

Easter Sunday



A Psalm of Resurrection Joy

God our Father,
you bring light out of darkness
and spring out of winter.
We praise you for all the ways you bring life:
the pink bud opening to lilac,
rains that gild the branches,
for dandelion yellow, speckled petal,
and new leaf tinged with red.
And in every generation,
you work your saving power in your people.
You brought them through the Red Sea
on dry land,
you led them safely through the wilderness,
you sent your Son to teach and save,
you raised him from the dead to live
with us forever.
For all this care and transformation,
we thank you.
May our hearts also be transformed
with this Resurrection joy.
We ask this through the same Christ
our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, April 24, 2011 Our Key Belief

Today's Readings: Acts 10:34a, 37-43; Colossians 3:1-4; John 20:1-9. Today's Gospel recounts an experience that is the turning point for all of human history. If Jesus could come back from death, he could defeat any obstacle that prevents him from being with those he loves. Whatever dark tomb we're in, he'll find us.

Christians experience Jesus, not only through the memory of his earthly life, but through our Baptism, where we have a continuing bond with the living person of Jesus Christ. He is with us always, but we become particularly aware of his presence at certain moments—through our encounters with other people, through scripture and prayer, and especially in the Eucharist. This is the fruit of the Resurrection.

To appreciate Jesus' Resurrection, we need to remember the little "resurrections" in our own lives. Perhaps it was health after illness, a sudden burst of energy or creativity after dullness, a renewed relationship, a new job or home, a change in scenery, good news when we weren't expecting it, laughter after sadness. Through such experiences, Jesus comes to life again and again, just as he did for Mary, Peter, and John that gray morning near the tomb.

Their three distinct personalities represent the variety of people longing for good news. Peter was impulsive, often mistaken, eventually the rock. John was the beloved, more reflective one, who believed immediately. Mary said, "I have seen the Lord" (John 20:18). So all Christians must recognize him, witnessing to our core belief: Jesus lives today!



This Week at Home

Monday, April 25

Easter Decoration at Home

We are in the Easter octave—eight days of unceasing festivity! Children can share Easter joy by making Easter decorations. Anchor a bare branch firmly in sand or rocks within a large container. Have the children decorate it with ribbons, colored construction paper cutouts of angels, trumpets, eggs, or flowers, and Alleluias in their best printing. To recall our Baptism, as on Easter Sunday when we were sprinkled with water from the font, place a pretty bowl of water on the table, along with an evergreen branch tied with a ribbon (the sprinkler). Today's Readings: Acts 2:14, 22–33; Matthew 28:8–15.

Tuesday, April 26

Creating Your Own Psalm

"Make a joyful noise to the LORD, / all the earth!" sings Psalm 100. Read a psalm of praise such as 93, 98, 100, or 150. Then write your own psalm, as in today's opening prayer. Using your own words, thank God for Christ's Resurrection, for all the little resurrections in your life, and for your favorite things about spring. Or, if you're artistic, draw or paint a psalm. Today's Readings: Acts 2:36–41; John 20:11–18.

Wednesday, April 27

The Meaning of Mystagogia

The Greek word may sound odd to us, but it simply means "teaching the mysteries." This is the final period in the process of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, or RCIA. The neophytes (those baptized at the Easter Vigil) reflect deeply on all that has happened to them. We too can think about what touched us most during the Triduum liturgies, and what it meant to us. Was it a song? A phrase from the readings? The sight of the people, the cross, the font? What have you learned about God or yourself during this sacred time? Today's Readings: Acts 3:1–10; Luke 24:13–35.

Thursday, April 28

Easter in Nature

Brother Lawrence, author of *The Practice of the Presence of God*, had a deep spiritual insight when he saw a bare, gray tree on a cold winter day and knew that in a few months, the same tree would be covered with green leaves. That sight spoke to him of God's providential care. Take a walk outside, observing what speaks to you of new life and Resurrection. Is it something you hear? Smell? See? Touch? Today's Readings: Acts 3:11–26; Luke 24:35–48.

Friday, April 29

Another Sort of Eucharist

Just as Jesus had taken bread and given it to the disciples at the Last Supper, and on so many other occasions, today's Gospel describes him doing so again after the Resurrection. Only after the stranger on the shore has directed them to a huge catch of fish do the disciples recognize the Lord. Finding the Lord in a stranger, in the midst of our workaday lives, and finding spiritual food in the experience—that's another sort of Eucharist to be grateful for. Today's Readings: Acts 4:1–12; John 21:1–14.


Saturday, April 30

Easter Reflection

Find some quiet time this week to pray over these words from an Easter homily by Bishop Melito of Sardis (second half of the second century): "Christ rose from the dead, and cried aloud: 'I have freed the condemned, brought the dead back to life, raised men from their graves. Who has anything to say against me? . . . I have destroyed death, triumphed over the enemy, trampled hell underfoot, bound the strong one, and taken men up to the heights of heaven: I am the Christ.'" Today's Readings: Acts 4:13–21; Mark 16:9–15.



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 Keeping the Seasons

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