlocked for us the path to eternity,
grant, we pray, that we who keep
the solemnity of the Lord's Resurrection
may, through the renewal brought by your Spirit,
rise up in the light of life.

Commentary

The Easter day collect echoes the Exultet refrain in situating the prayer 'on this day'. Yet with this is a profound sacramentality. Just as the moment of the incarnation placed the divine within matter, time and flesh, so the feast of the resurrection marks the definitive defeat of death. Interestingly, the reference to 'on this day' is an addition to the ancient prayer, one that effectively aligns it more closely with the Easter proclamation. The prayer is replete with the resurrection vocabulary, strung together to evoke the mystery being celebrated. Death, the blockage on our path to life eternal, has been conquered. This is an ancient layer of theology, with parallels in the Holy Saturday reading of the descent of Christ into the underworld to break open its gates. The path to eternity is now an ascent into the light of life: just as light replaces the night, so life displaces death. This is an ongoing work, under the power of the Spirit. Here we have a reminder of baptism, as well as a celebration of the constant presence of the Spirit, the gift of the resurrected Lord to the Church (Jn 20:22).

First Reading

Acts 10:34, 37-43

Today we begin a series of readings from the Acts of the Apostles. Their teaching is surmised by Peter in today's reading. Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, led by God the Father has done great works. Moreover, Jesus has been experienced as risen and the salvation offered is an ongoing reality; all can have their "sins forgiven through his name".

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 118(117):1-2, 16-17, 22-23

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

The Lord's love has no end. Even that which appears abandoned and dead becomes the 'cornerstone' and a marvel to our eyes.

Second Reading

Colossians 3:1-4

Following Christ's own death and resurrection, we have been brought "back to true life". Such a life draws us to seek what is above.

Or

1 Corinthians 5:6-8

Yeast is a small thing that becomes lost in dough yet impacts it significantly. So is it with evil that, even if small and invisible, has significant impact. The resurrection is an opportunity for us to realise our true selves, lives that are free of the effects of evil.

Gospel Reading

John 20:1-9*

While it was still dark, followers of Jesus have their first experiences of the empty tomb. Through their witness, we are encouraged to also seek the risen Christ. As we do so, we too journey from darkness to light.

*Alternative Gospel reading can be taken from the Vigil Mass; Luke 24:13-35.

Reflection

The Gospel reading speaks of those who first experienced the risen Christ. However, it is not quite in the form we might expect. In John's reading used for today as well as the alternatives taken from the Easter Vigil, all the Gospel accounts in their own way speak first of experiencing an empty tomb. That all the accounts of Jesus' resurrection start with an empty tomb rather than moving straight to physical encounters with the risen Christ is telling. The first movement is not a direct encounter with Christ but an absence and, initially at least, confusion.

In John's account, Mary of Magdala first sees the entrance to Jesus' tomb disturbed and open. She assumes that someone has robbed the grave and, being alarmed at such an event, runs to Peter and the 'beloved disciple'. Mary is expressing a form of doubt. The stone had been moved away and John's use of the passive tense and the perspective of our faith tradition implies that the stone has been rolled away by God. However, Mary does not consider that. The alarm, the dash away from the tomb and the subsequent distress found in the scene following the reading from John here today (Jn 20:11 ff.) tell us that Mary, initially at least, simply could not make sense of the situation.

Her reaction is quite understandable and, in many respects, represents many of us as we attempt to make sense of the empty tomb. John's account makes a point of expressing that 'it was still dark'. Not simply a scene setter for John who regularly uses light and dark as symbols of coming from doubt to faith, from being lost to being found and from death to life. Death and darkness are all consuming, but something has happened to those fundamental concepts of destruction and chaos. Something has disturbed them, the stone has been rolled away. But that is more confusing than helpful to Mary. There is an expectation of how things are meant to go, and they have not gone that way.

However, Mary, and us along with her, are being asked to shift our vision. To look beyond what we think is death is to the wonderful gift of Easter that is before us. To journey from the dark to the light. To somehow see as the 'beloved disciple' who, unlike Mary, went toward the tomb not away, and after entering "saw and believed" (20:8). Of course, Mary herself comes to a point of faith in the risen Christ too in the story as it unfolds. We are not privy to that in this reading. Her ongoing story is for another time. In this instance, it seems a clear contrast is presented in the two figures. Something changes in the beloved disciple that, to that point, does not in Mary.

We are given little data as to what causes the reaction in one and not the other. What little information we have seems to revolve around the burial cloths. This attention unique to John is curious and, especially given its double mention is, again, not simply a passing reference - something to fill the scene for the sake of it. One long held understanding is that the carefully folded and placed linen was proof that the scene was not a robbery. Jesus has risen and the state of the burial cloths is an illustration of God's intentionality, control and accomplishment. Is that enough to instigate a belief in the risen Christ? Perhaps.

Others have noted that there seems an intentional contrast here between Christ and the earlier scene with the rising of Lazarus from the dead (a scene also unique to John's Gospel). When Lazarus is raised, he is said to come out entirely wrapped in his burial linen and needed to be unbound from them (11:44). Lazarus does not need the burial garbs at that time but will need them again at some point – like all of us, Lazarus would have eventually passed into physical death. Jesus, on the other hand, is completely done with them. Death is symbolically and actually finished with in the person of the risen Christ. Has 'the beloved disciple' noticed that and, thus, believed?

We don't really know the full answer. What we know is that there are three reactions in the relatively short Gospel scene. Mary who sees a disturbance, something that is not right and is drawn to sorrow. Peter, who has a subtle part in this scene, who sees the cloths too, but whose response is left unsaid. That he along with the other disciples return home saying nothing to the others (20:10, the verse that immediately follows this reading is not included in the lectionary) suggests that his movement from darkness to light is not quite complete yet. Then there is 'the other disciple' who sees the same scene and believes.

We might be anywhere on that spectrum of three responses. We may be hopeful, but fundamentally confused and in doubt on the one hand. Or, on the other, we might be completely assured of the presence of the living Christ who is risen. Perhaps we are somewhere in the middle, with Peter who also sees something, but is not quite sure what to do with it yet.

Wherever we are, the Gospel narrative is drawing us to experience something special. To move in a direction toward faith. As is a common theme in John's Gospel, encouragement is often given to see with eyes of faith. To let our hope guide our vision, to look for signs that Christ is alive among us, that God is active in the world pulling it from darkness to light, from death to life.

One of the second readings offered starts with such a call; "look to the things that are in heaven Set your thoughts on heavenly things" (Col 3:1;2). This is not a simple fix or instant solution. It is a journey that we are invited to. This is why this Easter Sunday is actually the start of a season. We will have fifty days to consider this mystery, to be honest with ourselves if we doubt but, also, drawn to ponder the very foundation of our faith that God is the victor over all that would separate us from the fullness of life.

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

Let us place our needs before God our Father, rejoicing because Christ has triumphed over death and entered into glory.

Petitions

We pray for the Holy Father, Pope Francis, that, like Saint Peter and Saint Mary Magdalene he may continue to lead the Church in witnessing to the joyful truth of the resurrection.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those in power in the world. May they learn that humility and sacrifice are true signs of leadership.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all who have dedicated their lives to God, that they may never fail to understand the teaching of Scripture and be Christ's witnesses in the world.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for those who are working towards the conclusion of the Plenary Council and the beginning of the Synod in 2023, may they follow the promptings of the Spirit.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for the family of God, away on holiday or gathered here in Easter joy, that we may bear witness to the risen Christ and reflect him in our lives.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for all those who mourn that they may be comforted in the knowledge of the resurrection of those who have died.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

Father, your beloved son has risen from the dead as he promised. In peace and joy we present our prayers to you, through the power of the Spirit and the same risen Lord, who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA

The Sequence:

O flock of Christ. (The Sequence of Easter). J Quinn SJ/ M Vulpius. 357

Sprinkling of Holy Water:

By your kingly power, O risen Lord. J McAuley/R Connolly. 352

Come to the feast. M Haugen. 400

Song over the waters. 435

Water of life. S Dean. 176

Other hymns for the Liturgy:

All you nations. L Deiss. 353

Alleluia No. 1. D Fishel. 360

By your kingly power, O risen Lord. J McAuley/R Connolly. 352

Christ is alive, with joy we sing. P Stotter/ M Vulpius. 365

Christ is here. C Walker. 351

Easter Alleluia. M Haugen. 358

Easter glory fills the sky. J Quinn SJ/ J Jones 366

Jesus Christ is risen today. C Wesley/ Lyra Davidica. 361

Keep in mind. L Deiss. 391

Lift up your hearts. R O'Connor SJ. 416

Make us new. M Coleridge/J Wood. 436

Morning has broken. E Farjeon. Gaelic Melody 537

Now the green blade rises. J Crum/ French Carol. 364

O sons and daughters. J M Neale/ Gregorian Chant. 359

Out of darkness. C Walker. 504

Sing to the mountains. B Dufford SJ. 362

This day was made by the Lord. C Walker. 356

AOV1

Sprinkling of Holy Water:

Come to the feast. M Haugen. 151

Come to the water. F Andersen. 74

Other Hymns for the Liturgy:

Alleluia No. 1. D Fishel. 15

I have seen the Lord. B Hurd. 98

Keep in mind. L Deiss. 180

Morning has broken. E Farjeon. 135

Out of darkness. C Walker. 134

Sing to the Lord. O Alstott. 46

Sing to the mountains. B Dufford SJ. 92

This day was made by the Lord. C Walker. 183

AOV2

All creation sings. C Reid. 45
Easter people. D Light. 147
Jesus lives! C Walker. 29
Now the green blade rises. J Crum/ French Carol. 131

AOV4Kids

Alive, alive. Traditional melody. 79
Arise 'n' shine. G Holmes. 78
Easter people. D Light. 88
Easter Alleluia. M Mangan. 80
Singing Hallelujah! L Good. 77
Rejoice in the Lord. Traditional melody. 75
This is the day. Traditional melody. 159

AOVNG

Jesus is risen. Monica O'Brien. 82

CWB

O flock of Christ. Wipo of Burgundy. 290
Cleanse us, Lord. Douglas Mews. 543
Cleanse us, Lord. Ralph C. Verdi CPPS. 544
Bring, all you dear-bought nations, bring. Attr. Wipo of Burgundy, tr. Walter Kirkham Blount. 630
By your kingly power. James Phillip McAuley. 633
Christ is alive, with joy we sing. Pamela Stotter. 639
Christ the Lord is risen again. Michael Wiese. 646
Christ the Lord is ris'n today, alleluia. Charles Wesley. 647
Easter glory fills the sky. James Quinn SJ. 671
Easter song. Sr Miriam Therese Winter. 672
Now the green blade rises. John M.C.Crum. 756
O sons and daughters. Jean Tisserand, tr. John Mason Neale. 778
This joyful Eastertide. George Ratcliffe Woodward. 845

CWBII

O flock of Christ. Attr. Wipo of Burgundy, tr. James Quinn SJ. 345
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! O sons and daughters, let us sing! Jean Tisserand, tr. John Mason Neale. 349
Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord. Donald L. Fishel. 350
By your kingly power, O risen Lord. James Phillip McAuley. 352
Christ is alive, with joy we sing. Pamela Stotter. 353
Christ the Lord is ris'n again. Michael Wiese, tr. Catherine Winkworth. 354
Come, God's people, sing for joy. Keith David Pearson. 356
Easter glory fills the sky. James Quinn SJ. 358
Jesus lives. Jesus lives today. Christopher Walker. 361
Now the green blade rises. John M.C.Crum. 363
The Easter joy of Christ. Jennifer O'Brien. 364
Surrexit Christus, alleluia! Taizé Community. 65
This day was made by the Lord. Christopher Walker. 369

S&S2

Glory in the cross. Dan Schutte. 313

Join in the dance. Dan Schutte. 321

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 117: *This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad./Alleluia.*

Psalm 117: Christopher Willcock SJ. CWB 289a

Psalm 117: Robert Twynham. CWB 269b

Psalm 118: This is the day. Christopher Willcock. GA 70

Psalm 118: Let us rejoice. Marty Haugen. GA 71

Psalm 118 (117): Jenny O'Brien. JOBC pg. 39

Psalm 118 (117): Jenny O'Brien. JOBF pg.29

This is the day: Paul Mason. PM pg. 92

This is the day: Marty Haugen. LPC pg. 52

Seasonal Psalms for Easter Selected by Chris deSilva

Psalm 117: *This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad./Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.*

This is the day. Christopher Willcock SJ. CWB 289a

Psalm 117. Robert Twynham. CWB 289b

Psalm 118: This Is the Day. The Grail. GA 70

Psalm 118: Let Us Rejoice. Marty Haugen. GA 71

Psalm 118 (117): Jenny O'Brien. JOBA pg. 41

This is the Day. Paul Mason. PM pg. 92

Psalm 65: Let all the earth cry out to God with joy. Alleluia!

Let All The Earth. Christopher Willcock SJ. CWB 308

Psalm 66: Let All the Earth Cry Out. The Grail. GA 45

Psalm 66 (65): Jenny O'Brien. JOBA pg. 48

Let All the Earth Cry Out. Paul Mason. PM pg. 52

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Easter alleluia (TT/SYJ) [Gathering, Recessional]

This is the day (FWS) *Based on Ps 117/118* [Gathering, Recessional]

This is the day that the Lord has made (LCC) *Ps 117 (118)* Children's Lectionary translation

At the tomb (TWML) [Gifts]