

FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY



10th – 15th April 2023

Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and on those in the tombs bestowing life! — From the Easter liturgy of St. John Chrysostom used by the Orthodox and by the Eastern Rite Catholics

Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ, let us worship the holy Lord Jesus, the only Sinless One! We venerate Thy Cross, O Christ, and Thy Holy Resurrection we praise and glorify; for Thou art our God, and we know no other than Thee; we call on Thy name. Come, all you faithful, let us venerate Christ's Holy Resurrection! For, behold, through the Cross joy has come into all the world. Let us ever bless the Lord, praising His Resurrection. By enduring the Cross for us, He destroyed death by death!

— From Hymn to the Resurrection from the Orthodox Liturgy

Monday in Easter Week

Collect

O God, who give constant increase to your Church by new offspring: grant that your servants may hold fast in their lives to the Sacraments they have received in faith. 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.

Reading

Acts 2:14. 22-33 (RSV)

Peter preaches the Resurrection on the Day of Pentecost

Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, 'Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words.²².... Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—²³ this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴ But God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it. ²⁵ For David says concerning him,

**'I saw the Lord always before me,
for he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken;
²⁶ therefore my heart was glad, and my tongue rejoiced;
moreover my flesh will dwell in hope.
²⁷ For you will not abandon my soul to Hades,
nor let your Holy One see corruption.
²⁸ You have made known to me the ways of life;
you will make me full of gladness with your presence.'**

²⁹ 'Brethren, I may say to you confidently of the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne, ³¹ he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. ³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³ Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear.

Reflection

IN TODAY'S First Reading, we encounter Peter, leading of the apostolic band, preaching in Jerusalem. It's the Day of Pentecost, the day when the apostles received the gift of the Holy Spirit 'like the rush of a mighty wind' and with what appeared as 'tongues of fire' (Acts 2:2, 3). Frightened men are emboldened to proclaim the Gospel of the Resurrection.

We might be surprised that, in a city like Jerusalem, there would be anyone who hadn't heard about the Death and Resurrection of Jesus. After all, we are speaking of what were recent events in a particular location. But in the Pentecost account we hear that there are Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and a whole list of other places. At the time of the Pentecost festival, Jews from the diaspora would crowd into Jerusalem. So begins the Gospel mission to people of every country and language.

Peter has something of a hard job to do. There were plenty of clever interpreters of Jewish scripture and tradition. How would he, a fisherman, manage to speak into this culture with an authentic message, re-interpreting some Scriptural texts to show that they pointed to the Good News of Jesus Christ? Our passage comes after the prophecy of Joel, with which Peter begins, and we see Peter tackling the difficult message that the Messiah who was slain is resurrected to life. This he does using Psalm 16, today's psalm, as an explanation of how God rescues his Holy One from Hades and preserves his body incorrupt.

Tuesday in Easter Week

Collect

O God, who have bestowed on us paschal remedies, endow your people with heavenly gifts, so that possessed of perfect freedom, they may rejoice in heaven over what gladdens them now on earth. 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.

Reading

John 20:11-18 (RSV)

Christ appears to Mary Magdalen

¹¹ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb; ¹² and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. ¹³ They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' ¹⁴ Saying

this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?' 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.' ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, 'Mary.' She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rab-bo'ni!' (which means Teacher). ¹⁷ Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' ¹⁸ Mary Mag'dalen went and said to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord'; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Reflection

ON EASTER DAY the Gospel told us of Mary Magdalen's bewilderment on when, coming to the tomb on the first day of the week, whilst it was still dark, she saw the stone rolled away. She was frightened and fetched Peter and John, who investigated further and provided us with the two male witnesses (as required for testimony by Jewish Law). Subsequently, as we hear in today's Gospel, Mary encounters Christ and it is the first of the Resurrection appearances. There is some strangeness: she mistakes the figure looking out of the mist of the garden and thinks he is the gardener; only when he speaks and calls her by name does she recognise him. There is then the famous *noli tangere* exchange: Jesus warns Mary not to cling to him – not to touch him – because he has 'not yet ascended to the Father'. One explanation of this is that, though Christ rose 'on the third day', that is, Sunday, early on Sunday morning is at best only a couple of days since Good Friday afternoon. In short, this 'Resurrection appearance' might be as yet incomplete. It is the Sunday evening, when the disciples are gathered together at supper in the Upper Room, when the Risen Christ appears to them.

Wednesday in Easter Week

Collect

O God, who gladden us year by year with the solemnity of the Lord's Resurrection, graciously grant that, by celebrating these present festivities, we may merit through them to reach eternal joys. 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.

Reading

Luke 24:13-35 (RSV)

The Road to Emmaus

¹³ That very day two of them were going to a village named Emma'us, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ And he said to them, 'What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?' And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ Then one of them, named Cle'opas, answered him, 'Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?' ¹⁹ And he said to them, 'What things?' And they said to him, 'Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. ²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened. ²² Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning ²³ and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said; but him they did not see.' ²⁵ And he said to them, 'O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?' ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

²⁸ So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He appeared to be going further, ²⁹ but they constrained him, saying, 'Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.' So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight. ³² They said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?' ³³ And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them, ³⁴ who said, 'The Lord has risen

indeed, and has appeared to Simon!’ ³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Reflection

THE ENCOUNTER on the road to Emmaus on the evening of the first Easter Day is one of the loveliest of the Gospel stories. It is perfectly told: the walk of two bereaved and bewildered disciples; an encounter with a mysterious stranger to whom they pour out their grief; his counsel and encouragement, as he explains the Scriptures to them; the *mane nobiscum* (remain with us) incident; the meal and the discovery of the Risen Christ ‘in the breaking of the bread’. It is not only a journey of exploration and discovery – another instance of the darkness of unbelief to the light of faith – but an acting out of the Eucharist. In the Eucharist, where two or three are gathered together (Matt 18:20) ‘on the Way’, we discover Jesus accompanying us. He expounds the Scriptures – the Liturgy of the Word – and we find our hearts burning within us. We prepare the Supper, inviting him to remain with us. We then discover him in the breaking of the bread. The eucharistic liturgy does not end there: we find ourselves impelled to go out and tell others the Good News. In this way the Resurrection Faith is spread and communicated to the world.

Thursday in Easter Week

Collect

O God, who have united the many nations in confessing your name, grant that those reborn in the font of Baptism may be one in the faith of their hearts and the homage of their deeds. 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.

Reading

Luke 24:35-48 (RSV)

The Risen Christ again appears

The disciples told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

³⁶ As they were saying this, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, ‘Peace to you.’ ³⁷ But they were startled and frightened, and supposed that they saw a spirit. ³⁸ And he said to them, ‘Why are you troubled, and why do questionings rise in your hearts? ³⁹ See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has not

flesh and bones as you see that I have.’ ⁴⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹ And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered, he said to them, ‘Have you anything here to eat?’ ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate before them.

⁴⁴ Then he said to them, ‘These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled.’ ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶ and said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.’

Reflection

FOLLOWING the Emmaus Road encounter, yesterday’s Gospel, St Luke tells us of another appearance. This time the Risen Christ appears to the assembled disciples in Jerusalem. It is the final appearance in the Gospel itself but St Luke tells us in Acts that Jesus appeared to his followers for forty days, and as a vision to Stephen (Acts 7:55-56) and Paul (Acts 9:1-9, 27). This is no ghost: before the Ascension the Risen Christ speaks to them and eats broiled fish (Luke 24:42-43). He shows them his hands and his feet. These are details similar to those recorded by St John (20-21). St Luke is telling us – in sequence – that the passion prophecies of Jesus were fulfilled (the Empty Tomb), that Moses and the prophets had foretold the suffering and resurrection of the Messiah (Emmaus Road) and now, in his address to them in the Upper Room, that it is the Risen Lord who teaches them (and us) about the resurrection and the forgiveness of sins and empowers them (and us) to be witnesses of these things, which are to be proclaimed to the nations (the mission which ensues in the Acts of the Apostles, St Luke’s second volume).

Friday in Easter Week

Collect

Almighty ever-living God, who gave us the Paschal Mystery in the covenant you established for reconciling the human race: so dispose our minds, we pray, that what we celebrate by professing the faith, we may express in deeds. 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.

Reading

John 21:1-14 (RSV)

The Risen Christ appears to Seven Disciples

After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tibe'rias; and he revealed himself in this way. ² Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathan'a-el of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zeb'edee, and two others of his disciples were together. ³ Simon Peter said to them, 'I am going fishing.' They said to him, 'We will go with you.' They went out and got into the boat; but that night they caught nothing.

⁴ Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵ Jesus said to them, 'Children, have you any fish?' They answered him, 'No.' ⁶ He said to them, 'Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.' So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, for the quantity of fish. ⁷ That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his clothes, for he was stripped for work, and sprang into the sea. ⁸ But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off.

⁹ When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish lying on it, and bread. ¹⁰ Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.' ¹¹ So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them; and although there were so many, the net was not torn. ¹² Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.' Now none of the disciples dared ask him, 'Who are you?' They knew it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. ¹⁴ This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Reflection

BACK with the Resurrection accounts in St John's Gospel, we find in Chapter 21 what many scholars regard as an 'Afterword' or Epilogue. The Gospel seemed to have ended at Chapter 20:29: Jesus' appearance to the disciples in the Upper Room for the second Sunday evening running. All the manuscripts, however, contain Chapter 21 with its two further episodes. The first (verses 1-14) is a third appearance of the Risen Christ, this time by the Sea of Tiberias. The second is the rehabilitation of Peter. Today the fishermen-apostles have gone back to fishing, their livelihood. They catch nothing: their life's work before they met Jesus is now turning out to be

entirely unproductive. When they come once more under the sway of the Lord, they catch so much fish that it breaks their nets. In fact there are 153 fish altogether. Lots of theories about this ranging from the actual number: somebody counted them to this being the number of fish species known in the ancient world. Whatever the interpretation, clearly the apostles are called once more to be 'fishers of men' rather than 'fishermen'. We might make something of the breakfast – bread and fish both being highly symbolic and even eucharistic – but most important that here we have no ghost but One, who in his Resurrection body, can eat and drink.

Saturday in Easter Week

Collect

O God, who by the abundance of your grace give increase to the peoples who believe in you: look with favour on those you have chosen and clothe with blessed immortality those reborn through the Sacrament of Baptism. 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.

Reading

Mark 16:9-15 (RSV)

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

⁹ Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Mag'dalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. ¹⁰ She went out and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept. ¹¹ But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.

Jesus Appears to Two Disciples

¹² After this he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. ¹³ And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them.

Jesus Commissions the Disciples

¹⁴ Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they sat at table; and he upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. ¹⁵ And he said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation.'

Reflection

MANY scholars think that St Mark's Gospel, clearly the work of a single author, ended at 16:8

And [the women] went out and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to any one, for they were afraid.

If that were so the women would have disobeyed the young man at the sepulchre – presumably an angel – who instructed them to report what they had seen – the Empty Tomb – to the disciples and Peter. Old manuscripts give us three different endings to the Gospel and the best attested of them, sometimes called 'the Marcan Appendix' or 'the Longer Ending' is what we read as today's Gospel. The truth of the Resurrection gradually dawns on the women and on the disciples and finally Jesus appears to the eleven, upbraids them for their unbelief, and commissions them to go and preach the Easter Faith.

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