

## SERMON FOR EVENING PRAYER

December 30<sup>1</sup>

### Lessons:<sup>2</sup>

**The First Lesson:** Here beginneth the sixty-first Chapter of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah.<sup>3</sup>

“The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

“And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers. But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD; men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

“For your shame ye shall have double; and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion: therefore in their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them. For I the LORD love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people: all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed. I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and

as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations.”

Here endeth the First Lesson.

**The Second Lesson:** Here beginneth the third Chapter of the Epistle of Blessed Paul the Apostle to the Colossians.<sup>4</sup>

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in

the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

**Homily:**

*“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.”*

“Christ is Risen! Alleluia!” That is the traditional greeting between Christians on Easter Day. Easter is the biggest Holy Day in all Christendom and in the early Church was the only official Holy Day. It is the only specially-appointed day that has been celebrated every year since the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ. The Second Lesson today is also the Gospel for Easter and, reading over it and the third chapter of Colossians that is the Epistle for that day, many of us may think that they are pretty plain, matter of fact, and maybe even downright boring for such a glorious and wonderful day, but after a closer look, it becomes quite clear why the Church appointed them.

Mary Magdalene and the other disciples had just witnessed the tragic torture, crucifixion and death of their beloved friend and Spiritual Leader. The gentle and sinless man that they came to realize was the Son of God and the promised Messiah, the Christ. They saw His dead body taken down from the Cross and watched as He was laid in the tomb.

Jesus had told them that in order for Salvation to be achieved, He must die; just as the Prophets had foreseen and written in Scripture. He had also told them that He would overcome death, but that seemed impossible. This was also spoken of in Scripture, but during all of the chaos that followed His death, no one remembered that. After seeing the empty tomb

and the linen clothes lying inside, they had no choice but to believe.

There is more to be said and it can be found in the very first sentence of this passage from St. John. The Sabbath was on the seventh and last day of the week. It was the day that God had rested after creating the world. The selection begins with, “The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early.” It is important to remember that after God created the world in six days, He rested on the seventh, the Sabbath. Jesus, who was God and Man, had just created a new world for us to live in. It is a world in which the unattainable has been achieved and now we, the fallen children of Adam, could live “hidden with Christ in God.”

After Jesus created this new world, He rested and it was on the Sabbath, the last day of the week. It is now the first day of the next week and He has risen from the Dead.

The seventh day is still the Sabbath and is observed by those that choose remain under the Law, those who do not recognize that Jesus has come to fulfill it. We, who do recognize what He has done; celebrate the first day because it is the never-ending day of Jesus Christ’s glorious Resurrection from the dead, completing His work for our salvation.

In the third chapter of his Epistle to the Colossians, St. Paul admonishes the Church in Colossae, and also us, to keep our thoughts on what God wants us to do. The wage of sin is death. Christ was a man completely free from sin, but He took our sins upon Himself and paid that price for us by dying on the Cross. On Easter, and on every Sunday of the Church Year, we celebrate because, having experienced that Death, He then overcame it. In our Baptism, we died to sin and are now able to have life everlasting through Him. Our past sins are hidden by Jesus resurrected.

We must put away the sinful things that we have done. We must continue asking God to help us with this task so that we can return some portion of the love He has for us. We do this by loving Him with everything that we are and by loving others as we love ourselves.

Christ is Risen! Alleluia!

*“To Him be all Honor and Glory, World without end.”*  
*Amen.*

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The Rev’d George Parrish<sup>5</sup>  
April 8, 2012

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<sup>1</sup> This sermon was originally written on the Gospel at Mass on Easter Day, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> *An Alternative Table of Lessons (The Table of 1922, As Revised in 1928)*, THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER, WITH THE ADDITIONS AND DEVIATIONS PROPOSED IN 1928 31 (Canterbury Press 2008); *The Table of Lessons (The Table of 1922, As Revised In 1928)*, A BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER xxiii (South Africa 1954); *A Table of Lessons (authorized by the Episcopal Synod)*, THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER xxi (CIPBC 1963).

<sup>3</sup> Isaiah 61:1-11 (KJV).

<sup>4</sup> Colossians 3:1-17 (KJV).

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