

Sunday Message

EASTER SUNDAY OF THE
RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

THE WORD

Year A • 9 April 2023 • Psalter Week 1



**EASTER
JOY**

JOHN 20:1-9

I love telling jokes on Easter Sunday, and there's an excellent reason for it.

It is in keeping with an ancient tradition in the Russian Orthodox Church, where the day after Easter was devoted to telling jokes. They even told jokes in church. But why? It was their way of celebrating the great cosmic joke God pulled on Satan in the resurrection. Satan thought he had won. Satan was sure the forces of darkness had prevailed. He was confident that with the death of Jesus, all hope was lost, that God's plan for humanity was destroyed. And so Satan smiled to himself and was smug in his victory. Satan had the last word, the last laugh.

So he thought.

Then something extraordinary happened. God raised Jesus from the dead – and life, hope, and salvation became the last words. Life and hope and salvation replaced death and despair, and darkness. As St John says: "Christ's is a light that shines in the dark, a light that darkness could never overpower." And so the whole world, heaven and earth, rejoiced at the devil's discomfort.

That's why the Orthodox Russians tell jokes on Easter Day. And why we should rejoice and tell jokes too. Jesus, our brother, has broken the chains of death through the power of the Father. Death, the last and greatest enemy, has been overcome. Death has no more power over us.

Easter is the great feast of joy and demands a response from us. What should our response be?

First, to acknowledge it, let it sink in. We can be so familiar with the Easter story that it loses its impact. It's something we celebrate every year, just another date on the church calendar. We can get more emotional about a piece of music or a storyline in *Easterenders* than that God died and was raised for us. We can get more passionate about a football match than that we have been saved. Remember the mind-blowing truth we are celebrating this day. Remember and give thanks.

Second, the resurrection is proof of how much God loves us and believes in us. It tells us that hope has triumphed over despair, light over darkness, good over evil, life over death, love over hate. It reminds us that even though people and institutions let us down, God never lets us down; even though banks and governments fail us, God never fails us; even though the Church can disappoint us, God never disappoints us.

No matter how old or young, strong or frail, large or small, or wrinkled or fresh-faced we may be, God loves us and believes in us. No matter where we're from, what ethnicity we possess, or what our personal history is, God loves us and believes in us. The resurrection of Christ Jesus tells us God is on our side.

Imagine if we saw ourselves and saw each other the way God sees us; if we believed in ourselves and believed in each other the way God believes in us. If we did that, there would be no hatred, no wars, no bigotry, no discrimination, no tribalism, no intentional suffering. We would live as Easter people, people redeemed.

So make sure to tell jokes this day and sing alleluia. Let God's love shine in you. Let God's love radiate through you. We are an Easter people, and alleluia is our song. ■

REFLECT

In today's first reading, Peter proclaims the good news of the resurrection.

It's an extraordinary change from only a short period before when he denied Jesus three times, and had locked himself behind closed doors, quivering in fear. Now Peter is on fire with faith. He preaches it to Cornelius, his household, and anyone who listens. He will even die for the sake of the Gospel. His belief in the resurrection has changed everything for him. How strong is your faith in the resurrection? Would you be prepared to die for it? ■

DO

When the apostles realised that Jesus had been raised from the dead, they hurried back to tell the others the astonishing news. They became, at that moment, witnesses to the Good News. We, too, are called to be witnesses to the Good News. How well and how boldly do you witness to the Gospel?

SAY

**"We are an Easter people,
and alleluia is our song."**

PRAY

Pray for the community of believers worldwide that they may grow stronger in the faith. Pray especially for all those who were received into the Church this Easter.

LEARN

Today, we begin the Season of Easter, which will continue for fifty days until Pentecost. These fifty days are celebrated as one feast, the "Great Sunday." During these days, we celebrate the very basis of our faith – that God raised Jesus from the dead

The resurrection of Jesus Christ means that death has no more hold over us

Alleluia is our great Easter exclamation. The word itself is Hebrew and means "Praise God"

May the peace of the risen Christ be in your homes and hearts this Easter day.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

I have risen, and I am with you still, alleluia.
You have laid your hand upon me, alleluia.
Too wonderful for me, this knowledge,
alleluia, alleluia.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

O God, who on this day,
through your Only Begotten Son,
have conquered death
and unlocked for us the path to eternity,
grant, we pray, that we who keep
the solemnity of the Lord's Resurrection
may, through the renewal brought by your
Spirit,
rise up in the light of life.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. Amen.

FIRST READING Acts 10:34-37-43

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.
Peter addressed Cornelius and his household:
"You must have heard about the recent
happenings in Judaea: about Jesus of
Nazareth and how he began in Galilee, after
John had been preaching baptism. God had
anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with
power, and because God was with him, Jesus
went about doing good and curing all who
had fallen into the power of the devil. Now I,
and those with me, can witness to everything
he did throughout the countryside of Judaea
and in Jerusalem itself: and also to the fact
that they killed him by hanging him on a tree,
yet three days afterwards God raised him to
life and allowed him to be seen, not by the
whole people but only by certain witnesses
God had chosen beforehand. Now we are
those witnesses – we have eaten and drunk
with him after his resurrection from the
dead – and he has ordered us to proclaim
this to his people and to tell them that God
has appointed him to judge everyone, alive
or dead. It is to him that all the prophets
bear this witness: that all who believe in Jesus
will have their sins forgiven through his name."

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 117

Response:

This day was made by the Lord; we rejoice
and are glad.

Or Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

1. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good,
for his love has no end.
Let the sons of Israel say:
"His love has no end." (R.)
2. The Lord's right hand has triumphed;
his right hand raised me up.
I shall not die, I shall live
and recount his deeds. (R.)
3. The stone which the builders rejected
has become the corner stone.
This is the work of the Lord,
a marvel in our eyes. (R.)

SECOND READING Colossians 3:1-4

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the
Colossians.

Since you have been brought back to true life
with Christ, you must look for the things that
are in heaven, where Christ is, sitting at God's
right hand. Let your thoughts be on heavenly
things, not on the things that are on the earth,
because you have died, and now the life you
have is hidden with Christ in God. But when
Christ is revealed – and he is your life – you
will be revealed in all your glory with him.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Alternative second reading

1 Cor. 5:6-8

SEQUENCE

Christians, to the Paschal Victim offer
sacrifice and praise.
The sheep are ransomed by the Lamb;
and Christ, the undefiled,
hath sinners to his Father reconciled.
Death with life contended; combat strangely
ended!
Life's own Champion, slain, yet lives to reign.
Tell us, Mary: say what thou didst see upon
the way.
The tomb the Living did enclose;
I saw Christ's glory as he rose!
The angels there attesting;
shroud with grave-clothes resting.
Christ, my hope, has risen: he goes before
you into Galilee.
That Christ is truly risen from the dead we
know.
Victorious king, thy mercy show!

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
Christ, our passover, has been sacrificed;
let us celebrate the feast then, in the Lord.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

John 20:1-9

(Alternative Gospels: Mt 28:1-10, or in the
afternoon, or evening: Lk 24:13-35)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
John.

It was very early on the first day of the week
and still dark, when Mary of Magdala came
to the tomb. She saw that the stone had been
moved away from the tomb and came running
to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one
Jesus loved. "They have taken the Lord out

of the tomb" she said "and we don't know
where they have put him." So Peter set out
with the other disciple to go to the tomb. They
ran together, but the other disciple, running
faster than Peter, reached the tomb first; he
bent down and saw the linen cloths on the
ground, but did not go in. Simon Peter who
was following now came up, went right into
the tomb, saw the linen cloths on the ground,
and also the cloth that had been over his head;
this was not with the linen cloths but rolled
up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple
who had reached the tomb first also went
in; he saw and he believed. Till this moment
they had failed to understand the teaching of
scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES

Dear brethren (brothers and sisters), through
the Paschal Mystery we have been buried with
Christ in Baptism, so that we may walk with him
in newness of life. And so, now that our Lenten
observance is concluded, let us renew the
promises of Holy Baptism, by which we once
renounced Satan and his works and promised
to serve God in the holy Catholic Church. And
so I ask you:

Do you renounce Satan?

I do.

And all his works?

I do.

And all his empty show?

I do.

Do you believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth?

I do.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son,
our Lord,
who was born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered death and was buried,
rose again from the dead
and is seated at the right hand of the Father?

I do.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting?

I do.

And may almighty God, the Father of our Lord
Jesus Christ,
who has given new birth by water and the
Holy Spirit
and bestowed on us forgiveness of our sins,
keep us by his grace,
in Christ Jesus our Lord,
for eternal life. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Exultant with paschal gladness, O Lord,
We offer the sacrifice by which your Church
is wondrously reborn and nourished.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Christ our Passover has been sacrificed,
alleluia;
therefore let us keep the feast with the
unleavened bread
of purity and truth, alleluia, alleluia.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Look upon your Church, O God,
with unflinching love and favour,
so that, renewed by the paschal mysteries,
she may come to the glory of the resurrection.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

