

Sunday, April 5, 2026

The Resurrection of Our Lord

EASTER SUNDAY A

Matthew 28:1-20

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

My friends,

Today's Gospel Reading begins
in the quiet shadow of Good Friday.
*"Now after the Sabbath,
toward the dawn of the first day of the week,
Mary Magdalene
and the other Mary
went to see the tomb."* (Matthew 28:1)

God's Sabbath rest

had come early the Friday before.
Darkness came
with the death of Christ.
Christ had hung on the cross in darkness,
bearing the sins of the world.
Then He was taken down,
and laid in the tomb.
The heavy stone closing Him in was sealed.
The Christ of God
was dead and in the ground.

And now here,

early on the first day of the week,
the women go to the tomb.
They all forgot His Word:
*"The Son of Man is going
to be betrayed into the hands of men.
They will kill Him,
and on the third day
He will be raised to life."* (Matthew 17:22–23)

But they are not expecting resurrection.

They are expecting death.
They go to mourn.
They go to care
for the Lord's dead body
with spices and linens.
They go,
as if He were still dead.

Do we sometimes live our lives
as if Jesus were still dead?

St. Paul wrote,

*"If Christ has not been raised,
then your faith is useless..."* (1 Corinthians 15:17)
Yet that is how the women approach the tomb.
As if death
and sin
had won.

1.

My friends,

They go with spices.
They go grieving.
They go expecting silence
and a stone barring the way.
Their hope is broken.
All they have is the pain
of love turned to mourning.

Life without resurrection is hopeless.

If there is no resurrection,
despair makes sense.
*"And if Christ has not been raised,
then your faith is useless
and you are still guilty of your sins."* (1 Corinthians 15:17).

I wonder,

how often do we live
as if our faith is useless?
How often do we live
as if we are still guilty of our sins?

Do we forget, neglect, or ignore His Word?
Do we give our loyalties to things that are not Christ?
Does fear rule us?
Does despair define our future?

When you come to Jesus,

do you expect silence?
Do you expect a heavy stone barring the way?
A stone of guilt and judgment?
A stone of God's frowning displeasure,
sealing you out?

There are so many people
who try to spice up life.
The one constant in worldly life is death.
And so many try to fill life
with distractions.
They try to cover up
the ever-present smell of decay.
They try to distract themselves
from the odour of death.
They try to ignore
the inexorable reality
of their death.
And the death of everyone
and everything
that they love.

In many and various ways,
we conduct our day-to-day lives
as if Jesus were dead.
And If we don't expect Jesus to help
—where do we turn?
In a volatile world,
we look for any port in a storm.
We give our allegiance
to things which are not Christ.
We put hope
in getting the right politicians in office.
The right laws passed.
Bank accounts, careers, and achievements.
Making friends
with the right kind of people.

We are sometimes needlessly crippled
by fear of the future.
Or the problems
that are facing us right now.
We can look at all the real,
terrifying realities
in the world right now
and despair.
Acting as if there is no rescue,
no hope.

There's even a story of Martin Luther.
Facing trials and tribulations
—the reformer had fallen into depression.
His wife, Katie,
decide to do something
about her husband's hopelessness.
So she dressed for mourning.

Upon seeing her,
a surprised Luther asked,
“who died?”

Katie replied,
"I don't know,
but since you act
as though God is dead,
I wanted to join you
in mourning."

Shocked by her words,
Luther replied that God could not die.
Katie countered:
"If God isn't dead,
why are you acting
as if He were?"

Luther acknowledged her wisdom and cheered up.
He confessed that he had a living God to trust in,
and asked her to change out of her funeral clothes.

Yes, we sometimes live as if Jesus is of no account.
Like someone long dead.
With no affect on present or future.
Whose words no longer matter.
We forget that His Word is living and active.
That His words
are the Word of eternal life.

Sometimes we go with spices.
We go grieving.
We go expecting silence
and a stone barring the way.

If Jesus is dead, then fear would be reasonable.
Despair would be logical.
And sin would still rule.

2.

But, my friends
 —there is a "However!"
 Mary Magdalene
 and the other Mary
 do not find death
 at the tomb.

An angel of the Lord comes down from heaven.
 He rolls back the stone.
 He sits.
 And the ground quakes.
 The brave soldiers quake.
 And faint like dead men.

His appearance is like lightning,
 and his clothing is white as snow.
 But the angel's appearance
 is nothing compared
 to what he says.

*"Do not be afraid,
 for I know that you are looking
 for Jesus,
 who is crucified.
 He is not here!
He has risen, just as He said.
 Come and see the place where He lay.
 Then go quickly
 and tell his disciples:
 'He has risen from the dead
 and is going ahead
 of you into Galilee.
 There you will see Him.'
 Now I have told you." (Matthew 28:5–7)*

Do not be afraid...He is risen!

The angel's message changes **everything**.
 The women had not yet seen Jesus.
 But they heard His messenger.
 And believed.

*"So they departed quickly from the tomb
with fear and great joy,
and ran to tell His disciples." (Matthew 28:8).*
Like you, they have not yet seen.
They have only heard the message.

This Sunday,
I have the responsibility,
privilege,
and joy to take up the angel's role.

He has risen!
Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed!
Alleluia!

I am here
to announce to you this morning:
Jesus the crucified is risen!
And that changes everything for you.
That changes everything for us.

Because Christ is risen
—your sins are forgiven!
Because Christ is risen
—your fears are overcome!
Because Christ is risen
—your death is weak and temporary!
Because Christ is risen
—your future is secure!
Because Christ is risen
—God is making all things new!

Do not be afraid!
Jesus Christ the crucified
is risen from the dead!
Alleluia!

The resurrection of Christ is not just history;
it is your ongoing reality,
your hope
and strength
amid the challenges of life today.

His resurrection is your past,
 present,
 and future
 —sealed to you in Baptism.

You are raised in Christ!
 Eternal life is already yours in Christ Jesus!
 Because He lives,
 you also live forevermore!
 Death is defeated!
 Sin is defeated!
 Satan is defeated!
 For Jesus is risen!

And yet, the story is not finished!

3.

My friends,
 As the women run
 with the good news,
 they meet Someone.
*"And behold,
 Jesus met them and said,
 'Greetings!'
 And they came up
 and took hold of His feet
 and worshiped Him.
 Then Jesus said to them,
 'Do not be afraid;
 go and tell My brothers
 to go to Galilee,
 and there they will see Me.'"* (Matthew 28:9–10)

They see Jesus.
 They grasp His feet.
 It is truly Him.
 He is really alive.
 No mere metaphor.
 No mere ghost.
 This is Jesus,
 raised bodily from the dead.
 The crucified Christ is alive!

Their Lord is alive!

They take hold of His feet
and worship Him.

They worship
our great God
and Saviour,
the Lord Jesus Christ.

Beloved,

we have not yet seen Him like this.

Those who have told us.

The holy Apostles write:

*"We proclaim to you
the One who existed from the beginning,
Whom we have heard and seen.*

We saw Him

with our own eyes

and touched Him

with our own hands.

He is the Word of life.

*This One Who is life itself was revealed to us,
and we have seen Him.*

*And now we testify
and proclaim*

to you

that He is the one

Who is eternal life...

We proclaim

to you

what we ourselves

have actually seen

and heard

*so that you may have fellowship
with us.*

And our fellowship is

with the Father

and with His Son,

Jesus Christ." (1 John 1:1–3)

We have not yet seen
 and touched Him like this.
 Like the women at first,
 we have only heard the message.
 But we **will** see Him.
*"For now we see in a mirror dimly,
 but then [we will see] face to face."* (1 Corinthians 13:12a)

And that great hope reshapes everything.
*"Beloved, we are God's children now, and...
 We know that when [Jesus] appears,
 we shall be like Him,
 because we shall see Him as He is.
 And everyone who thus hopes
 in Him purifies himself
 as [Jesus] is pure."* (1 John 3:2–3)

Your Jesus,
 who is crucified for you,
 is risen from the dead.
 You have heard His Word.
 You have seen and touched Him in the Sacraments.
 And He is coming back for you.
 You will see Him,
 and worship at His feet.

The message of the resurrection today
 is that you will see Him
 face to face.
 And that makes all the difference.

There's a marvellous line from Tolkien.
 After a harrowing adventure,
 Sam Gamgee awakens
 and sees
 a room full of his friends
 and loved ones.
 He cries out,
 "I thought you were dead!
 But then I thought I was dead myself!
 Is everything sad going
 to come untrue?"

Yes, Sam Gamgee!

Everything sad **is** going to come untrue!

Because of Jesus.

Because Jesus is risen from the dead.

Jesus,

who is crucified,

is risen from the dead!

My friends,

you can live confidently

and freely

knowing

all that is sad will come untrue!

For He is risen!

He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

Because Jesus is risen:

Death does not get the last Word.

Death will be undone,

and life will triumph forevermore.

Sin does not define your future.

Sorrow is temporary.

Joy is eternal.

*

My friends,

The women went to the tomb

as if Jesus were dead.

But:

They left the tomb

because Jesus is alive.

And so today,

you do not leave this place

as people belonging to the grave.

You leave this place

as people who belong to the resurrection.

You live

as the risen people

of the risen Christ!

The risen Lord
who conquered death
now sends
His Church
into the world.
He sends His Church baptizing,
teaching
and proclaiming,
until the day we see Him face to face.

Because Christ is risen:
Your sins are forgiven.
Your death is defeated.
Your future is secure!
No stone stands
between you and your God.

Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

And because He lives,
everything sad will become untrue.
The risen Christ will wipe away your tears.
Therefore, do not be afraid.
Amen.

And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, amen.