

Sunday, Apr 21, 2019

SOLEMNITY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD (EASTER SUNDAY)

Roll away the stone

Each year at this time we gather with friends in faith to pay a mystical visit to a cemetery in Jerusalem. We go up to an abandoned tomb and peer in. What do we see? Nothing. There's no one buried here. In fact, the church gathers every year at this spot to affirm there's nobody here. Isn't this odd behavior, to visit an empty grave? Yet it's not the empty tomb that matters. It's what happened just before this tomb became irrelevant that counts. We come here to pledge our allegiance to that. *He is risen!*

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 10:34a, 37-43; Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8; Victimae Paschali Laudes; John 20:1-9 or Luke 24:1-12 (42, 41) or, at an afternoon or evening Mass Luke 24:13-35 (46). "*So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb.*"

Monday, Apr 22, 2019

MONDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF EASTER

Take care of your mother

Catholicism is rich in observances, but here's one outside our tradition that Catholic teaching also invites us to join: Earth Day, celebrated annually on this date since 1970. The event, which kick-started the environmental movement, is now the largest secular observance in the world, with 193 countries demonstrating support for environmental protection. From the biblical mandate to care for God's creation to Pope Francis' recent encyclical on environmentalism, you are directed by your faith to heed the call to "think globally, act locally."

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 2:14, 22-33; Victimae Paschali Laudes (42); Matthew 28:8-15 (261). "*Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went away quickly from the tomb, fearful yet overjoyed.*"

Tuesday, Apr 23, 2019

TUESDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF EASTER

Rise up from sorrow

Easter is a season of joy, but it's not always joyous for everyone. Perhaps a loved one has recently died or the anniversary of their death is at hand. How do you handle death and sorrow at a time of new life and joy? Mary Magdalene grieved mightily at the tomb of Jesus, but he helped her let go of his earthly life, which had already given way to his resurrected life. With eyes of faith we, too, can begin to let go of the earthly presence of a loved one, trusting that they also live on in the loving presence of God.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 2:36-41; Victimae Paschali Laudes (42); John 20:11-18 (262). "*Jesus said to her, 'Stop holding on to me.'*"

Wednesday, Apr 24, 2019

WEDNESDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF EASTER

Break bread together

A retreat director, preaching on the story of Emmaus, told this story about recognizing Christ in our midst, anywhere and in anyone. It had been a long day and the first-graders were running their teacher ragged. The dismissal bell rang and the children sped out the door. The teacher shepherded them out, then sat wearily on a bench watching them go. A child waiting for her big brother to walk her home watched the teacher, then wandered over. She sat beside her and carefully opened her lunch bag. She unwrapped the sandwich and, with her small hands, broke it in

two. She looked up at the teacher and handed her half, saying, "I get tired and hungry after school, too. Here."

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 3:1-10; Victimae Paschali Laudes (42); Luke 24:13-35 (263). "*He took bread, said the blessing . . . and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him.*"

Thursday, Apr 25, 2019

THURSDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF EASTER

Happy Alleluia!

In virtually all liturgies during Easter, the refrain of the responsorial psalm may be replaced by *Alleluia!* For Christians it has become an Easter word, so much so that in the Polish language, for example, rather than "Happy Easter" the people declare "Happy Alleluia!" During Lent we fast not only from food but from the exultant joy of this word, keeping silent, letting it build within. Then, at the Easter Vigil, the *Alleluia* bursts forth! Before the gospel the deacon sings *Alleluia!* for the first time in six weeks, in an elaborate melody, three times, each time in a higher key, and each time repeated by the assembly. Sing *Alleluia* today in and out of the shower! Shout it! Listen to Handel's setting in the *Messiah*. Wish someone "Happy Alleluia!"

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 3:11-26; Victimae Paschali Laudes (42); Luke 24:35-48 (264). "*You are witnesses of these things.*"

Friday, Apr 26, 2019

FRIDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF EASTER

Gone fishing

In times of loss and grief, we often find comfort in doing something that is familiar. Once we attend to the details of burial, we face each new day as best we can, seeking the comfort of mindless routine and doing things we must do in order to keep on going. Thus, in this week after Jesus' death, it is not unusual to find his sad and fearful disciples returning to the sea to work the nets of their fishing boats. Though our loved ones may not appear to us on the seashore, faith does tell us that they have found new life and continue to be with us from among God's communion of saints. In prayer today, remember a loved one who has died and ask for the grace of their intercession.

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 4:1-12; Victimae Paschali Laudes (42); John 21:1-14 (265). "*Come, have breakfast.*"

Saturday, Apr 27, 2019

SATURDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF EASTER

Sing out the good news!

"That Christ is truly risen from the dead we know. Victorious King, Thy mercy show!" Thus ends the *Victimae Paschali Laudes*, a medieval church hymn traditionally chanted during Easter liturgies. A more fitting conclusion could not have been written—rejoicing in Christ's victory over death and in the same breath asking for his mercy. If any Christian doubted the need for the mercy of God, the events recounted on Good Friday should have been enough to refresh their memory. Fortunately Christ's victory is also a victory over human sinfulness. Rejoice and break into song!

TODAY'S READINGS: Acts 4:13-21; Victimae Paschali Laudes (42); Mark 16:9-15 (266). "*When Jesus had risen . . . he appeared first to Mary Magdalene.*"

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time



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