

For meditation and context:

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Isaiah 12:2-3, 4bcd, 5-6 (3)

When baptism is not celebrated.

R. You will draw water joyfully from the springs of salvation.

God indeed is my savior;
I am confident and unafraid.
My strength and my courage is the LORD,
and he has been my savior.
With joy you will draw water
at the fountain of salvation.

Sing praise to the LORD for his glorious
achievement;
let this be known throughout all the earth.
Shout with exultation, O city of Zion,
for great in your midst
is the Holy One of Israel!

Give thanks to the LORD, acclaim his name;
among the nations make known his deeds,
proclaim how exalted is his name.

Or:

For meditation and context:

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 51:12-13, 14-15, 18-19 (12a)

When baptism is not celebrated.

R. Create a clean heart in me, O God.

A clean heart create for me, O God,
and a steadfast spirit renew within me.
Cast me not out from your presence,
and your Holy Spirit take not from me.
Give me back the joy of your salvation,
and a willing spirit sustain in me.
I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners shall return to you.

For you are not pleased with sacrifices;
should I offer a holocaust, you would not
accept it.
My sacrifice, O God, is a contrite spirit;
a heart contrite and humbled, O God, you
will not spurn.

EPISTLE Romans 6:3-11

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

Brothers and sisters:

Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.

Proclaim this letter from St. Paul with energy.

Paul's opening questions are the catalyst for him to develop an explanation of what the believers have already experienced by Baptism—both the ritual and the continued immersion into Christ's life—and how they should live accordingly. The intimate participation of believers who are plunged into Christ, as explained by Paul, has practical implications. The last verse of the reading begins with the word "consequently," a term that Paul often uses when he moves from theological teaching to exhortation. He tells the community mem-

bers how they are to live in light of their belief. In the verses following our reading, Paul develops the "consequently," telling the believers in Rome how they are to co-live in Christ, not as a burden, but as an expression of their intimate relationship with the risen Christ.

The readings from the Old Testament can be heard and interpreted anew in light of the mystery of Christ as proclaimed by Paul. In Christ there is a new creation, new freedom from enslavement, new release from exile. The transformation proclaimed

by Israel's prophets is even greater than they could have hoped for, for the transformation entails a "newness of life" in Christ. Ezekiel's prophecy of a new heart and a new spirit, and the promise "You will be my people and I will be your God" find extraordinary, unimaginable fulfillment through the profound intimacy of life with Christ.

GOSPEL

Matthew 28:1-10. The setting for the Gospel is "after the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning." The day of Sabbath rest is

Keep building your energy.

For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his,
 we shall also be united with him in the resurrection.
 We know that our old self was crucified with him,
 so that our sinful body might be **done** away with,
 that we might **no** longer be in slavery to sin.
 For a **dead** person has been absolved from sin.
If, then, we have died with Christ,
 we **believe** that we shall also live with him.
 We **know** that **Christ**, raised from the dead, **dies no more;**
death no longer has power over him.
 As to **his death**, he died to sin once **and for all;**
 as to **his life**, he lives for **God.**
 Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as being **dead to sin**
 and living **for God in Christ Jesus.**

This line is important. Pause before you proclaim it. Use good eye contact.

For meditation and context:

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

R. Alleluia, alleluia, 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."

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

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.

over, and a new day has begun, bringing with it a totally unexpected and wondrous newness. It is the "first day" of a new creation. Three women who had also witnessed the death of Jesus brought spices to anoint him at the tomb where he had been buried by Joseph of Arimathea. Shortly before his death, another woman had anointed Jesus' body in preparation for his burial, and now these three women plan to anoint it after burial. The three are named, unlike so many anonymous men and women: Mary Magdalene; Mary, the

mother of James; and Salome. They were among the women who had ministered to Jesus in Galilee, and their desire to anoint him was to be a final ministry to him. Wondering who would roll away the large stone from the tomb entrance, the women see instead that the stone had already been rolled back. On entering the tomb, to their amazement, they see a young man clothed in white. We can well understand their astonishment, noted by Mark with a strong verb (*exethambethesan*), portraying them as completely amazed, utterly over-

whelmed. More than simple surprise at the presence of the young man, theirs is a typical reaction in the face of the divine. The mysterious young man is a heavenly messenger, announcing to them that Jesus has been raised. His use of the passive verb "has been raised," is a biblical idiom to indicate that that action has been accomplished by God. Although Jesus appeared to be abandoned by God at the crucifixion, God has not abandoned his Son. Always present and powerful, God has transformed Jesus' death into life.