

Holy Eucharist, Rite II, Easter Sunday, April 4, 2021

The Celebrant and LEM stand, maintaining physical distance. There is no procession.

Opening Rites and the Collect of the Day

Celebrant: Alleluia! Christ is risen.

LEM: *The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia!*

Celebrant: Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

LEM: *Rejoice in the Lord, always; let all that lives, rejoice.*

Celebrant: Let the heavens and the earth ring with God's blessings.

LEM: *For Christ is risen, risen indeed. Alleluia!*

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

LEM: *And also with you.*

Celebrant: Let us pray.

The Celebrant says the Collect.

God of new creation,
from the womb of earth
you raised the Lord of life:
may we receive the word of women

who braved the soldier's spears
and met him in the dawning light;
may we live with morning joy
that love will never die,
through Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life. Amen.

Opening Hymn: Jesus Christ is risen today

The Hymnal 1982, #207

Jesus Christ is risen today,
our triumphant holy day,
who did once upon the cross,
suffer to redeem our loss. Alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing,
unto Christ, our heavenly King,
who endured the cross and grave,
sinners to redeem and save. Alleluia!

But the pains which he endured,
our salvation have procured;
now above the sky he's King,
where the angels ever sing. Alleluia!

The Lessons¹

The Old Testament Lesson

Isiah 25:6-9

¹ The readings are from the Revised Common Lectionary. See: <https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/>.
The table for readings in Year B (Easter) may be found here:
<https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/lections.php?year=B&season=Easter>.
Where two choices are given for readings, use the second one listed.

⁶On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines,
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.

⁷And he will destroy on this mountain
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
the sheet that is spread over all nations;

⁸he will swallow up death forever.

Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces,
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken.

⁹It will be said on that day,

Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us.

This is the LORD for whom we have waited;

let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Celebrant: Thanks be to God.

Psalm of the Day

Psalm 118:1-2,14-24

¹O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his steadfast love endures forever!

²Let Israel say,

”His steadfast love endures forever.”

¹⁴The LORD is my strength and my might;
he has become my salvation.

¹⁵There are glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous:

”The right hand of the LORD does valiantly;

¹⁶the right hand of the LORD is exalted;

the right hand of the LORD does valiantly.”

¹⁷I shall not die, but I shall live,

and recount the deeds of the LORD.

¹⁸The LORD has punished me severely,
but he did not give me over to death.

¹⁹Open to me the gates of righteousness,
that I may enter through them
and give thanks to the LORD.

²⁰This is the gate of the LORD;
the righteous shall enter through it.

²¹I thank you that you have answered me
and have become my salvation.

²²The stone that the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.

²³This is the LORD's doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.

²⁴This is the day that the LORD has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.*

The New Testament Lesson

Acts 10:34-43

³⁴Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. ³⁶You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ — he is Lord of all. ³⁷That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: ³⁸how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; ⁴⁰but God

raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, ⁴¹not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. ⁴²He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. ⁴³All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

LEM: *The Word of the Lord.*

Celebrant: Thanks be to God.

Gradual Hymn: Come ye faithful raise the strain The Hymnal 1982, #199

Come, ye faithful, raise the strain
of triumphant gladness!
God hath brought his Israel
into joy from sadness:
loosed from Pharaoh’s bitter yoke
Jacob’s sons and daughters,
led them with unmoistened foot
through the Red Sea waters.

‘Tis the spring of souls today:
Christ hath burst his prison,
and from three days’ sleep in death
as a sun hath risen;
all the winter of our sins,
long and dark, is flying
from his light, to whom we give
laud and praise undying.

Now the queen of seasons, bright

with the day of splendor,
with the royal feast of feasts,
comes its joy to render;
comes to glad Jerusalem,
who with true affection
welcomes in unwearied strains
Jesus' resurrection.

Neither might the gates of death,
nor the tomb's dark portal,
nor the watchers, nor the seal
hold thee as a mortal:
but today amidst thine own
thou didst stand, bestowing
that thy peace which evermore
passeth human knowing.

The Gospel

Mark 16:1-8

Then, all standing, the Deacon or a Priest reads the Gospel, first saying

Celebrant: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

LEM: *Glory to you, Lord Christ.*

¹When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. ²And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. ³They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" ⁴When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. ⁵As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. ⁶But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of

Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him.⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.”⁸ So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Celebrant: The Gospel of the Lord.

LEM: *Praise to you, Lord Christ.*

The Sermon: He is Not Here²

First of all, Happy Easter! Alleluia, Alleluia! The Lord is risen, He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

But...he is not here.

I said Alleluia, Alleluia! Christ is risen. The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Yes, as the angel said to the Marys and Salome who came to the graveyard, that may be, but he is not here.

But that's the whole point – I mean, how would we know – I mean, what did you say? Why are you sitting there dressed all in white, young man, and telling us this? Did He not know that we were coming? The sun is barely up, no-one's awake, and you're telling me...what? He couldn't wait five minutes? He must've known we were coming. I mean, He basically told us to. He told us after three days He would – I mean, that God would raise him up, plus it was the Sabbath until last evening and we couldn't come in the night, it's not safe out, you know what this city is like, but we're here

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now and you're telling me, what? That He's not here? Well where in the hell is He, then?

He has been raised, said Mr. Clean there, dressed in white, waiting for the bus for all they knew. He is not here. Go tell the others to meet him in Galilee. He is not here.

Cry though they might, weep though they had to, the three women could from that young man no more information; nor had rest of the dead anything to say, much less their tombs. So they, who had come to anoint Jesus's body – and just imagine the sight of that, the smell – what did they do? What could they do? They went away amazed and terrified, saying nothing to no-one.

Whom would they have told? What would they have said?

Um, Peter, James, John, everybody: we went to the graveyard, and the tomb was open. There was no body, just a dude sitting there looking like he'd been bleached who told us he was not there.

Really?

Really really.

Where did He say He was?

On His way to Galilee.

Did he point out the direction?

No.

Show you His footprints or sandal prints?

Um, no.

And you didn't see Him walking anywhere around there while he was 'on His way to Galilee' after having so recently been on the way to the supper not where He eats, but where He is eaten?

No, Peter, no. We didn't. I swear.

And this isn't a Roman noncom's prank, or some priests' trick, to steal His body, see if we'll claim He was raised, and then produce it on us to humiliate us, rub His murder in one more time?

No, none of that, I mean, not as far as we could tell. They'd have arrested us or something, right? But the fella sitting there was all by himself and didn't tell us any more that what we just told you.

Ah.

And he didn't look Roman at all, or even Jewish – I mean, to tell you the truth what he most looked like was Mormon, dressed like you know how they do so they look like the saints robed in white from Revelation and all, as we'll be on the Last Day, or like those angels in the Duré woodcuts?

Yeah, yeah, I get it. So this guy is just sitting there, like that, and say this.

Yep.

And you believed him?

I mean, I guess so. I don't know. What choice did we have?

You believed a stranger *sitting in a grave* when he said Jesus, whose grave it was and whom we *all saw die* on Friday, was not in there but was on His

way home? And that we should meet Him there? Even though you didn't see Him?

No, like I said. We didn't see Him. All the guy said was, "He has been raised. He is not here."

And you believed him?

I don't know.

You think we should believe him?

I don't know.

You think we should believe you?

I don't know.

No-one's going to believe you.

We know.

Don't tell his mother.

We won't.

I'm serious. Not till we figure out what's going on.

I don't think the guy was lying, Peter.

Then where is He, Mary? Where is Jesus?

I don't know.

Neither do I. All that we do know, for sure, is that He's not here.

For whatever reason, by whatever means, the God we've come to know and love and whose will for us, at least, we think we understand decided to

do things this way. I have no idea why. I can speculate, and so can you, as people have for thousands of years about What Actually Happened? and What Does It Mean? Fights over what happened, what it means and what one may, or must, think about it pepper the history of our faith like so many holes the side of the vessel God made for us to sail on, holes through which the sea, as well as the light, can get in.

Questions about the reality and the meaning of the resurrection add one more, at least, to that long list of questions for which we don't have answers, can't have answers. All the history we have concerning them, all the profound elaborations we have that draw from them, remind us of nothing so much than that the mysteries at the heart of existence will not be solved simply because we want them to be, or by any means we possess and know how to use. At best, what we have before us in the resurrection of Jesus is Paul's term for him: the first-fruits of them that sleep. This, to the grieving, is either a foretaste of the heavenly banquet whose menu we heard in Isaiah this morning – "a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear" – or a bitter reminder that God raised His only son from the dead but won't raise ours, nor our daughters, nor anyone else, not until the end, if there even is an end. What we know most of all this morning, as the Marys and Salome did that first Easter morning, is that He is not here.

Clearly, He wanted it that way. Clearly, He wants it that way. Otherwise, He surely would've done it differently. In truth, of course, He didn't do it at all – Jesus, that is. His heavenly Father, that way God is that we experience as creator, designer, and imaginer, from whose hand in its beginning the world went, as one poet puts it, spinning – that God, God in that way, did it,

taking the sting out of death as He did so, or at least the venom out of that sting. From the moment He gave up His spirit in shocked realization that He really was going to die – gasping “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” as the unrepentant thief, like the repentant, gasped to death beside Him – Jesus has just been along for the ride. This is all God’s doing, God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth, maker of all that is, and judge of all who live and speak with words, sacrificing Himself to Himself on that tree, much in the manner of the Norse father-god Odin – or maybe they learned it from the Christians, I don’t know – in order to...

...well, in Odin’s case, it was to gain wisdom, insight, the mead of poetry – for in poetry come all insights, and in poetry are founded all religions. Odin was willing to give an eye for it, all the better to see with his mind, apparently, and to create things in poetic form that were adequate to what he knew. Yet at the heart of our religion, the temptation to knowledge, particularly knowledge of such things as the difference between good and evil, is itself the temptation to evil. The sacrifice of Christ was meant to gain for God not wisdom, but love, through pain and loss.

Whose? His. Why? Because He, God, had made a mistake. He made beings that had the power to love, but also the power to hate. He made beings that had the power to obey, but also the power to disobey. He made beings who could create wonders and goodness, joy without end, but also who could create misery and torment for themselves and everyone else. That’s us, if you’re wondering. We. People, that is. He made us, human beings, in His own image, male and female from the beginning, equal in all genders from the beginning, but equally, dare I say it? Dare we admit it? Flawed – flawed because corruptible, flawed because deceivable, flawed

because we had the power, the capacity, the tendency, even, not to be perfect. We had, have the capacity to excel, but also the capacity to just not bother, to be too damn cheap and lazy to, to do what no other creature has the power to do: become mediocre, but linger, or become wicked and endure. But we can – and we can because He made us that way. While it may have been good at the time, over time we can see that it has not been good, or not only good. So He came to be one of us to see what that would be like, feel like, to be human – to be capable of sin, even if He didn't sin. He felt, He knew what it would be like, and He felt, He knew that because of what it would be like, He – and, with Him, it in Him – had to die.

What it is we say in baptism? That we die to self but rise in Christ? That, literally, is what happens from Good Friday through to Easter Sunday: God in human form dies. All that is corruptible in that human form dies with him. Forever, in pain, and lost. Stunned, abandoned, and alone. What comes back, what comes to life, is not that, not quite, Jesus but yet not Jesus, Christ but changed, renewed, the first fruits of them that sleep and are raised...and here memory must serve...are raised, and how does that go in *The Messiah*? “Are raised incorruptible.” Yes, that's it. We cannot be corrupted, whether by the worms that make a king go a progress through the guts of a beggar or by the desire to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil when we know we should not, for what would we do with that power? Good, but also evil. To get rid of that power is to know the power of redemption: all of that is gone – if we want it to be, and choose it to be. Humanity is redeemed, made perfect, set free, made...as it should have been, not as it was. He repented – God, that is. He made it right, when it had not been. We sinned, or our forebears did, but He made us able to,

and should not have. What did it benefit Him or us that we were that way? What glory did it give Him? None – and He had to know that, which is why He died on that cross, and why, when He got up in that empty tomb, He did not wait, did not hesitate, but instead headed for home, for Galilee, for Nazareth, where it all began, to make up for what they had lost, His family, His people, His disciples, His fellow human beings, and to show them that it would all be well in time. They would be as He now was, in time – be raised incorruptible, and be changed.

The God who made us, that is, set us free from what was wrong in how He made us, and in what we did with it. That is the message of the Easter gospel this year, for all of us. He is not here? Nope. So where is He, then? He is everywhere, in every place a child cries, in every place a child laughs, redeeming us all, and making us whole.

Do not look for Him in a graveyard, Mary. Do not seek Him, Salome, in a tomb. He is not here. He is everywhere but here.

So get moving. Go tell the others. They'll want to know. I promise. *Amen.*

There is no passing of plates or reception of gifts.

The Deacon or Priest prepares the altar and sanctuary for the Eucharist.

The People make ready their gifts of bread and wine. The LEM continues

The Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father *and the Son*.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The Prayers of the People

The LEM prays. In the silence after each bidding, the People offer their prayers without speaking.

I ask your prayers for all God's people; for our bishops, our clergy, and this gathering, and for all ministers and people. Pray for the Church.

Silence

I ask your prayers for peace; for goodwill among nations; and for the well-being of all. Pray for justice and peace.

Silence

I ask your prayers for the poor, the sick, the hungry, the oppressed, and those in prison.

Pray for those in any need or trouble.

Silence

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of God.

Pray that they may seek, and pray that they might find.

Silence

I ask your prayers for the departed [*especially N.N.*]. Pray for those who have died.

Silence

I ask your prayers for those on the prayer list of this parish, and those whose needs are known to you alone.

Silence

The Celebrant adds a concluding collect.

The Peace

The People stand.

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be always with you,

LEM: *And also with you.*

The Ministers and People greet one another in silence while keeping physical distance.

The Holy Eucharist: The Great Thanksgiving

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

LEM: *And also with you.*

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.

LEM: *We lift them to the Lord.*

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

LEM: *It is right to give God thanks and praise.*

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, holy Lord, giver of life and light. You fill us with your blessings and feed us with your constant love; you have redeemed us in Christ Jesus, renewed us in your Spirit, and brought us into everlasting life.

Therefore we praise you, joining with Angels and Archangels and with all the host of heaven, who forever sing this hymn, to the glory of your Name,

The LEM says or sings:

*Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.*

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

The Celebrant continues

Blessed are you, gracious God, maker of all things, judge of all who live. You made us in your image and to live in your infinite love. You gave the world into our care and bade us be faithful stewards of its bounty. But we honored not your gifts, misused your creation, abused one another, and rejected your love.

Yet you never ceased to care for us. You called us into your promise, delivered us from bondage, sustained us in the wild, and sent prophets to bid us repent and return.

Then, in the fullness of time, you sent your eternal Word, made human in Christ Jesus, to live as one of us, and to reveal your glory. Giving himself up to death on the cross, he triumphed over evil and opened for us the way of everlasting life.

On the night before he died, as he sat at table with his friends, Our Lord Jesus Christ took bread. Giving thanks to you, he broke it, and shared it with them, saying:

“Take, eat: This is my Body which is given for you. Do this in memory of me.”

As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup, gave thanks, and shared it with them, saying:

“Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, poured out for you and for all for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in memory of me.”

Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of faith:

The LEM says

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

The Celebrant continues

In that mystery we offer to you this bread and this wine, fruit of the vine and the work of human hands. May they become for us the Body and Blood of our Savior Jesus Christ. May we who share them be filled with that Holy Spirit to live as Christ’s Body in the world. May we come to the everlasting heritage of your

children, and with the apostles and martyrs and all your saints, enter into the joys of your salvation.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, to you be honor, glory, and praise, now and forever. AMEN.

Now, as Christ taught us, we are bold to say,

The LEM prays

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.*

Give us this day our daily bread.

*And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those
who trespass against us.*

*And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.*

*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.*

The Breaking of the Bread

The Celebrant breaks the consecrated Bread, and then keeps a period of silence. The Celebrant continues

Celebrant: Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

LEM: Therefore, let us keep the feast. Alleluia!

Celebrant: The Gifts of God for the People of God.

The People consume their gifts. After Communion, the Celebrant says

Let us pray. *The Celebrant prays*

Eternal God, holy Lord, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart, through Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Blessing and Dismissal

The Celebrant says

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you.

The Lord be with you, this day and always, and give you peace.

The LEM says

Let us go forth, in peace, to love and serve the Lord.

Withdrawal Hymn: Jesus lives thy terror now

The Hymnal 1982, #194

Jesus lives! thy terrors now
can no longer, death, appall us;
Jesus lives! by this we know
thou, O grave, canst not enthrall us.
Alleluia!

Jesus lives! for us he died;
then, alone to Jesus living,
pure in heart may we abide,
glory to our Savior giving.

Alleluia!

Jesus lives! to him the throne
over all the world is given:
may we go where he has gone,
rest and reign with him in heaven.
Alleluia!

The Celebrant, the LEM, and the People depart, maintaining physical distance.

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For information about St. Mark's, please visit our website:

www.stmarksfairland.org

www.stmarks-silverspring.org

We hope that today's service has been a blessing to you.

We are here to serve you, and hope to see you again.

Please feel free to call us, email us, or visit us online.