

## **The Sunday Missive – April 7, 2024 The Second Sunday in Eastertide**

### **Hymn 178 Alleluia, alleluia give thanks to the risen Lord**

Alleluia, Alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord,  
Alleluia, Alleluia, give praise to God's 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.

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

Alleluia, Alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord,  
Alleluia, Alleluia, give praise to God's Name.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DyPYJtxu8cE>

### **The Collect of the Day**

Almighty and everlasting God, who in the Paschal mystery established the new covenant of reconciliation: Grant that all who have been reborn into the fellowship of Christ's Body may show forth in their lives what they profess by their faith; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

### **Acts 4:32-35**

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought

the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

### **Psalm 133**

Oh, how good and pleasant it is\* ***When sisters and brothers live together in unity!***

It is like fine oil upon the head\* ***That runs down upon the chin***

That runs down upon the chin\* ***And runs down upon the collar of my robe.***

It is like the dew of Hermon\* ***That falls upon the hills of Zion.***

For there the Lord has ordained the blessing\* ***The promise of life for evermore.***

Praise to the Creator and to the Child\* ***And to the Holy Spirit,***

The God who was, and is, and is to come\* ***To the ages of ages, hallelujah!***

### **Second Lesson 1 John 1:1-2:2**

We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life-- this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us-- we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his

Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

### **Lift Every Voice and Sing Hymn 64 – I love to tell the story**

I love to tell the story of unseen things above,  
Of Jesus and His glory, of Jesus and His love.  
I love to tell the story, because I know it's true;  
It satisfies my longings as nothing else would do.

I love to tell the story; twill be my theme in glory.  
To tell the old, old story of Jesus and His love.

I love to tell the story, for those who know it best  
Seem hungering and thirsting to hear it, like the rest.  
And when, in scenes of glory, I sing the new, new song,  
'Twill be the old, old story that I have loved so long.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AB-KSNQdhaY>

### **John 20:19-31**

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of their persecutors, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

### **Tomorrow is Today -- Easter2B**

In preparation for a junket to Austria in a couple of weeks, I've been trying to learn something about her history which, for about 650 years was dominated, along with lots of other places, for varying lengths of time, by a family called Hapsburg. Among their many qualities, both good and for ill, was a tendency to ecumenism, promotion of self-government – to a point -- in the places they ruled, and tolerance – to a point .

The beginning of the end of their primacy can be said to have occurred during a struggle for various Italian regions they controlled. Those places were lost to Austria when her military commander, who happened also to be the emperor hesitated at a crucial time, whereupon his forces were overcome by the Prussians. This led to Prussia's growing strength in the latter half of the nineteenth century, thence to the eventual unification of Germany and thus made possible the ghastly events of the twentieth century. At the risk of both over-simplification and rosy retrospection, if Franz Joseph had acted more boldly, modern European history might have been very different, and maybe even a lot better, especially for the Jewish people. Here endeth today's history tale.

From a talk by Martin Luther King: "We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In the unfolding conundrum of life and history, there is such a thing as being too late. Procrastination is still the thief of time. We may cry out desperately for time to pause in her passage, but time is deaf to every plea and rushes on. Over the bleached bones and jumbled residue of numerous civilizations are written the pathetic words: "Too late." There is an invisible book of life that faithfully records our vigilance or our neglect. We still have a choice today: nonviolent coexistence or violent co-annihilation. We must move past indecision to action. Now let us begin; now let us rededicate ourselves to the long and bitter—but beautiful—struggle for a new world."

Such language! Not scripture, but it sounds holy -- and such good news; we have a purpose! Dr. King's talk, at The Riverside Church was entitled "Beyond Viet Nam." It was the climax of a public rally against the war, that took place on April the Fourth, 1967 and it became one of his most admired speeches. The choice, says King is between "nonviolent coexistence," the rule of law in peace and civility, and the sharing of resources – what a couple of weeks ago we talked about as a hard new world to bring about – and the alternative: "violent co-annihilation," a condition reported and recorded in our newspapers every single day.

True rule of law is of course not based on whatever it takes to control a diverse population but on our most forthright efforts to be just. As a great man said, "Good government is conservative with money and liberal with people." For example, as we are now all too slowly coming to admit, our criminal justice system is good neither with money nor with people. Nor is it much good at reducing crime, especially among the privileged. Thus, it is not a true rule of law. It is the result of poor and tragic choices, and abuse of power.

This is the choice: rule of law and sharing of resources, King's nonviolent coexistence, or violent co-annihilation, not only in our own wildly over-armed and security-crazed society, but through the horrors of misinformation, fearmongering, terrorism, invasion and genocide we read about every day, at home and abroad.

Sometimes it's hard to believe we do have choices. But our human existence hinges most radically on this one reality: we have a choice. 'God so loved the world that she gave her only daughters the power of choice, that whosoever tried their best to make good choices would not perish – though they die.' "We must move past indecision into action," King says, actions, as in those things that speak louder and originate deeper than words. Yes, often our decision to choose well is the only action we can take in the face of overpowering violence in its many forms. And sadly, sometimes we even have to be violent ourselves in order to put a stop to violence done by others. But there will be no martyrdom in a just society.

Surely God's most holy gift to us is embodied in Jesus the Christ. As John says in his letter, that which "was from the beginning, we have heard, have seen with our eyes, and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life, was revealed to us so that our joy may be complete: that God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. And whoever obeys his word, whoever strives to choose justice, rule of law and sharing of resources, truly in this person, in these people, the love of God may reach perfection.

How can such great things happen to the likes of us, just by way of our coming to choose ways of peace? Thomas Merton waxes mystical: "A door opens in the center of our being and we seem to fall through it into immense depths which, although they are infinite, are all accessible to us. God touches us with a touch that is emptiness and empties us. God moves us with a simplicity that simplifies us."

Or, as C. S. Lewis put it, "We wake up."

That simplicity is evident in the acts of love and mercy people instinctively perform when they have given themselves up to lives of faith. Not long ago, a friend from high school, Rennie died from raging cancers after years of diagnoses, treatments, remissions and hoping. The untimeliness of her passing was tragic and terribly sad for her family and for everybody who knew her. But the choices she made over the past few years: to spend festive times together, to raise money and awareness in cancer walks and networking, to nourish and cherish brave hope and rigorous healing strategies, to love each other

as selflessly as they could in the face of agonizing uncertainty, these faithful choices made of their family a community of love that inspired everybody who knows them to value life and love more highly.

The process of choosing can be, must be at once mystical and practical, uncertain and yet concrete, humbling and joyous: "Put your finger here and see my hands," says Jesus, "reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe."

Here is Richard Tarnas, who describes our choices: "I believe our task is to develop a moral and aesthetic imagination deep enough and wide enough to encompass the contradictions of our time and history: the tremendous loss and tragedy as well as greatness and nobility, an imagination capable of recognizing that where there is light there is shadow, that out of hubris and fall can come moral regeneration, out of suffering and death, resurrection and rebirth." We can imagine that; We can choose it.

### **Hymn 179 – Welcome, happy morning!**

"Welcome, happy morning!" age to age shall say:  
Hell today is vanquished, heaven is won today!  
Lo! the dead is living, God for evermore!  
Him their true Creator, all his works adore!

"Welcome, happy morning!" age to age shall say.

Earth her joy confesses, clothing her for spring,  
All fresh gifts returned with her returning King:  
Bloom in every meadow, leaves on every bough,  
Speak his sorrow ended, hail his triumph now.

Months in due succession, days of lengthening light,  
Hours and passing moments praise thee in their flight.  
Brightness of the morning, sky and fields and sea,  
Vanquisher of darkness, bring their praise to thee.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQiWhoS50fU>

## **My bad hearing does not trouble me here**

My bad hearing  
Does not trouble me here.  
In the country  
Every tree  
Seems to talk to me, saying, "Holy! Holy!"  
Inside the forest is enchantment  
Which expresses all things ?  
Sweet peace of the forest!

Almighty, I am happy  
In the woods,  
Blessed  
In the woods,  
Every tree has a voice  
Through thee.

O God, what glory  
In such a woodland place!  
On the heights is peace ?  
Peace to serve thee ?

How glad am I  
Once again  
To be able to wander  
In forest and thicket  
Among the trees,  
The green things and the rocks.  
No mortal can love  
The country as I do;  
For woods and trees and rocks  
Return the echo  
A man desires.

Ludwig van Beethoven