

Gratitude Foundation



*“Were not ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?
Has only this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?”*

(Lk. 17:15-17)

Easter Sunday—Year B

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“In all things give thanks, it is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus”

(1 Thess: 5:18)

Easter Sunday - Resurrection of the Lord

The Mass of Easter Day

Reading I

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

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.”

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23.

R (24) This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
for his mercy endures forever.

Let the house of Israel say,
“His mercy endures forever.”

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

“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.”

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

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

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

Reading II

Colossians 3:1-4

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:

I Corinthians 5:6b-8

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.

Alleluia

1 Corinthians 5:7b-8a

R. Alleluia, alleluia.
Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed;
let us then feast with joy in the Lord.
R. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

John 20:1-9

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.

Reflection

Long before we were called Christians the followers of Jesus were referred to as the *People of the Way* or the *People of the Resurrection* or the *Easter People*. The apostles and the people of the infant Church were called that because of the way that they lived their lives. The experience of the Resurrection of the Lord changed their lives. It was an experience that transformed them. Contrast Peter, for example, as he cowardly denied even knowing Jesus during the Passion with Peter as he boldly proclaimed the risen Lord at Pentecost. He is transformed by the Easter experience and emboldened with the power of the Holy Spirit. The transformation of those early Christians, and in fact the world, is one of the anchor points of my faith.

Without the Resurrection the Cross would not have been a victory but a defeat. We have the vantage point of looking back at the Cross through the lens of the empty tomb. The victory has been won. The passion, death and resurrection of Jesus not only changed the apostles, but it changed the world forever. The question for each of us is, "Will we allow the power of the Paschal Mystery to change us?"

Sacred Scripture is full of images of flowing water as a powerful symbol of God's love pouring upon the world. I have used the image of Niagara Falls in past homilies. During the Triduum the symbol is ever present. It begins on Holy Thursday with the pouring of water on the feet of the disciples. Upon the Cross on Good Friday blood and water flowed from the pierced side of Jesus. On Holy Saturday the waters of baptism flow from the font of Christ's Church.

During the Last Supper Peter was refusing to allow Jesus to wash his feet. Jesus said to him, "If I do not wash you, you will have no inheritance with Me." (Jn 13:8) In other words, unless you allow me to wash you, you will not share the gift of eternal life. John the Baptist proclaimed Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. However, because of the gift of free will, we must allow Him to take away our sins. We must allow Him to wash us clean. We must accept the gift of His love. Unless we allow Him to wash our feet we will have no inheritance with Him.

Nearly two thousand years have come and gone since that first Easter. It is the event that changed the world, changed the course of human history. The question is, "Will we allow it to change each one of us?" Like the Cross, Easter must become personal for each one of us. Like St. Peter and the apostles, we should be changed by the Easter experience and empowered by the Spirit of the Risen Lord. We are still the *Easter People*, the *People of the Resurrection*. Happy Easter and Alleluia!!!

Yours in the Risen Christ and Mother Mary,



Personal Witness

Several years ago, I was in Rome for a couple of weeks touring the great Catholic sites. I spent the first few days at St. Peter's Basilica and the Vatican Museum. I first knelt at the Tomb of St. Peter for several hours feeling incredibly connected to Christ and to His Church. From there I branched out visiting the numerous churches in Rome.

One day I was visiting Santa Maria sopra Minerva church, and I discovered a lesser-known statue by the famous artist Michelangelo. It is entitled *The Risen Christ* and is located just to left of the main altar. I was instantly captivated by the statue.

I think all too often we see in art very effeminate renderings of Jesus in paintings and in statuary. This is not my image of Jesus. I have always pictured Jesus as a very strong and rugged man. As a carpenter working with his hands in his father's shop, he would have naturally developed a pronounced muscle tone. Certainly, the renderings taken from the Shroud of Turin capture the ruggedness of Jesus. In the movie *The Passion of the Christ* the actor Jim Caviezel captures my image of Jesus as a strong and powerful man.

With *The Risen Christ* Michelangelo captures a strikingly powerful image of Jesus. He is portrayed as an extremely muscular man. With his rippling biceps and powerful thighs, with His well-developed chest and well-defined abdominal muscles He looks like a powerful highly trained athlete. His body bears the nail marks in his hands and in his feet. He is holding the cross slightly behind him in his right hand. The cross is small in comparison; it could not have held the person who was now holding it. In His left-hand the Risen Lord is holding His shepherd's staff.

What captivates me the most is the face of Jesus. As Jesus was journeying to Jerusalem to take up His Cross, we are told that His face was set like flint. He was resolutely focused on the task for which He came into the world. Now the Risen Lord with staff in hand is discarding the Cross and His face is looking forward, set like flint on the new world and the mission that lies ahead. The Risen Lord is now the Good Shepherd who is seeking us out and leading us forward into the fullness of life, life eternal. A new power has been unleashed on the world. It is the power of the Resurrection.

One of the anchor points of my faith is the power of the Resurrection. It is a power that would change the world forever. The apostles are the first to be transformed by their experience of the Risen Lord. With the experience of the empty tomb, the Resurrection appearances of Jesus, the Ascension of Jesus, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost the infant Church spreads like a wildfire. This rapid transformation of the world witnesses to the power of the Resurrection and the Holy Spirit working anew.

Easter is more than a holiday that we celebrate or the great event that we commemorate: It is a way of life, a way of living. We now live our lives empowered by the Resurrection and guided by the Holy Spirit. Two thousand years have come and gone, and we are still the Easter People, the People of the Resurrection. People today need to see in us what was visible in the apostles, the face of the Risen Lord, a face set like flint on the mission at hand, the spreading of the Good News. He is Risen. Happy Easter!

