

April 12, 2009

**Easter Sunday The Resurrection of the Lord -  
The Mass of Easter Day**

**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.**

or:

**Alleluia.**

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.**

or:

**Alleluia.**

"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.**

or:

**Alleluia.**

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.**

or: **Alleluia.**

## **Reading II**

[Col 3:1-4](#) or [I Cor 5:6b-8](#)

Brothers and sisters:

If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above,  
where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Think of what is above, not of what is on earth.

For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

When Christ your life appears,

then you too will appear with him in glory.

**or**

[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](#) or [Mk 16:1-7](#) or [Lk 24:13-35](#)

[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.

**or**

Mk 16:1-7

When the sabbath was over,  
Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome  
bought spices so that they might go and anoint him.  
Very early when the sun had risen,  
on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb.  
They were saying to one another, "Who will roll back the stone for us  
from the entrance to the tomb?"  
When they looked up,  
they saw that the stone had been rolled back;  
it was very large.  
On entering the tomb they saw a young man  
sitting on the right side, clothed in a white robe,  
and they were utterly amazed.  
He said to them, "Do not be amazed!  
You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified.  
He has been raised; he is not here.  
Behold the place where they laid him.  
But go and tell his disciples and Peter,  
'He is going before you to Galilee;  
there you will see him, as he told you.'"

**or, at an afternoon or evening Mass,**

Lk 24:13-35

That very day, the first day of the week,  
two of Jesus' disciples were going  
to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus,  
and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred.  
And it happened that while they were conversing and debating,  
Jesus himself drew near and walked with them,  
but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him.  
He asked them,  
"What are you discussing as you walk along?"  
They stopped, looking downcast.  
One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply,  
"Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem  
who does not know of the things  
that have taken place there in these days?"  
And he replied to them, "What sort of things?"  
They said to him,  
"The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene,  
who was a prophet mighty in deed and word  
before God and all the people,  
how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over  
to a sentence of death and crucified him.  
But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel;  
and besides all this,  
it is now the third day since this took place.  
Some women from our group, however, have astounded us:  
they were at the tomb early in the morning  
and did not find his body;  
they came back and reported  
that they had indeed seen a vision of angels  
who announced that he was alive.  
Then some of those with us went to the tomb  
and found things just as the women had described,  
but him they did not see."  
And he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are!  
How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke!  
Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things  
and enter into his glory?"  
Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets,  
he interpreted to them what referred to him  
in all the Scriptures.  
As they approached the village to which they were going,  
he gave the impression that he was going on farther.

But they urged him, "Stay with us,  
for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over."  
So he went in to stay with them.  
And it happened that, while he was with them at table,  
he took bread, said the blessing,  
broke it, and gave it to them.  
With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him,  
but he vanished from their sight.  
Then they said to each other,  
"Were not our hearts burning within us  
while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?"  
So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem  
where they found gathered together  
the eleven and those with them who were saying,  
"The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!"  
Then the two recounted  
what had taken place on the way  
and how he was made known to them in the breaking of bread.

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## HOMILY

When I was a young child my Grandmother would faithfully attend mass each Sunday. Like many people here, she went to the same mass, sat in the same pew, next to the same people week after week. One Easter morning she returned home quite upset. When my mother inquired about her disquiet she told my mother about a woman who arrived immediately before mass, tried to squeeze into the pew next to her, only to discover that my grandmother would not be moved. In a loud voice the woman announced, “You think that the people who come to mass each week would stay home on Easter so that those of us who come to church a couple of times a year would have a place to sit!” My grandmother was not amused.

We all know that our numbers swell on Easter. Whether we come each week, or are visiting from outside of the area, or were simply walking past and stopped in to worship, welcome! It is good that we have gathered to remember this important day in human history and in the life of this community and our families.

Our numbers increase on Easter because this mystery of life after death, victory over sin and evil, and the remembrance of a man scorned, executed, and laid in a tomb somehow speaks deeply within our hearts and our souls. We cannot always explain how this divine and human drama captivates us, we fail to understand why our hearts are so deeply moved when we recall these events of long ago, we struggle to discern how our spirits are troubled and yet strangely soothed by these events. Consequently, we are drawn to gather, to celebrate and ponder this mysterious drama.

Last Sunday we processed with palms and recalled the story of an innocent man wrongly accused and held up to scorn and shame. We winced as he became the victim of violence. We wanted to cry out as he was abandoned by followers and betrayed by his closest friend. We were shaken as he stripped naked, nailed to a cross, and surrendered his spirit wondering ~ particularly in the Gospel of Mark ~ if he would be vindicated, wondering if his life had meaning, if his Father was present, if he was loved.

This morning we gather knowing that he was vindicated, believing that his life has meaning for all of creation, trusting that God is present, and convinced that we are loved. This human and divine drama captivates us because its mystery is lived in our human experiences. Jesus’ questions are so often our questions, and somehow the struggles he endured are echoed in our own lives and histories. This day captivates us because in this celebration we are assured that when we are scorned and shamed our dignity in God remains intact, unblemished, respected ~ and that Christ is there for us. This day draws us in because as a peaceful people in a violent world we are assured that violence and hate will ultimately be vanquished by non-violence and tolerance ~ and that Christ is there for us. Our souls stir when we begin to realize that the resurrection of Jesus assures us that when we are betrayed by our closest friends and lovers that Christ remains with us. When we grieve the death of those with whom we have shared our lives and energies, our passions and dreams we find hope in the realization that death is not the final event of life. Death is the entrance into a new reality of God’s victory and consolation and the vindication of our discipleship.

We find ourselves strangely hopeful and uniquely convinced that because of the resurrection of Jesus our lives have meaning. Because of the resurrection we now believe that love will overcome violence and hatred. Because of Jesus’ victory over death our victory is

assured. We gather this day because we finally perceive that God is with us and that we are loved.

***Rev. Joseph Benedict***