

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord



Prayer of Joy

God our Father,
we celebrate your wonders.
You restored your Son Jesus to life
after a terrible death,
and you offer us all the promise
of eternal life.
In the light of his rising,
nothing can crush our joy.
You who gave your only Son
to free a slave,
help us appreciate your gift.
Renew us through our Easter
celebrations,
and teach us never to lose hope.
We ask this through our Lord
Jesus Christ,
your Son, who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever. Amen.

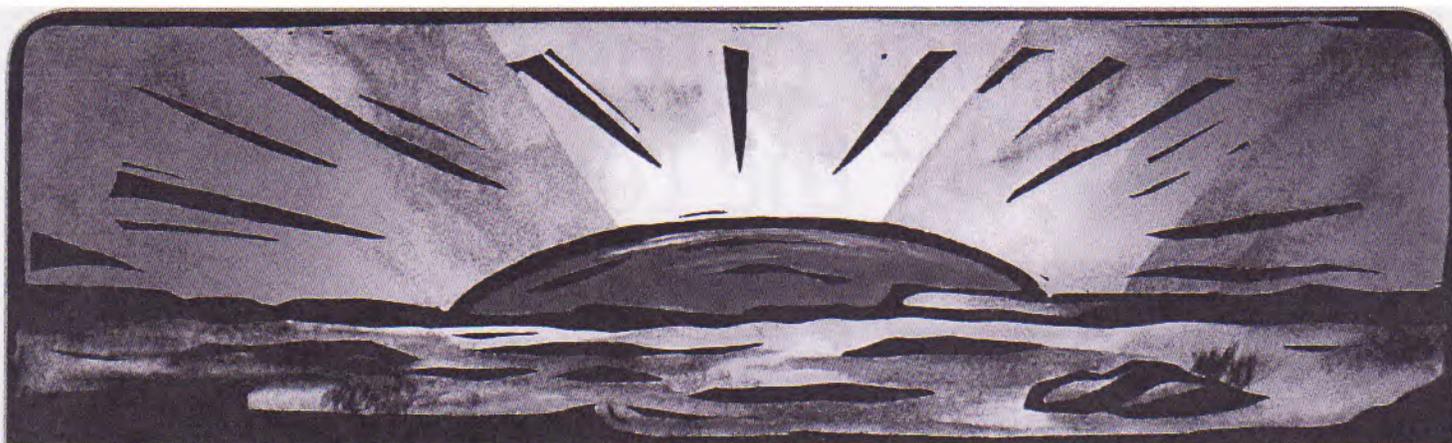
Sunday, April 8, 2012 Invitation to Joy

Today's Readings: Acts 10:34a, 37-43; Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23 (24); Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8; John 20:1-9 or Mark 16:1-7. Today's solemnity gives us reasons for joy, even if we think things look grim. Despite evidence of tragedy, Easter fulfills promises so daring, we yearn to believe them. Light conquers darkness; death is not final; we will live eternally and meet our loved ones again.

Indeed, "in this, you rejoice" (1 Peter 1:6). So much good news, in fact, may seem overwhelming. Since we have limited capacity to absorb all this, the Church wisely presents it in narrative form. We hear the story of ordinary human beings like ourselves. Mary Magdalene, Simon Peter,

and the Beloved Disciple have all been through a grueling ordeal, watching the torture and murder of their beloved leader, Jesus. They have seen their high hopes perish and his vibrant life extinguished. Such trauma can bring depression that saps energy, so that even ordinary tasks become formidable obstacles.

For that reason, it's interesting that the verb repeated twice is "run." Mary runs to tell Peter, and the two men run to the tomb. This sudden burst of energy is surely a tribute to the power of hope and their love of the Lord. Can we too set aside inertia, and with rejuvenated hope, "see and believe"?



This Week at Home

Monday, April 9

Mixed Emotions

Today's Readings: Acts 2:14, 22–33; Psalm 16:1–2a and 5, 7–8, 9–10, 11 (Alleluia); Matthew 28:8–15. The women's response to the angel's message is "fear and great joy" (28:8). While that seems an unlikely combination of emotions, it may characterize Christians in the face of mystery. In fact, those baptized at the Easter Vigil now enter a period called "mystagogy," which means "savoring the mysteries." To what extent do you think faith is about having clear answers? To what extent does it mean entering into mystery?

Tuesday, April 10

Two Key Questions

Today's Readings: Acts 2:36–41; Psalm 33:4–5, 18–19, 20 and 22 (5b); John 20:11–18. Today we hear of Jesus' tender concern for Mary. He doesn't make a dramatic entrance into the scene. Instead, he asks gently why she weeps and for whom she is looking. Use Jesus' questions for meditation. What causes you to weep? And for whom are you looking? Perhaps Jesus? Yourself? Another?

Wednesday, April 11

Constant, Hidden Companion

Today's Readings: Acts 3:1–10; Psalm 105:1–2, 3–4, 6–7, 8–9 (3b); Luke 24:13–35. The Emmaus story signals how Jesus always walks with us, even in our darkest hours, although sometimes we don't recognize him. The disciples are almost paralyzed with grief: "They stood still, looking sad" (24:17). Yet Jesus gets them moving again, talking about what happened, although pretending ignorance of recent events. Take a cue from him: if you know people who are depressed or grieving, spend some time listening to their story.

Thursday, April 12

The Signs of Easter

Today's Readings: Acts 3:11–26; Psalm 8:2ab and 5, 6–7, 8–9 (2ab); Luke 24:35–48. Today's Gospel story shows Jesus eating with his friends and helping them understand the scriptures: these continue to be the central actions of our Eucharist. How is the Mass different this week? After six weeks without the "Alleluia," we hear it often now. Flowers and candles abound. The "Gloria" rings out again, sometimes with bells. The sprinkling rite reminds us of our Baptism; the air fills with incense; the vestments are white. Through all these signs, we attempt to express our joy.

Friday, April 13

The Primacy of Love

Today's Readings: Acts 4:1–12; Psalm 118:1–2 and 4, 22–24, 25–27a; John 21:1–14. Today's Gospel gives insights into Peter and the Beloved Disciple. After his betrayal, Peter is reconciled with the Lord as his commission is renewed ("Feed my sheep."). And we see the intimacy between Jesus and the Beloved Disciple, whose intuition ("It is the Lord!") parallels his reaching the tomb first and believing first in the Resurrection. For John, mystical union always takes priority over authority.

Saturday, April 14

Correcting a Wrong

Today's Readings: Acts 4:13–21; Psalm 118:1 and 14–15ab, 16–18, 19–21 (21a); Mark 16:9–15. Mark's account of Jesus' first post-Resurrection appearance to Mary Magdalene offers an appropriate moment to repeat a correction concerning her: nothing in scripture supports the misconception that Mary Magdalene was a prostitute. That mistake came from the conflation of several biblical texts, reinforced by Pope Gregory the Great in the seventh century. We know from Luke's Gospel account that she supported Jesus' ministry from her wealth and was his beloved friend, a leader in the early Christian community. Let's not allow a mistaken slander to continue for another 1,400 years.

