

The Sunday Missive -- April 17, 2022

The Feast of the Resurrection of Christ

Hymn 208 The strife is o'er, the battle done

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

The strife is o'er, the battle done, the victory of life is won;
The song of triumph has begun. Alleluia!

The powers of death have done their worst, but Christ their legions hath
dispersed: let shout of holy joy outburst. Alleluia!

The three sad days are quickly sped, he rises glorious from the dead:
All glory to our risen Head! Alleluia!

He closed the yawning gates of hell, the bars from heaven's high portals fell;
Let hymns of praise his triumphs tell! Alleluia!

Lord! by the stripes which wounded thee, from death's dread sting thy
servants free, that we may live and sing to thee. Alleluia!

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1HXG9m8vfo>

Alleluia! Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed, Alleluia!

The Collect of the Day

O God, who for our redemption gave your only-begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by his glorious resurrection delivered us from the power of our enemy: Grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Acts 10:34-43

Then Peter began to speak to them: “I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: how 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. We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not 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. He 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. All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

Psalm 118

Alleluia! Give thanks to the Lord* ***For God's love endures forever and ever.***

I called to the Lord in my distress* ***Who answered me and set me free.***

The Lord is at my side; I do not fear* ***What can mere humans do against me?***

It is better to take refuge in the Lord* ***Than to trust in humankind.***

It is better to take refuge in the Lord* ***Than to trust in princes and wealthy men.***

I was thrust down, thrust down and falling* ***But the Lord was my***

strength and my helper.

The Lord is my strength and my song* *My savior in times of trouble.*

And so there are shouts of joy* *In the tents of the just and merciful, Alleluia!*

1 Corinthians 15:9-28

For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.

Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ—whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have died in Christ have perished. If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” But when it says, “All things are put in subjection,” it is plain that this does not include the one who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who put all things in subjection under him, so that God may be all in all.

Hymn 178 Alleluia, Alleluia

Alleluia, Alleluia, Give thanks to the risen Lord,
Alleluia, Alleluia, give praise to His Name.

Jesus is Lord of all the earth; he is the King of creation.

Spread the good news o'er all the earth. Jesus has died and has risen.

We have been crucified with Christ; now we shall live forever.

God has proclaimed the just reward, Life for all men, Alleluia.

Come let us praise the living God, Joyfully sing to our Saviour.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4E0JaaXMPM>

John 20:1-18

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not

know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

He Vas Krazy -- Easter C

Christos Anesti -- Christ is risen! Alethos Anesti – Is risen indeed! That is the exchange you will hear on Easter morning among Christians in the East. Although everyone knows what it's about, they keep saying it to each other anyway. The suddenness and overwhelming power of death defied renders all explanation useless. Peter ran to the tomb, stooped to look in, saw the linen cloths, and went home, amazed at what had happened. Christ is Risen! Is risen indeed!

Welcome all of you to the one Holy, catholic and Apostolic Church on this glorious Easter morning. Thank you for choosing to celebrate with us the new creation of God's love in the risen Christ! We are here to tell and celebrate and glory in the story of Jesus of Nazareth, as whom God has created the means, the opportunity, and the obligation for humanity to live beyond fear, self-defense and self-interest into the immeasurable joy of confidence, availability and compassion. We will go home from here amazed at what has happened and with – if we keep ahold of it -- a lifetime vocation to use this wonderment for good.

The ancient rituals of this time of year, when nomads celebrated the move to summer pasturage and farmers glorified the new planting season, are older than history. Our Jewish spiritual ancestors saw in Spring a time to celebrate the complete change of life that came about when they escaped from Egypt at the Passover. No longer in bondage, they became free.

Now as Christians, we continue this tradition with a wholesale overhaul of our own – a spiritual Spring cleaning, when we admit to God, to ourselves and to each other, not only the exact nature of our wrongs, but also reiterate to one another the exact nature of God’s rights; God’s righteousness and glory. We accept that goodness, love, and grace are real – not only theoretically possible, but historically accurate. Jesus was indeed born. He indeed lived. He was killed by the people around him for being too theologically literal and thus politically subversive. He pointed out just how far from just and righteous were those in power. But on this day in history, today of all days, Jesus left his tomb, stunning friend and disempowering foe. Death no longer has dominion over him, nor over us who follow in his footsteps.

Today, all of us – if we are paying the slightest attention – are understandably concerned and indeed fearful about what will happen to civilization, here and around the world. It is not wrong if we woke up this Easter morning with our sense of joy tempered by trepidation. What God has proven in Jesus the Christ is that death and violence and ugliness have no victory; the Kingdom of God is coming. But it does take time. And it requires our effort.

Throughout his career as a teacher and preacher, Jesus referred to the Kingdom of Heaven. His behavior was an ongoing illustration of the Kingdom of Heaven. His every word was both invitation to and admonition about the Kingdom of Heaven. But today is different. Today, the stone is rolled away, the door is wide open, with no questions asked and no ticket necessary. As Madeline Kahn once memorably urged, “Wilkommen, Bienvenue, Welcome! ...Come on in!”

In another place, the lanes and byways on Easter morning ring out with cries of *Hristos Vozkrese!* To this the people joyfully reply: *Vo istina Vozkrese!* Yes, that’s Bulgarian, but when I hear that Christos vozkreze, I can’t help but think of the wise and treasured Frederick Buechner who wrote:

“If the world is sane, then Jesus is mad as a hatter, and the Last Supper was a mad tea party. The world says, ‘Mind your own business,’ and

Jesus says, 'There is no such thing as your own business;' the world says, 'Get,' and Jesus says, 'Give;' the world says, 'Law and order,' and Jesus says, 'Love.' In terms of this world's sanity, Jesus was crazy as a coot; and anybody who thinks they can follow him without being a little crazy too is laboring less under a cross than under a delusion."

So, Christos voz krese, and so must we be. This is the life to which we are invited. Humility and respect before one another, no matter the circumstances and even when it seems a little crazy. And this Easter morning, the story of Jesus of Nazareth is proof incontrovertible that such a life is not only wondrous, but real and possible.

There are three mysterious things we remember this week: the Eucharist, wherein we gratefully take into ourselves the great and gracious blessing that is Christ. Secondly, is the wondrous fact of con-celebration -- we do it together -- we are all involved or there is no communion. And finally, the new commandment: Love one another as I have loved you; to which we are mandated in every sense.

By God we have been given the freedom and to act in love; but also the bounden duty to act in love. If our desire is there, the ability will follow. We can, we must, and if we want to, we will. When we hear this story and are amazed and captivated like Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, we may indeed be called crazy tellers of idle tales, but we tell it out anyway through our lives. We have to go and do likewise, and maybe there will be Peters who will come and take a look for themselves. The story proves that no matter how painful things get down here in the valley of the shadow of life and death, the love of Christ enables us to rise to every occasion. Jesus has shown that, with love, the ultimate cruelty of crucifixion will only result in the ultimate healing of resurrection. This new news is the inspiration of our celebration today. Alleluia, Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Alleluia! However we say it, Christ is Risen. Christos Anesti. or Hristos Vozkrese, it all adds up to Hallelujah.

Hymn 199 Come, ye faithful raise the strain

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.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-J4ikNMZCBA&t=40s>

Now may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, through the power of the eternal covenant, make you eager in every good work to live in lovingkindness, ever working in you all that is well-pleasing in God's sight; and thus the blessing of God Almighty, Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer be with you and those whom you love this day and remain with you forever. Amen.