

Easter Sunday Holy Trinity Parish, Germantown, NY Worship Site April 4, 2010

1st Reading: Acts 10:34a, 37-43 [Everyone who believes in Christ will receive forgiveness of sins]

Responsorial Psalm 118 [This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad]

2nd Reading: Colossians 3:1-4 [You have been raised with Christ]

Gospel: Luke 24:1-12 [Why do you search for the Living One among the dead]

On the first day of the week, at dawn,
the women came to the tomb bringing the spices they had prepared.
They found the stone rolled back from the tomb; but when they entered the tomb,
they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.
While they were still at a loss about what to think of this, two men in dazzling garments
appeared beside them. Terrified, the women bowed to the ground.
The men said to them: "Why do you search for the Living One among the dead?
He is not here; he has been raised up!
Remember what he said to you while he was still in Galilee -
that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinners, and be crucified,
and on the third day rise again."
With this reminder, his words came back to them.

On their return from the tomb, they told all these things to the eleven and the others.
The women were Mary of Magdala, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James.
The other women with them also told the apostles,
but the story seemed like nonsense and they refused to believe them.
Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb.
He stooped down but could see nothing but the wrappings.
So he went away full of amazement at what had occurred.

That was the Gospel for the Easter Vigil. As John Harvey would put it, this is: "The Rest of the Story" [John 20:11-18]

Meanwhile, Mary of Magdala stayed outside the tomb, weeping.
Even as she wept, she stooped to look inside,
and there she saw two angels in dazzling white robes.
One was seated at the head and the other at the foot
of the place where the body of Jesus had been.
They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?"
She answered, "They have taken my Lord, and I do not know where they have put him."
She had no sooner said this than she turned around and saw Jesus standing there.
But she did not know it was Jesus.
He said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Who is it you are looking for?"

She thought he was the gardener, so she said,
"Sir, if you are the one who carried him off, tell me where you have laid him
and I will take him away."

Jesus said to her, "Mary!"

She turned to him and said, in Hebrew, "Rabbouni," which means "My teacher."

Jesus then said,

"Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father.

Rather, go to the others and tell them,

'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God!'"

Mary of Magdala went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord."

Then she told them what he had said to her.

And what did she tell the guys? She probably did it in Aramaic, since that was the language they spoke. But if she sang it in Spanish it might have sounded like this:

♪ Resucito, resucito, resucito, aleluya ♪
Which means: "He is risen, Alleluia!"

And the verses tell the story of what Easter means:

1. La muerte, donde esta la muerte? Donde esta mi muerte? Donde su Victoria?
[Death, where is death? Where is my death? Where is its victory?]
2. Alegria, alegria hermanos, que si hoy nos queremos es porque resucito.
[Rejoice, rejoice brothers & sisters, the one you are looking for is risen.]
3. Si con El morimos, con El vivimos, con El cantamos. Aleluya!
[If we die with him, we will live with him, we will sing with him. Alleluia!]

This year we celebrate Easter on the same day as the Eastern Christians, Greek Orthodox, Ukrainian, Melkite, Byzantine and so on. That is not always true, since they follow a different liturgical calendar.

When they greet each other today they do not say, "Happy Easter!"

They use this greeting: "Christ is risen!" And the response is, "He is truly risen!"

After Mass today I will greet you using that greeting
and I invite you to say "He is truly risen!" back to me.

It's OK if you forget or say "Happy Easter," but this will plant those words in your minds & hearts as a reminder that this is what the Feast of Easter is all about for those who believe in Jesus.

There is another song that says it clearly.

It is the memorial acclamation for the Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass today:

♪ Christ has died, alleluia, Christ is risen, alleluia, Christ will come again, alleluia, alleluia. ♪

Sing it with me.

Now, tell the truth, did any of you sing, "Christ HAS risen"?

When I was leading music ministry groups at college or in parishes,

I used to go on a rant when they sang it that way, and somebody always did.

That is because the Resurrection of Christ is not just a historical event that happened long ago.

We believe in a Savior who is PRESENT with us, who IS risen and lives among us now.

We believe in a Christ who speaks to us through the Gospel, who is really present

in the Eucharist, both as living bread and the consecrated wine which is his life-blood.

We believe in a Lord who comes to us through each other, who loves us through the ones

we came to Mass with today, who meets us in the poorest of our sisters and brothers

-who said, "Whatever you do for the least of my brothers or sisters, you do for me."

Christ IS Risen - in Mary of Magdala and the women, in Peter & the beloved disciple;

in Francis, Clare and Kateri Tekakwitha; in Oscar Romero,

Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Dorothy Day & Martin Luther King, Jr.

Christ IS Risen in all who feed the hungry, oppose injustice and work for peace.

Christ IS Risen in anyone who refuses to be caught up in the culture of cruelty & condemnation promoted by so many talk radio personalities and reality shows.

Christ IS Risen in all who fight for life at all stages and

struggle to care for the earth God has given us as our home.

Christ is Risen in every recovering alcoholic & forgiven sinner, in my mother who is with him

now & in all who have died in his grace, in every parish community that puts their trust in him.

Christ is Risen in you and in me, if we allow him to love us, forgive us and walk with us

on our own life journey.

I would like to conclude with ancient words from two of the Fathers of the Church

- one from the Eastern Church and one from the Western Church.

St. John Chrysostom, one of the *Eastern Father*, wrote in an Easter sermon:

"Let no one grieve being poor, for the universal reign has been revealed.

Let no one lament persistent failings, for forgiveness has risen from the grave.

Let no one fear death, for the death of our Savior has set us free.

The Lord has destroyed death by enduring it...

For Christ, having risen from the dead,

is become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep."

And St. Augustine, one of the *Fathers of the West*, says in an Easter season sermon:

"Since it has pleased the Lord our God that... we should sing in His honor the "alleluia" which is translated as "Praise God," let us give praise to the Lord, my brothers [and sisters], in life and in speech, in heart and in voice, in words and in actions. For God wishes the "Alleluia" to be said in His honor in such a way that there will be nothing discordant in the one giving praise. Therefore, in ourselves above all let speech accord with life, tongue with conscience. I repeat, let our words agree with our actions so that beautiful words will not bear testimony against evil deeds..."

♪ Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. ♪

We sang one of the ancient melodies for the Alleluia acclamation before the Gospel today. I have heard that very music sung at Masses in Israel, France & Italy, even as I have met the Risen Christ in parishes from Montreal to Mississippi and many places in between, including Germantown. I have sung this melody and this Easter word with people from all over the world and all over our country. I invite you to sing it with me today and to live the meaning of that song in your lives.

♪ Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. ♪

We will renew our Baptismal promises in a few moments, & will be asked some questions. We will all respond, "I DO", but our response is not complete
until we begin to live what we say in words.

You have already begun to live those words by coming here today,
but we are all challenged to carry that life out from here to our families,
to our community, to the places where we work /go to school and to the world.

When we say "I DO" to the words: "Do you believe in God the Father....."
We are saying that the whole human race is one family and that we are all
brothers and sisters.

When we say "I DO" to the words: "Do you believe in Jesus Christ....."
We are saying that we cannot save ourselves but we believe he has won
victory over death and without resorting to violence.

We are saying that we will commit ourselves to follow the way of the Prince
of Peace, and that we accept him as our only judge.

When we say "I DO" to the words: "Do you believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints..."

We are saying the same creed as our brothers and sisters in the Reformed
Church across the street (since the word "catholic" in the creed does not mean only
Roman Catholic, it means **everyone** who believes in Jesus).

We are saying that we trust in the power of God's Spirit to forgive our sins and
to heal our divisions on earth and even to bridge the gap between us and those who have
died, and are now a part of the communion of saints.