

EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

In this reading, Peter is telling an assembled crowd the story of Jesus' life and the important lessons learned from his instructions
Judea = joo-DEE-uh

Here is the first point: Jesus went about doing good.

Here is the second point: He was crucified.

Here is the third point: He was resurrected. Mostly even stresses on the words in this line.

Here is the fourth point: He commissioned Peter and the other disciples to preach.

And finally, the fifth point: If you believe in Jesus, your sins will be forgiven. This point speaks directly to the assembly.

There are options for today's readings. Contact your parish staff to learn which readings will be used.

READING I Our first reading is a speech attributed to Peter on the occasion of his visit to the household of Cornelius, a Roman centurion who was posted in Caesarea and who was a generous supporter of the Jewish community there. One day, in a vision, Cornelius is told to call for Peter to come to his home. The next day, Peter receives a vision that he does not understand at first but that

LECTIONARY #42

READING I Acts of the Apostles 10:34a, 37-43

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

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**."

appears to cancel certain food prohibitions that kept Jews separate from Gentiles at meals and from entering each other's homes. Therefore, when Cornelius' men arrived at his home, Peter knew that he could go with them (see Acts 10:1-23).

When Peter enters Cornelius' home, he discovers that his entire household along with relatives and friends were gathered there. The first thing Peter does is acknowledge publicly that Jews were not supposed to associate with Gentiles, but that God showed him that no human person is to be

considered "profane or unclean" (Acts 10:28). This is a radical break with tradition.

After Cornelius explains to Peter why he was summoned, Luke presents Peter in today's reading as delivering a testimony to his audience about the central mystery of Christian faith: that Jesus was sent by God to bring the Good News to the world, that he was crucified, that God raised him, and that he appeared to the apostolic witnesses. Finally, calling on the witness of the prophets, Peter says, "everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through [Jesus'] name."

For meditation and context:

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 118:1–2, 16–17, 22–23 (24)

R. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.

or

R. 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.

READING II Colossians 3:1–4

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Colossians

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:

Colossians = kuh-LOSH-uhnz

An exhortatory reading, compressed in
its length but powerful in its message.

The focal word in this reading is “above.”

The syntax here is strange. Be sure
to practice.

As if to testify to the quality of faith found among his Gentile audience, we hear in the verses following today’s reading that the Holy Spirit comes down upon everyone gathered at Cornelius’ home and they begin speaking in tongues. What else could Peter conclude from this glorious event, but that everyone should be baptized in Jesus’ name (Acts 10:47–48)!

READING II **Colossians.** Our second reading comes from the latter half of Colossians, in which the author gives practical advice for living as Christians.

Before going into the specifics of this, the letter writer exhorts the community to “seek what is above,” that is, to seek the resurrected Christ, who is “seated at the right hand of God.” Most likely, this is the snippet of a creedal statement based on Psalm 110:1. In this context, it affirms the summation of the paschal mystery: once crucified and buried, Jesus Christ was raised from the dead and now is exalted in glory.

But the key to fully understanding this text is a theology of baptism that appears to be similar to what Paul describes in Romans 6:1–11. Christian believers are bap-

tized into Christ’s death, and their old self is now dead to sin. This is what the author of the Letter to the Colossians means when he says, “for you have died.” And just as, in baptism, Christian believers are united with Christ in his death, they are united in his resurrection and emerge to newness of life. This is what the author of this letter means at the beginning of this reading when he writes, “If then you were raised with Christ.” But for now, Christian believers live in the “between times,” after Jesus’ salvific death and resurrection but before he returns at the end time. This is what the

Corinthians = kohr-IN-thee-uhnz

A reading in which Paul makes use of an ingenious metaphor.

Yeast is Paul's metaphor for Christ's sacrifice. Just as there would be no feast without bread, so there is no spiritual life without leaven.

TO KEEP IN MIND

Sequences originated as extensions of the sung Alleluia before the proclamation of the Gospel, although they precede the Alleluia now. The Easter Sequence is an ancient liturgical hymn that praises Christ, the paschal victim, for his victory over death. Mary Magdalene recounts her experience at Christ's tomb, proclaiming, "Christ my hope is arisen."

letter writer means when he says, "your life is hidden with Christ in God."

1 Corinthians. The situation described in today's reading concerns a report that Paul received about a member of the Christian community who has been sleeping with his mother or stepmother. Of course, Paul is not happy! He is equally displeased with the rest of the community, because they seem not to consider the harm that this does to everyone else.

To explain his position regarding what should happen to this man, Paul appeals to

READING II 1 Corinthians 5:6b–8

A reading from the first Letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians

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**.

SEQUENCE Victimae paschali laudes

Christians, to the Paschal Victim

Offer your thankful praises!

A Lamb the sheep redeems;

Christ, who only is sinless,

Reconciles sinners to the Father.

Death and life have contended in that
combat stupendous:

The Prince of life, who died,

reigns immortal.

Speak, Mary, declaring

What you saw, wayfaring.

"The tomb of Christ, who is living,

The glory of Jesus' resurrection;

Bright angels attesting,

The shroud and napkin resting.

Yes, Christ my hope is arisen;

to Galilee he goes before you."

Christ indeed from death is risen, our new
life obtaining.

Have mercy, victor King, ever reigning!

Amen. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

Today's Gospel reading, taken from John's account of the empty tomb, is constructed as an intercalation, a story within a story. The lectionary reading only consists of the opening section of the outer story (with Mary) and the inner story (with Peter and the Beloved

the metaphor of Passover preparation, for which every form of leavening must be removed from the house before Passover can begin, as a way of indicating one's commitment to a new beginning for a people no longer in slavery. Although the Christian community at Corinth consisted mostly of Gentiles, they would have known about this practice, because many would have already been attending synagogue or because they were introduced to the message of Jesus Christ by Paul, who was himself a Jew. Paul likens this man to the yeast that must be removed from the house

before Passover. Further, he likens the crucified Jesus to the Passover lamb that was sacrificed in the Temple on the day before Passover, and he wants the Corinthian community to be the new "unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

GOSPEL John 20:1–9

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John

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**.

A reading relating a scene of enduring power and strangeness.

Magdala = MAG-duh-luh

The detail of the burial cloths is important. When Peter recognizes that the head cloth has been folded up, he understands that the body of Jesus was not stolen (since thieves wouldn’t take the time to fold up the linens).

Seeing is believing: belief dawns on them here.

Believing and understanding are two separate things. Understanding can take more time than belief.

Disciple). It does not include the conclusion to the outer story about Mary still at the empty tomb (John 20:10–18).

In the first half of the outer story, Mary of Magdala arrives at the tomb very early in the morning when it is still dark outside, which would have been an extremely dangerous time for a woman to be out and about, especially alone. Only John’s Gospel describes the tomb as being in a garden, perhaps an allusion to the paradisaal garden of the first chapters of Genesis (John 19:41). When she sees that the tomb is open, she immediately assumes the worst! Her fright

is evidenced in the detail about her running to find Peter and the Beloved Disciple to tell them the horrifying news, that Jesus’ body had been taken from the tomb and “we don’t know where they put him.” To whom does “we” refer? Is the Gospel writer using Mary to speak for the entire Johannine community? They must have struggled, at first, to understand the significance of Jesus’ exaltation and return to the Father. Or perhaps there were other women with her, as in the other Gospel accounts.

The inner story begins with the narrator indicating that Peter and another disci-

ple, presumably the Beloved Disciple, went to the tomb. They run to the tomb and the Beloved Disciple arrives first, but he waits for Peter to enter into the tomb. This is an indication of the community’s acknowledgment of Peter’s authority in church leadership. But, while the Beloved Disciple is waiting, he looks in and sees the burial cloths. Likewise, when Peter arrives, he looks in and sees the burial cloths as well as the head covering, which is rolled up and set away from the other cloths. Why such detail? Some of the vocabulary in this story reminds us of the Lazarus story, in which

A reading with great drama built into it. You can easily imagine it being filmed. The focus on the reading is recognition, specifically the time it takes Jesus' two disciples to recognize that he has been raised from the dead. The build-up of the narrative intensifies the excitement and joy of their recognition.

This phrase introduces the motif of recognition that guides the passage. Recognition is connected initially to seeing.

It's interesting that only one of these two disciples are named.

Note that "they" are speaking, both of them, even though it's one unified speech. The purpose of this description of Jesus' deeds and words is to build toward recognition.

Note "a vision of angels." Recognition and seeing are still urgently connected.

Jesus orders Lazarus to come forth from his tomb (John 11:44). When he emerges, he is still bound by the burial cloths and the head covering, but Jesus' situation is different. How was Jesus freed from the burial clothes? Was this God's doing? And what does it mean that the head covering was rolled or folded up by itself? Certainly, we can assume that Jesus' body was not stolen. After all, grave robbers who are in such a hurry as to steal a body are not going to take the time to undress the corpse and neatly fold up the face covering! Still, the

AFTERNOON GOSPEL Luke 24:13–35

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke

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**.

disciples did not fully understand what had happened.

This passage in John continues beyond the lectionary reading with the note that the disciples went home. What a strange ending! This inner story reminds us that Mary Magdalene, Peter, and the Beloved Disciple are all persons of limited faith at this point. This is important for us to acknowledge because they are us. We, too, find ourselves to be of limited faith more often than we would like to admit.

In the second half of the outer story (John 20:11–18), we learn that Mary remained at the tomb weeping. She encounters someone whom she assumes to be the gardener, but when he calls her by name, she recognizes him to be the risen Christ. Sent off by Jesus with a message to deliver to the disciples, she is able to proclaim, "I have seen the Lord," (John 20:18), making her the first apostle of the resurrection. But seeing is believing in John's Gospel. Mary's journey to full faith is now complete!

After spending time with Jesus (whom they still don't recognize), these disciples have a desire for further fellowship with him. They are beginning to sense something different than seeing something.

In the breaking of the bread—the ritual that repeats the Passover when they last were in Jesus' company—there is recognition. Ritual reveals presence.

Confirmation of their recognition, repeated in the phrase "the breaking of bread," the message of this reading.

"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**.

AFTERNOON GOSPEL

As Luke tells the story in this Gospel reading, this encounter with the risen Christ takes place on the same day that Jesus was raised from the dead. We learn that two of Jesus' disciples are deep in conversation as they make their way to Emmaus, which is approximately seven miles from Jerusalem. The narrator notes that they appear sad or downcast and, when the risen Jesus joins them on the road, they do not recognize him.

As Jesus engages these two disciples in conversation, he prompts them to tell the story of what happened to him in Jerusalem. Their response reads like a credal formula, but noticeably absent is any mention of the resurrection. This is at odds with what they reveal next, that news of the resurrection had been proclaimed to them earlier that day. Thus, the risen Jesus confronts them, calling them foolish and slow of heart and scolding them about not understanding the Scriptures that describe

the necessity of Jesus' suffering and glorification as part of God's plan from the start.

Then, at their evening meal, Jesus blessed, broke, and shared the bread in much the same way he did at his last meal before his death. It is only in the breaking of the bread do the disciples complete their journey from unbelief to full faith. Certainly, this is cause for great joy. C.C.