

ECHOING GOD'S WORD
in
THE CATHOLIC FAITH COMMUNITY
EASTER TRIDUUM
APRIL 17-20, 2025

Easter Lectionary Readings:

Acts 10:34, 37-43	We know him because we have experienced him.
Psalm 118	This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice!
Colossians 3:1-45	Since we already share in the resurrection, let us be worthy.
John 20:1-9	Those closest to Jesus are witnesses that the tomb is empty.

READ THE SCRIPTURES:

John:

In each Gospel, women are the first to go to the tomb. They are portrayed as having the most devotion and respect for Jesus. They were not paralyzed by fear and remorse as were the men. To these women belongs the privilege of first witnessing to the Risen Lord. The male disciples find only the empty tomb. They do not know the full meaning of the tomb being empty. John says it is because the Holy Spirit has not yet come. He records the experience of the “beloved disciple,” not the writer himself apparently. This beloved one can see the meaning of the empty tomb. He is given to the community as the model of Christian faith. He has not seen yet, but he has believed. This disciple comes to believe even though he has not yet seen the Risen Lord. John wants his community to know that they, too, can come to believe even though they have not seen the physical evidence of the resurrection.

The Gospels are very honest about the disbelief of the disciples. These texts do not whitewash or gloss over the faults of those early Christian leaders. They were slow to believe. Their grief and their fear stood in the way of faith. Blinded by their own limited expectations, they were still struggling to comprehend the power and meaning of God’s purposes. Believing in the Risen Lord would mean that they had to accept a new horizon for God’s purpose, a new vision of God’s purposes for them, too. Their lives would have to be powerfully transformed by the Spirit of the Risen One. They could no longer live as before, given only to earthly realities.

We, too, are slow to believe: we fear having to live up to the consequences of our transformation. The price to be paid is that we must become responsible for the good news that we have heard. We must live by the standards of the One who is risen. We can no longer live in the arena of sin and death. Once we have seen the Light, we cannot live in darkness any longer. The Church needs to move beyond its fears and into the arena of light in faith. The Church community must venture into the area of faith where it becomes responsible for what it has seen in faith. The Church comes to realize that it must go out to proclaim the good news of the resurrection.

The resurrection is not merely a historical event that took place 2,000 years ago. It is also the new life that fills the hearts and the hands of all who believe in the Risen Lord. We all today need to be fully alive and fully engaged in bringing new hope and new life to the poor, the downtrodden, the alienated, the outcasts of our times. We become responsible for doing the works of new life in Christ. The resurrection of Christ is without fruit if it does not become our resurrection in works that are truly alive with the Spirit of Christ. Christ did not rise from the grave for his own sake. He rose so

that we might live and do deeds, bearing new life to the people and to the world where we live. The fulfillment of Christ's resurrection must be found in our own Spirit-filled lives in this world.

Acts:

Peter brings the good news of salvation in Christ Jesus to the household of the Gentile centurion. Even before Paul was sent to the Gentiles, Peter had already made the breakthrough whereby the good news was not for Jews only; the Gospel is also addressed to the Gentile world. The sermon of Peter is taken from the preaching of the early Christian community. It is a summary of Christian beliefs addressed to those about to be baptized. The message is even now formulated in an organized and programmatic manner: 1. God's salvation comes through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. 2. All are called to repent and accept that gift. 3. The witnesses are "those who ate and drank with him." Whenever we celebrate the Eucharist, even today, we too become those witnesses, since we do in fact "eat and drink with him."

Colossians:

The author points out that Christ's resurrection has led to his being enthroned "at the right hand of the Father in heaven," an expression that asserts the divine right of Jesus and his equality with the Father. Jesus shares the glory and power that belongs to God alone by right. Through baptism, all those who believe have been called to a special destiny: glory and power for everlasting life in the presence of God. For us, all this will be completed in the final coming of the Lord.

REFLECTION

The Triduum (The Three Days) should be spent in prayer and contemplation. Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday are not ordinary days. We can only stand in awe before the Lord. It is better for us to stand in wonder at the marvels of God's love and mercy on our behalf.

The sacred triduum constitutes the holiest of all the days in the Christian calendar. Lent ends on the evening of Holy Thursday. The season of Lent has been a time of enlightenment and purification for the elect and for us who are being re-enlightened and repurified each year. With the three days, we enter into an entirely different space. Not-Lent, now!

Holy Thursday: As we celebrate the mysteries of the Last Supper of the Lord, we are challenged to undertake our ministries of service in God's world. If the Lord washed our feet, are we not expected to perform the very humblest services for each other? Our work in the world can be sacred if we take up the task that God has given us with eagerness and enthusiasm. Jesus kneels at our side, washing with us the grime of sin from the foundations of his Father's creation.

Good Friday: Today marks the Church's experience of dying with Christ. We, too, are being crucified. We are called into total surrender to God's will, a complete emptying of self, of self-will, or selfishness; death to all that is sinful. We can only wail at our condition. We cry out to God from the depth of our desolation. The Solemn Intercessions afford us our only hope. We raise our voices from the despair of the grave, calling out for mercy, for ourselves and for all the world. The most ancient practice of the Church was that only the bishop took Communion on this day, and he from the bread of pre-sanctification (made holy the day before); nothing is holy on this day. Eucharist is not celebrated; the faithful can only watch in prayer and in repentance. They fast, even from the Bread of Life. Since the reforms of the liturgy of Holy Week in the 1950's, we are allowed to take Communion on this day; but then, only, like the bishop, from the bread "pre-sanctified."

Holy Saturday: This day does not exist in the Church's calendar. It is a vacant day. Nothing is done that day. The Church waits at the tomb. We are like the living dead, walking around in

darkness, with no Lord in sight. We feel the murkiness of the grave. So, we clean the church; we clean our homes. We do not know what else to do!

(See: The Catechism #1168-1171)

PRAYER

BLESSING OF THE FONT OF BAPTISM AT THE EASTER VIGIL

Father of mercy, through these waters of baptism you have filled us with new life as your very own children.

BLESSED BE GOD!

From all who are baptized in water and the Holy Spirit, you have formed one people, united in your Son, Jesus Christ.

BLESSED BE GOD!

You have set us free and filled our hearts with the Spirit of your love, that we may live in your peace.

BLESSED BE GOD!

You call those who have been baptized to announce the good news of Jesus Christ to people everywhere.

BLESSED BE GOD!

You have called your children to this cleansing water and new birth, that by sharing the faith of your Church they may have eternal life.

Bless this water in which they will be baptized.

We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.