



Bringing Home the Word

The Resurrection of the Lord (Easter) March 27, 2016

Remember the Alleluia

By Janel Esker

Being a bit of a liturgical geek, I have many favorite elements of the Easter liturgies, among them the Easter Vigil baptisms, the dark church enlightened by the paschal candle, and the first sprinkling rite of the season.

But what I anticipate most is the return of the *Alleluia* in full force. We hear it first before the Gospel proclamation at the Easter Vigil. It's sung by the priest at the dismissal and uniquely responded to in song by the congregation. This double *Alleluia* is sung this way only during only during the Octave of Easter to remind

us that this is a special moment in the Church year.

Some parishes practice a ritual before Ash Wednesday called "burying the *Alleluia*." A cloth on which *Alleluia* is printed is ceremoniously "buried"—hidden away during Lent. At the Easter celebration, it bursts forth from its tomb along with Jesus. *Alleluia*, which means "praise God," is a word of joy, hope, and promise. It always feels great to sing it again.

In the Lukan account of the resurrection proclaimed at the Easter Vigil, the disciples are at first confused by the empty tomb but, Scripture says, "they remembered his words." They recalled what Jesus had said about his rising after three days.

On Easter, we remember the word *Alleluia* after it has been buried for forty days. It's a word that celebrates Jesus' incredible triumph over sin and death, and his promise of new life for us. Remember the *Alleluia* this day—and throughout the Easter season.

Thanks be to God indeed! †

Sunday Readings

Acts 10:34a, 37–43

"To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins."

Colossians 3:1–4

"If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above."

John 20:1–9

"Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed."

A Word From Pope Francis

Newness often makes us fearful, including the newness which God brings us, the newness which God asks of us. We are like the Apostles in the Gospel: often we would prefer to hold on to our own security, to stand in front of a tomb, to think about someone who has died, someone who ultimately lives on only as a memory, like the great historical figures from the past... Let us not close our hearts, let us not lose confidence, let us never give up: there are no situations which God cannot change, there is no sin which he cannot forgive if only we open ourselves to him.



—Easter Vigil homily, March 30, 2013

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- What tomb entraps me and keeps me in darkness?
- What part of the liturgy (Mass) or Easter tradition do I anticipate and enjoy the most?

Feeling God's Pleasure

By Fr. Byron Miller, CSsR

A retreat director once quoted the movie *Chariots of Fire* to me: “God made me fast, and when I run, I feel his pleasure.” The same applies, of course, to whatever notable quality each of us possesses: “God made me humorous, and when I laugh, I feel God’s pleasure,” or “God made me honest, and when I am truthful, I feel God’s pleasure.”

The early Christians maintained that Jesus was personally transformed to live beyond death and manifested himself in this new existence through a series of encounters recorded as appearances, revelations, or conversion experiences. Accounts of the Easter event and post-resurrection encounters present a Jesus who transcends our normal earthly existence. The disciples—despite their initial fears—felt the pleasure of the Lord’s company. If a departed loved one actually appeared, after all, would not the heart be more receptive than the head?

During his breakfast with Jesus on the beach (John 21:1–14), Simon Peter had more questions than answers: How can he be alive and among us? How can he be completely changed in appearance yet we still recognize him?



How can he come and go like a ghost? That morning marathon to the tomb also must have raced through Peter’s head. When Mary Magdalene reported that the stone had been removed, he and John ran side by side. Both disciples observed the burial cloths on the ground. These realities were hard to swallow.

It is clear, however, that Jesus did not simply return to his former life after the resurrection, and as an Easter people, neither should we. Jesus is alive and among us when we recognize him in the breaking of the bread. It gives God pleasure when we mend what is broken and bury all that needs to be buried so that at the end of our journey, these words of St. Paul may be especially meaningful: “I have finished the race; I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7).

An elderly woman from St. Louis, obviously distraught over the changes in the Church after the Second Vatican Council, is said to have remarked, “I tell you, if Jesus were alive today, he would roll over in his grave!” The Good News of Easter proclaims that the stone was indeed rolled away, that Jesus could not be kept away from the hearts of his believers, and that he opened the entrance to heaven for us.

“If you think that one individual can’t make a difference in the world, consider what one cigar can do in a nine-room house,” quipped author Bill Vaughan. Admittedly, *The New York Times* reported decades ago that God is dead. How many people would know by our actions that Jesus was ever alive? When it is too easy to sit out the Easter marathon, the Redeemer, who made a difference in our world, is ready to lift us up. Rise to the occasion! †

PRAYER

Lord, your resurrection pierces the darkness of doubt and fear.

May the power of your resurrection help me to deepen my love for you and all people.

—From *Mindful Meditations for Every Day of Lent and Easter*,


Rev. Warren J. Savage
and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

March 28–April 2

Mon. Octave of Easter: Acts 2:14, 22–33 / Matthew 28:8–15
Tue. Octave of Easter: Acts 2:36–41 / John 20:11–18
Wed. Octave of Easter: Acts 3:1–10 / Luke 24:13–35

Thu. Octave of Easter: Acts 3:11–26 / Luke 24:35–48
Fri. Octave of Easter: Acts 4:1–12 / John 21:1–14
Sat. Octave of Easter: Acts 4:13–21 / Mark 16:9–15

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