

The Sunday Missive – March 31, 2024
The Feast of the Resurrection – Easter Sunday

Hymn 175 *Hail thee, festival day*

Hail thee, festival day! blest day that art hallowed forever,
Day whereon Christ arose, breaking the kingdom of death

Lo, the fair beauty of earth, from the death of the winter arising!
Every good gift of the year now with its Master returns:

He who was nailed to the cross is Lord and the ruler of nature;
All things created on earth sing to the glory of God:

Daily the loveliness grows, adorned with glory of blossom;
Heaven her gates unbars, flinging her increase of light:

Rise from the grave now, O Lord, who art author of life and creation.
Treading the pathway of death, life thou bestowest on all:

God the Creator, the Lord, who rulest the earth and the heavens,
Guard us from harm without, cleanse us from evil within:

Jesus the health of the world, enlighten our minds, thou Redeemer,
Son of the Father supreme, only-begotten of God:

Spirit of life and of power, now flow in us, fount of our being,
Light that dost lighten all, life that in all dost abide:

Praise to the Giver of good! Thou Love who art author of concord,
Pour out thy balm on our souls, order our ways in thy peace:

Hail thee, festival day! blest day that art hallowed forever,
Day whereon Christ arose, breaking the kingdom of death

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uzk-2RManE8>

The Collect of the Day

Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of the Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by your life-giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Isaiah 25:6-9

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.

And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever.

Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken.

It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Psalm 118

Alleluia! Give thanks to the Lord* *God's love endures for ever 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 to 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.***

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

Acts 10:34-43

Peter began to speak to Cornelius and the other Gentiles: "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."

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!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGVazujx9Lc>

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.

A New Truth – Easter B

Hallelujah, Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed! As the Dinka say, even amongst their pain and suffering in South Sudan, “Miete piou de jon de rot!” As the Ukrainians say, even in the midst of their suffering at the hands of invaders, Khrystos voskres; Christ is risen voistynu voskres! – is risen indeed! Welcome to church on this fine and glorious Easter morning, here where our lives are altogether more fortunate. As the psalmist insists, “This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it. For God so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten child into the world to do whatever was necessary to appeal to humankind in the name of peace. Preaching wasn’t sufficient, even healing wasn’t sufficient. But overcoming death – that made the joyful noise heard around the world, a sound that reverberates here in this place on this Easter morning and forevermore.

As the women ran from the empty tomb to tell their friends, so we turn to one another and say, “Happy Easter!” To paraphrase what a wag once wrote of the origins of Jewish holidays, “They tried to kill him, they failed; let’s eat!” “For you have been a refuge to the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat. When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm, when the noise of enemies was like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds and the song of the ruthless was stilled.

“On this mountain, the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, Lo, this is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in our salvation.”

What are these terrible storms and noisy enemies? We each of us have own list, with anything and everything that threatens to keep us from lives of peace, charity and joy, anything that threatens justice and decency. As Richard Rohr observes, “Christ crucified is all of the hidden, private, tragic pain of history made public and given over to God.”

And what are the rich foods that Isaiah extols, rich foods filled with marrow, and well-aged wines strained clear? “Christ resurrected is all of that private, ungrieved, unnoted suffering received, loved and transformed by an all-caring God. How else could we have any kind of cosmic hope? How else could we not die of sadness for what humanity has done to itself and is doing to one another?” We have seen the Moabites, and they are us. “Jesus is the blueprint, the plan, the pattern revealed in one body and moment of history to reveal the meaning of all of history and each of our lives. The cross is the emblem of what we do to one another and to God. The resurrection is the banner of what God does to us in return.”

“All through the Bible, in both Torah and Gospels,” writes Madeleine L’Engle, “comes the message of blessing: that it is the vocation of the people of God to bless as well as to be blessed, and to turn away wrath with a soft answer — a softness that is not flabby, but which has the power of meekness. Easter is the most brilliant of all blessings. It is almost too brilliant to be contemplated, like looking directly into the sun. We are burned and blinded by life.”

“I have seen the Lord,” exclaims Mary. She believes, because she has seen the Lord. Therefore, we’re having a party. As Sam Cooke sang, “Cokes are in the icebox; popcorn’s on the table...” These confirmed

and corroborated and celebrated sightings of Jesus by his followers change only one thing in the nature of our existence, but that one change changes everything. It's been said that all each of us really wants are something to do, someone to love and something to look forward to. Jesus gives us all this. Our earthly lives are God's commodity, God's currency. How much of this precious substance is misspent in sadness, self-destruction and violence – each day's news brings us stories of more. But today we know for certain that the power for goodness continues beyond earthly life. It is not gone from our hearts, even when things are out of our hands. Because Jesus was lifted up, so can we be also. We can become citizens of a different society, another culture from the one we have grown used to. Our response to God's invitation: *Timshel*, "Thou mayest," catapults us into the realm of becoming. Our desire to be connected with that which is timeless is fulfilled in the living Christ. Our hearts now beat with a sense of connectedness and hope, our voices now sing joyful psalms that say, "We shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord."

So, whether we rise up saying "Miete piou de jon de rot," "Khrystos voskres" or "Welcome happy morning," the truth of this day persists beyond our imaginings: Hallelujah, Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed!

Hymn 207 *Jesus Christ is risen today*

Jesus Christ is risen today, our triumphant holy day, Alleluia!
Who did once, upon the cross, suffer to redeem our loss, Alleluia!

Hymns of praise then let us sing unto Christ, our heavenly King,
Who endured the cross and grave, sinners to redeem and save,

But the pains which he endured, our salvation have procured, Alleluia!
Now above the sky he's King, where the angels ever sing, Alleluia!

Sing we to our God above, Alleluia! praise eternal as his love, Alleluia!
Praise him, all ye heavenly host, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Alleluia!

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

**Easter lilies are given to
The Glory of God by:**

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