



Today is one of the year's most significant celebrations, and it moves us into perhaps the most significant season.

Once again the Easter season reminds us that Christ's life is inextinguishable, and invites us to know the reality of resurrection every day. If we can avoid the "curse" of familiarity, this celebration can lead us ever deeper into God's life and transform us into life-carriers that bring life to others and to our world.

May Christ's life capture us and transform us a little more this year.

INTRODUCTIONS

For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines

Acts 10 : 34-43

During the Easter season, in place of the Hebrew Scriptures, we read the witness of the early church to the power of the Lord's resurrection.]

This is a small part of the story of Peter and a centurion of the Roman occupying army, when the Gospel first reached beyond the Jews. The teaching sums up Jesus's old and new life.

or **Isaiah 25 : 6-9**

The prophet holds out God's promise of joyful end to all human travail, when there will be feasting and rejoicing as death is destroyed for ever and God saves his people.

1 Corinthians 15 : 1-11

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Paul writes here of the very heart of the gospel: the fact that Jesus was raised from death and seen by many people. Paul's own apostleship, he says, stems from the appearance to him of the risen Christ.

or **Acts 10 : 34-43**

John 20 : 1-18

Mary Magdalene is sometimes called 'The Apostle to the Apostles', for she was the first to see the risen Lord and tell the others. But his appearance had changed, and only love speaking to love made him known to her.

or **Mark 16 : 1-8**

After the Sabbath, the women came to anoint the body of Jesus, but were amazed to find the tomb empty. A strange figure tells them he has been raised and they must prepare the other disciples to see him again.

Click here to view the readings -

http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Acts%2010:%2034-43%0A%2BOR%0AIsaiah%2025:%206-9%0A%20Psalm%20118:%201-2,%2014-24%0A1%20Corinthians%2015:%201-11%0A%2BOR%0AActs%2010:%2034-43%0AJohn%2020:%201-18

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

Almighty God,
who through thine only-begotten Son Jesus Christ
hast overcome death,
and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life;
We humbly beseech thee,
that, as by thy special grace preventing us
thou dost put into our minds good desires,
so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit,
ever one God, world without end.

If there are two celebrations of the Holy Communion this collect may be used at the first.

and/or

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O God,
who for our redemption didst give thine only-begotten Son
to the death of the cross,
and by his glorious resurrection
hast delivered us from the power of our enemy;
Grant us so to die daily from sin,
that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection;
through the same Christ our Lord.

Collect Two

Almighty God,
through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ
you have overcome death
and opened to us the gate of everlasting life:
Grant that, as by your grace going before us
you put into our minds good desires,
so by your continual help we may bring them to good effect;
through Jesus Christ our risen Lord
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Presider or deacon

Filled with joy on this royal feast of feasts, let us offer prayers to God who leads his sons and daughters through the Red Sea waters.

Deacon or other leader

For the holy churches of God, *N* our bishop, the presbyters and deacons, our new brothers and sisters, this holy gathering, and all the holy people of God.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For the world and its leaders, our nation and its people.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For all those in need, the suffering and the oppressed, travelers and prisoners, the dying and the dead.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

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For ourselves, our families, and those we love.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

That our Saviour may grant us triumph over our visible and invisible enemies.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

That with Christ we may crush beneath our feet the prince of darkness and all evil powers.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

That Christ may fill us with the joy and happiness of his holy resurrection.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

That we may enter the chamber of the divine wedding feast and rejoice without limit with the angels and saints.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

Remembering *N*, and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ. **To you, O Lord.**

Presider

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, for the victory over death of your Son Jesus Christ. Hear the prayers we offer this holy day, and grant that we who have received new life in baptism may live for ever in the joy of the resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

POST COMMUNION

Living God,
for our redemption you gave your only-begotten Son
to the death of the cross,
and by his glorious resurrection
you have delivered us from the power of our enemy.
Grant us so to die daily unto sin,
that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his risen life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS

Mighty God,
in whom we know the power of redemption,
you stand among us in the shadows of our time.
As we move through every sorrow and trial of this life,
uphold us with knowledge of the final morning
when, in the glorious presence of your risen Son,
we will share in his resurrection,
redeemed and restored to the fullness of life
and forever freed to be your people. Amen.

Living God,
long ago, faithful women
proclaimed the good news
of Jesus' resurrection,
and the world was changed forever.
Teach us to keep faith with them,
that our witness may be as bold,
our love as deep,
and our faith as true. Amen.

Creator of the universe,
you made the world in beauty,
and restore all things in glory
through the victory of Jesus Christ.
We pray that, wherever your image is still disfigured
by poverty, sickness, selfishness, war and greed,
the new creation in Jesus Christ may appear in justice, love, and peace,
to the glory of your name. Amen.

Let us pray for the needs of the church and the world
to God who raised Jesus to new life...

Petitions may be included here

... Through the resurrection of your son, O God,
you destroy the power of death
and remove your people's shame.
By the power of the Spirit,
raise us from sin
and seat us at the paschal feast,
that we may rejoice in the gift of salvation
Jesus has won for us. Amen.

Love divine,
in raising Christ to new life
you opened the path of salvation to all peoples.
Send us out, with the joy of Mary Magdalene,
to proclaim that we have seen the Lord,
so that all the world may celebrate with you
the banquet of your peace. Amen.

LECTIONARY NOTES 1

Acts 10:34-43:

- Peter is speaking to Cornelius and his friends and relatives in Caesarea. Cornelius had been visited by a messenger from God telling him to invite Peter to his home and here he speaks.
- "God shows no partiality". Do we get that? Believe it? Preach it? Live and practice it?
- "preaching peace by Jesus Christ" Ah, the gospel message is a message of peace. Too much of our Christian history works to counter that claim. We struggle on!
- A mini-sermon, all the facts needed to share the good news packed into one little blurb - this is Peter's quick pitch, at the opportunity he's been given.

Psalms 118:1-2, 14-24:

- Note that this is virtually the same selection from Psalms as on [Palm Sunday](#), with slightly different verses. Included in Easter's reading, but not in Palm Sunday's: "the Lord has punished me severely, but he did not give me over to death." Hm. I don't like to think about God punishing us. But the verse's significance on Easter is powerful. The cup was not taken from Jesus - he drank it. And yet, he lives.
- Even still, it's hard to focus on any scripture passage on Easter Sunday other than the gospel lesson of the Resurrection, isn't it?

1 Corinthians 15:19-26:

- "If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied." A striking statement. I'm not sure how to react - I guess I don't exactly share Paul's perspective. I think we're so wrapped up in thinking about what awaits us after this earthly life, that we forget what

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Christ means for us right now, on earth. My hope for Christ in this life is powerful stuff!

- "The last enemy to be destroyed is death." I'm a big fan of [John Cobb and process theology](#). I remember reading that for process theologians, some could not get over the "ultimate evil of personal death." Conceptions of afterlife are tricky things. How can death be destroyed for you? When I was younger, I used to ask my pastor/mentor, [Rev. Bruce Webster](#), if heaven wouldn't be a boring place. He, a math major in college, could draw some sort of graph to show it would be ok!

John 20:1-18:

- I have to admit, as a woman, I get a kick out of the way the men behave here, versus the way Mary Magdalene acts. The men run there, almost competitively, after hearing Mary's report, and then they return home, apparently not too impressed or curious to figure out what's going on. It's Mary who is there to begin with to care for the tomb, Mary who sheds tears for Jesus, Mary who remains at the tomb long enough to encounter the risen Christ, Mary who is the first to spread the good news. You go girl!
- "Rabbouni!" What would you say if you had a change to come face to face with a lost loved one again?
- I just can't let loose of the sense of the importance of Mary staying at the tomb. She is honest with her emotions, and holds still, stays in place, soaks it in. She gets to see Jesus, the fruits of her devotion. Don't hurry through Easter, but rest at the empty tomb!

Mark 16:1-8

- Ah, Mark. Eight verses for the resurrection. Of course, there are verses 9-20, but many scholars think this is an add-on, doubtfully from Mark, likely added later to compensate for Mark's alarming brevity.
- "and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid." Good thing they get over their fears and at least tell the disciples, else this would have really been a different Easter story altogether!
- Note even Mark's description of who the women find in the tomb, as compared to the other gospels. Mark seems to describe a man, very simply, dressed in a white robe. Matthew, on the other hand, has an earthquake, and an angel descending from heaven with dazzling white clothing. Matthew is bells and whistles. Mark is "just the facts".
By Beth Quick

LECTIONARY NOTES 2

REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

The focus of Easter Sunday this year is, of course, on the resurrection, but this year, the supporting readings all offer a tantalising glimpse of the inclusivity of God's Reign as it was expressed through Jesus. The message that comes through is that the resurrection brings life and salvation not just to the Jews, or even the disciples, but to all people. The Acts reading is taken from Peter's sermon to the Gentiles in Cornelius' house and celebrates God's inclusive love and life and the Isaiah prophecy proclaims that God's salvation, and the feast that accompanies it, is for all people. The Psalm takes the celebration of God's life and salvation to a personal level, but acknowledges that God's rescue came even when the psalmist required God's discipline. In a similar way, Paul reflects on how Christ appeared to him even though he was persecuting the followers of Jesus. The Gospels tell the story of the empty tomb – the moment of resurrection that made life available to all of the people that are mentioned in the other readings. Both Gospels show the inclusive grace of God in a reality that would have been shocking for the first believers – the first witnesses to the resurrection were women, and it was they who were given the responsibility of sharing the news with the men. The essential message of this significant day in the Lectionary is this – God has given life to all people, and it is in this inclusive resurrection community that we find and enjoy God's life. This is not just an individualist, escapist Gospel, but an invitation for the entire cosmos to enjoy the gift of resurrection together.

CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

GLOBAL APPLICATION: One of the great fallacies of human history is the persistent belief that some groups or individuals can find life and liberation alone, or at the expense of others. However, the last century has demonstrated how mistaken this way of living is. We have seen how closely connected we are, and we have experienced how the emphasis on our separation from one another and from our world has brought great suffering and conflict on us and others. The challenge of the resurrection is for us to realise that God has brought life to us all, and that life cannot be extinguished by our foolishness or even by death. Further, the life that God offers is neither for only some people, nor is it only for some other reality after we die. Rather, God's life can and should be known and enjoyed now, but can only really be experienced together. While it can be tempting to think about the resurrection only in metaphysical terms, a whole new world of possibilities opens up when we see how resurrection permeates everything. When we start to live as resurrection people, we recognise that we participate in resurrection in every moment that we bring life to others, whether through caring for our environment, working to alleviate poverty, serving those in need, learning to understand other cultures and people, or living more simply and peacefully in

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order to foster justice and equality in our world. Resurrection, then, is a reality that we are called to live – as Paul demonstrates in his life and teaching. We do not just receive resurrection life, but we become carriers of that life to the world – if only we can believe in and embrace it's power.

LOCAL APPLICATION: In churches around the world the resurrection will be the focus of our worship, but for many of us, the celebration will simply be a remembrance of a miraculous event from the past, with perhaps a mention of our hope of a life beyond death. But, if this is all the resurrection is, it actually has little value for us now – or for anyone else. But, if our celebration can connect us with the living reality of resurrection life now, everything changes. In our homes and families, we can live knowing that there is always hope and life, even after times of grief or conflict. In our churches and communities we can gather knowing that God's life is found together, and that we are able to bring life to one another through the grace, love, care and compassion we show one another. When we allow the resurrection to become a reality by which we live, and not just an idea that we remember, our mission changes from just trying to "get people into heaven" to bringing life to others in whatever way we can – big or small. When our lives become oriented around the resurrection we cannot help but move away from just telling people about Jesus, to seeking to embody the life, the grace and the all-inclusive compassion of Jesus in our own lives. The resurrection, then, is not just an evacuation plan for us as individuals. It's the basic principle by which the entire cosmos is ordered, and in which we participate when we share Christ's life in every way, and at every opportunity.

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

Day 1 - Set Free - *This sermon was chosen as Day 1's Sermon of the Year in November 2005 on the occasion of its 60th anniversary.* Good use of a family experience of death and burial. Excerpt:

In raising Jesus from the dead, God broke the bondage of evil. And so we are set free for life! Set free to imagine the world in a whole new way.

Sixteen years ago I stood in a graveyard and wept at my mother's grave. A few days later we returned to the cemetery. This time we took our children. They hadn't been there earlier. They were too young for funerals. As we drove to the cemetery, I tried to explain why we were going. I told them grandmother was with Jesus. I wasn't sure what they had heard. When we got there, the boys didn't linger long beside the grave. They were soon running around, as children will, playing in the cemetery, exclaiming over the variety of old tombstones. Suddenly, our three-year old pointed at an especially large sepulcher that looked almost like a house.

"Look!" he exclaimed with a broad smile, "That must be where Jesus lives!"

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The wonderful logic of a child. If this is grandmother's grave and she is with Jesus, then...why not?

We had thought the children were too young to understand, but perhaps they caught a glimpse of the truth that through our tears it was hard for us older folks to see.

http://day1.org/986-set_free

Faith & Leadership - Christ got up. *Faith & Leadership* offers sermons that shed light on issues of Christian leadership. "In order to worship Jesus, you must follow him. And Jesus refuses to stay put", says Bishop Will Willimon. This will need some adaptation for an Irish congregation. However, the central message is relevant.

<http://www.faithandleadership.com/content/christ-got>

America - Alleluia! "The Gospels do not describe what happened to Jesus at the moment of resurrection; they recount how his followers experienced its effects. In fact, all of the Easter readings focus on the implications of the resurrection in the lives of Jesus' followers. Paul instructs his converts that joined to Christ, they must now live a new way. Having been raised with Christ from the dead, they must purge themselves of their old way of living. They are on the threshold of newness. A wondrous world of mystery has opened up before them, inviting them to step into it.

"We are not unlike those first followers. Though we know well the Easter story, we never seem fully to grasp its meaning. Like them, we so often continue to live burdened with our dashed hopes and with our misunderstanding of God's mysterious power. Like them, we come to the tomb and expect to find death, but instead we find signs of a new life that we cannot even begin to comprehend. Like them, we do not realize that our history has been broken open and is now filled with the resurrected presence of Christ."

http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=2910

"The Secret in the Dark," Frederick Buechner Sermon Illustrations.

John 20:11-18. Here are Frederick Buechner's thoughts on "proclaiming" the resurrection, from "The Secret in the Dark" found in *The Longing for Home* and reprinted in the book *Secrets in the Dark*:

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<http://frederickbuechner.com/content/weekly-sermon-illustration-secret-dark>

"Easter Evidence," David J. Wood, Faith and Leadership.

One might expect the Gospel accounts of the Resurrection to reflect better on the disciples, says an Illinois pastor. But the story is unambiguous on this point: they were confused, perplexed and deathly afraid. Faith & Leadership offers sermons that shed light on issues of Christian leadership.

<http://www.faithandleadership.com/david-j-wood-easter-evidence>

"How I'm Preaching the Resurrection," Patheos

Easter morning approaches, bringing with it a fresh opportunity — and challenge — to unpack the mystery of the Resurrection to an alternately curious, skeptical and hopeful world. Here's how a few of our Patheos bloggers plan to preach it this Sunday.

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/faithforward/2012/03/how-im-preaching-the-resurrection/>

"Easter Dinner," Rev. Willliam Carter, Day 1

Isaiah 25:6-9. Easter is a day of celebration. The church sings alleluias after a quiet season of Lent. People dress in new clothing in springtime colors. Children and a few sneaky parents consume a lot of chocolate. And many, many people gather around full tables. On Easter day, Isaiah's ancient poem begs the question, "What's for dinner?"

http://day1.org/3715-easter_dinner

"Christ Got Up," Will Willimon, Faith and Leadership

In order to worship Jesus, you must follow him. And Jesus refuses to stay put, says Bishop Will Willimon.

<http://www.faithandleadership.com/content/christ-got>

"Deadly Things," the Rev. Dr. Scott Black Johnston, Day 1

Mark 16:1-8. Easter begins with fear. At least that's the way Mark tells it. It's not that Easter begins with wild panic--no, not that. Easter begins with the kind of fear that feels a lot like heart-break. It begins with the twist in your stomach that comes when the phone rings and you hear the voice of your sister. "Are you sitting down?" she asks--that kind of fear.

http://day1.org/1241-deadly_things

"Set Free," the Rev. Mary Jane Cornell, Day 1

John 20:1-18. When I was a child, our favorite playground was the cemetery. Our house was beside a church with graveyards next door and across the road. We spent hours playing hide and seek, walking the rock wall bordering the perimeter, making hideouts in the boxwoods. We did not intend any disrespect. As children we had not yet learned the hard rules of life and death, but through the years I've learned. This week is the 16th anniversary of the day I stood weeping in a cemetery as my mother was buried. Playing was the last thing on my mind.

http://day1.org/986-set_free

CHILDREN

On the Chancel steps - Scroll down to the second address - "This is an egg. This kind of egg comes from a chicken. In our culture we have many questions about eggs and chickens, like: Which came first, the chicken or the egg? Why did the chicken cross the road? Which end of an egg do you crack?..."

<https://onthechancelsteps.wordpress.com/2012/03/25/easter/>

Faith formation Journeys - For Easter Sunday on Mark 16:1-8-or-John 20:1-18. Basically an explanation of Alleluia

<http://faithformationjourneys.blogspot.co.uk/2012/03/childrens-sermon-easter-sunday-year-b.html>

Eight talks for Easter by a Church of Scotland minister Rev. Donald McCorkindale

<http://talks2children.wordpress.com/category/easter/>

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

Christ The Lord Is Risen Today
The Day Of Resurrection
Thine Be The Glory
Hail Thou Once Despised Jesus
We Shall Go Out With Hope Of Resurrection
Come, People Of The Risen King
Redemption Song
On The Darkest Day Of All
Come, See The Son

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Once Again (Link to YouTube video)