

Easter

Morning Prayer A

First Lesson: Isaiah 25:1-9

Second Lesson: Matt 28:1-10, 16-20

Homily

The day of resurrection!

Earth tell it out abroad:

The Passover of gladness,

The Passover of God.

From death to life eternal,

From earth unto the sky,

Our Christ hath brought us over

With hymns of victory.

The past forty days were somber days.
Holy Church called us to think on our sins,
to fast and to pray in sorrow
that we had offended our holy and loving God.
We've reminded ourselves of the bondage
in which we had bound ourselves,
and of our inability to climb back out of that pit.

This past week we stood symbolically
with the apostles and the faithful women
as they watched their only Hope,

arrested, beaten , killed, and buried.

The very sun darkened and the earth shook,

a gloom descended upon their hearts,

and the devils rejoiced with evil joy.

Darkness and sin certainly seemed to have won.

And in that hopeless third morning,

in a sad and futile gesture of love,

the women came to the tomb, carrying spices,

much as we would bring flowers,

intending to weep at His grave, and go away.

And then ...

"It's an angel!"

"Do you hear him?"

"Can you believe it?"

"He is not here! He is risen!

Just as He said it would be!

Didn't you hear Him?

Look! This is where He was.

He is not here! He is risen!

Run! Tell His friends!

Run! He is risen!"

They ran. With all their might they ran,
hoping against hope that it was true,
and ...

It's Him! He speaks! They fall before Him.

"Adonai", "My Lord!", "Halleluiah!"

"Tell them! Tell them!
 Tell His friends! Tell the world!
 He's alive! He's alive! He's alive!

*"He will swallow up death in victory;"
 said the Prophet long before,
 "and the Lord GOD
 will wipe away tears from off all faces;
 and the rebuke of his people
 shall he take away from off all the earth:
 for the LORD hath spoken it.
 And it shall be said in that day,
 Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him,
 and he will save us:
 this is the LORD; we have waited for him,
 we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."*

In a world where death seems to be king,
 where every life comes to an end,
 where men kill men,
 where life, as it has been said,
 "is nasty, short, and brutish,"
 and the world itself seems threatened with an end,,
 in such a world we have a message,
 there is hope,
 the last enemy, death itself,
 has been defeated,
 the gates are open

to an everlasting, ever-joyful life.
 Sin and death are overcome.
 He is risen!
 He is risen!
 He is risen!

As was said in many places last night
 in the Easter Vigil:

"Rejoice now, all ye heavenly legions of angels:
 and celebrate the divine mysteries with exultation:
 and for the King that cometh with victory,
 let the trumpet proclaim salvation.
 Sing with joy, O earth,
 illumined with this celestial radiancy:
 and enlightened by the King eternal,
 believe and know that thou hast put away
 the darkness of all mankind."

We have a message.
 Let us proclaim it.

Lord Christ, we praise thee in thy Resurrection.
 We celebrate the great salvation
 thou hast won for us.
 Let our joy overflow.
 Let the Good News be heard in this dark world.
 Let thy light shine through us,
 and lead the lost ones to thy joy.
 Amen.

Easter

Morning Prayer B

First Lesson: Exod 12:1-14

Second Lesson: Rev 14:1-7, 12-13

Homily

Christ is risen. Alleluia!

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

This is the day which the Lord hath made. Alleluia!

Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Alleluia!

The eternal Son, the everlasting Word of God,
came down from heaven, took flesh of the virgin
Mary,

was made man, and lived among us.

For our sins He suffered and died and was buried,
and on the third day,

as it were, on this very day,

he rose from the grave, broke the bonds of death,
declared freedom to those who had been bound,
and everlasting life to those chained in death.

Christ has risen from the dead,
trampling death by death,

and, on those in the tomb, bestowing life.

He is the Lamb slain

from the foundation of the world,
the one true and immortal Sacrifice
that conquers sin.

Let us rejoice!

Let us rejoice!

Let us rejoice!

We didn't hear the story of the Resurrection
in this service,

but the Scripture we did hear
gives us ample reason to rejoice.

We heard how the people of Israel,
every year about this time,

gathered for the Passover meal,
for a feast of roast lamb

to celebrate their deliverance
from the angel of death,

who passed over the houses
that were marked with lamb's blood;

and to remember in story and song,
and in many symbols,

the end of their slavery in Egypt,
and the freedom of the sons of God.

"And this day shall be unto you for a memorial;"
we heard,

"and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD
throughout your generations;

ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever."

And so it is, that even today we keep that feast,
 every time we gather for Eucharist,
 every time we partake of the Body and the Blood.
 "Lamb of God,
 who takest away the sin of the world,"
 we sing, and we feast, and, in feasting,
 we look forward
 to the everlasting Supper of the Lamb,
 which we shall celebrate in the heavenly places,
 with him, with the ...

*"Lamb ... on the mount Sion,
 and ... an hundred forty and four thousand,
 having his Father's name
 written in their foreheads.
 And ... a voice from heaven,
 as the voice of many waters,
 and as the voice of a great thunder:
 and ... the voice of harpers
 harping with their harps:
 ... as it were a new song before the throne,
 and no man could learn that song
 but the hundred and forty and four thousand,
 which were redeemed from the earth.*

And we, the redeemed,

for whom the Blood was shed,
 who have passed through the waters of Baptism,
 who have followed Him
 in repentance and in prayer,
 who have partaken of that Holy Meal here below,
 who have trusted in Him for salvation,
 we shall stand with that number,
 we shall know His presence and His beauty
 and His love.

And that rejoicing
 shall continue into ages of endless ages.
 He is risen!
 We are free!
 Let us begin that rejoicing that shall not end.

Hail thee, festival day!
 blest day that art hallowed forever;
 Day whereon Christ arose,
 breaking the kingdom of death.

Lo, the fair beauty of earth,
 from the death of the winter arising!
 Every good gift of the year
 now with it's Master returns.
 He who was nailed to the cross
 is Lord and the ruler of all men;
 All things created on earth,

sing to the glory of God.

Hail thee, festival day!
blest day that art hallowed forever;
Day whereon Christ arose,
breaking the kingdom of death.

God the All-Father, the Lord,
who rulest the earth and the heavens,
Guard us from harm without,
cleanse us from evil within.
Jesus the health of the world,
enlighten our minds, thou Redeemer,
Son of the Father supreme,
only begotten of God.

Spirit of life and of power,
now flow in us fount of our being,
Light that dost lighten us all,
life that in all dost abide.

Hail thee, festival day!
blest day that art hallowed forever;
Day whereon Christ arose,
breaking the kingdom of death.
Amen.

Easter

Evening Prayer A

First Lesson: Isa 51:9-16

Second Lesson: Luke 24:13-35

Homily

It had been a hard week.
 They had pinned their hopes upon the Teacher.
 They had heard His golden words.
 They had watched him work wonders.
 He had fed hungry multitudes.
 His closest disciples said that
 He had even walked upon the water.
 And they had believed ...
 Oh, how they had wanted to believe ..
 that He was the promised Messiah,
 the Son of David,
 come to set His people free.
 But there he had hung.
 They had watched from a distance,
 as the Teacher suffered and died,
 the terribly cruel death of the Cross.
 They buried Him in a stone tomb,
 the stone door closed and sealed,
 and it was all over.
 Oh, sure, there was talk.

Some of the women claimed the body was gone.
 There were even claims that He was alive.
 Could it be?
 Nah. We saw him die,
 Dead people don't get up again.
 It's over.
 The two of them walked sadly away from
 the sad and dangerous city,
 After a while a stranger joined them,
 and, after quizzing them about their conversation,
 began to go through the Scriptures,
 from one end to the other,
 explaining all they had to say about this Messiah,
 how he came both to suffer and to be glorified.
 He talked on, bringing a strange comfort,
 and remained with them for a meal.
 He took bread and broke it,
 and as they ate, they knew ...
 They knew Him in the breaking of Bread,
 so it was that day,
 and so it has been through the ages.
 He died for us.
 He rose from the grave and walked on the earth.
 He comes to us, feeds us,
 enters our lives, and makes us His own.
 They ran back to the city.
 They heard the reports,
"The Lord is risen indeed,

and hath appeared to Simon."

And so He had,
and though He ascended into heaven,
he has never left us,
and will not forsake us.

It was as the Prophet had said, in the words of God:

"Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD;"

and the only-begotten Son, known as the Arm of the Lord,

got up, reclaimed the strength of the body,
and came to us.

*"Therefore the redeemed of the LORD shall return,
and come with singing unto Zion;
and everlasting joy shall be upon their head:*

*they shall obtain gladness and joy;
and sorrow and mourning shall flee away. "*

"I, even I, am he that comforteth you: "

says the Lord,

*"who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid
of a man that shall die,
and of the son of man
which shall be made as grass;*

Rejoice and be glad, O Church,
for He has risen,

the last enemy, death itself, is conquered.
We have been brought out of condemnation,
He has nailed our sins to the Cross,
and has come to claim us as His own.

No sorrow,
no sickness,
no persecution,
neither poverty nor opposition,
not even death itself
can separate us from His love.

Christ is risen from the dead,
trampling death by death,
and on those in the tomb bestowing life

Let us pray.

O God, whose blessed Son did manifest himself to his disciples in the breaking of bread; open, we pray thee, the eyes of our faith, that we may behold thee in all thy works; through the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Easter

Evening Prayer B

First Lesson: Isa 12

Second Lesson: John 20:11-18

Homily

Christ is risen. Alleluia!

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

It's Easter, the Feast of the Resurrection,
the most joyous celebration in our calendar.

We decorate as much as we are able,
often we make special flower offerings.

Our vestments are the best and most festive
that we can come up with.

The music is the most splendid we can manage.

Most of us make an effort to dress better
for this celebration than we usually do.

It's a day

many of us have happy family parties as well.

It's a day of unrestrained joy.

But what is the cause of this great joy?

Obviously it is His Resurrection,

but why did He rise?

What's the background of the story?

Behind our joy lie some dreadful things.

Before that first Easter morning there came death,
death and despair and confusion;

and before that there came the sin
that brought about the death.

It was because of sin, yours and mine,
that God Sent His Sin into the world.

It was because of sin that He was condemned,
and killed with a horrible cruel death.

It was because of sin that He was laid in a tomb;
and because of sin, the disciples wept
the bitter tears of despair.

And Mary, the Magdalene, stood weeping.

Her Lord, her Deliverer,

the One who gave her life back to her,
was dead,

and now even his body was missing.

Mary hit bottom, and there seemed no way up.

The Psalmist may have seen this coming.

In Psalm 30, verse 5, he wrote:

*"...his anger endureth but a moment,
in his favour there is life:*

weeping may endure for a night,

but joy cometh in the morning."

Mary stood there weeping,

and would not be consoled.

even the voice of angels couldn't reach her,

in her deepest mourning.
 Even His presence right there with her
 was not enough.
 She sobbed, ... until ...
 He spoke her name.
 "Mary!" He said,
 and the whole universe dissolved into joy,
 a joy that could not be borne,
 a joy that could not be contained,
 a joy that left her shouting the news
 to anyone who would listen,
 as the Psalm goes on:

*Thou hast turned ... my mourning into dancing:
 thou hast put off my sackcloth,
 and girded me with gladness;
 ... that my glory may sing praise to thee,
 and not be silent."*

That was Mary.
 What about us?

It was for our sins He died.
 What He took upon Himself was what we deserved.
 Our state was absolutely, completely hopeless.
 We seldom truly realize that, but it is true.
 Without the Cross,
 without the intense sorrow of good Friday,
 we would have no hope.

If Good Friday were the whole story,
 we would have even less hope,
 but it is Easter.
 He is risen!
 He is calling your name and mine,
 and, as Isaiah sang:

*"... in that day thou shalt say,
 O LORD, I will praise thee:
 though thou wast angry with me,
 thine anger is turned away,
 and thou comfortedst me.
 Behold, God is my salvation;
 I will trust, and not be afraid:
 for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength
 and my song;
 he also is become my salvation. ...
 Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion:
 for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of
 thee."*

Let us pray.

O God, who makest us glad with the yearly
 remembrance of the glorious resurrection of thy Son
 our Lord; vouchsafe us this day such blessing
 through our worship of thee, that the days to come
 may be spent in thy service; through the same Jesus
 Christ our Lord. Amen.