

Easter Sunday – April 5, 2026 – Good Shepherd Parish

Scripture Reading: Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Peter proceeded to speak and said: "You know what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power. He went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree. This man God raised on the third day and granted that he be visible, not to all the people, but to us, the witnesses chosen by God in advance, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commissioned us to preach to the people and testify that he is the one appointed by God as judge of the living and the dead. To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone who believes in him will receive forgiveness of sins through his name.

Psalm: Ps 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

R. (24) This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,
for his mercy endures forever.
Let the house of Israel say,
"His mercy endures forever."

R. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.

"The right hand of the LORD has struck with power;
the right hand of the LORD is exalted.
I shall not die, but live,
and declare the works of the LORD.

R. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.

The stone which the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.
By the LORD has this been done;
it is wonderful in our eyes.

R. This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad.

Scripture Reading: Colossians 3:1-4

Brothers and sisters: If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ your life appears, then you too will appear with him in glory.

or

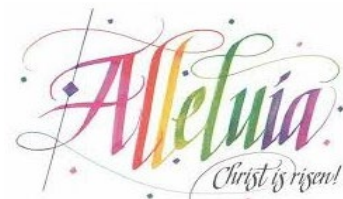
Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 5:6b-8

Brothers and sisters: Do you not know that a little yeast leavens all the dough? Clear out the old yeast, so that you may become a fresh batch of dough, inasmuch as you are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. Therefore, let us celebrate the feast, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Gospel: John 20:1-9

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him." So Peter and the other disciple went out and came to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; he bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in. When Simon Peter arrived after him, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered his head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place. Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead.

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INVITATION TO PRAY

Pause for a few moments of silence and enter more deeply into the presence of God.

Proclaim the Scriptures out loud.

As you listen to the scriptures be attentive to a word, a phrase, a question, an image, or a feeling that emerges. Reflect on this quietly or share it aloud.

INVITATION TO REFLECT

Night's dark soul stirs. Chirps of life tug at its ear. Just the smallest candle of light peeps through its shadows. This is the balance-point of time. Resurrection - Original sin was not really a good or blessed event. Good Friday had tempted us to guilt—about his wounds, about our sins. About his arms, branded by hurts. He uses them today to hold us, to enfold us. His wounds know somehow the shape of our small selves. Mothering Christ. At Easter Vigil the cantor sings:

*O certe necessarium Adae peccatum
quod Christi morte deletum est!
O felix culpa, quae talem ac tantum meruit habere Redemptorem!**
Oh truly necessary sin of Adam,
blotted out by the death of Christ!
O blessed fault, which won so great a redeemer!

Singing in praise of sin? Even though Christ's death has taken their sin away, is it right to rejoice about sin? Original sin was not really a good or blessed event. Nor is our selfish penchant for misdeed. Yet we rejoice. Without sin the reason for Christ's coming would have been absent. With it, Christ's healed arms can sweep us up, comfort and absolve and hold us. So we are blessed beyond words. In its midst, night carries the promise of light. In their revolt, sins carry the pledge of forgiveness. O truly blessed night in which earth is wedded to heaven and humans to God! The light is coming. Several rows of people have their candles lit. Over there, several more. Soon half the church awakens to Christ's gentle light. Then all. Morning has eased their faces into daylight, into the soft, humble glow. Christ became the night. Christ is the light.

*The Latin texts are from the *Exultet*, an ancient chant sung during the Easter Vigil. It is traditionally sung by the deacon after the Paschal candle has been lit and the clergy have processed to the altar.

INVITATION TO GROUP SHARING

1. What is the significance of the word "witness," in the sentence, "We are witnesses of all that he did"? Peter uses it both as a noun (meaning "observer") and a verb (meaning "corroborate," "testify"). It is something you can be (how are you a witness?) and do (what is your action to witness to truth?).
2. "Brothers and sisters: If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above." (See later in Colossians 3 for Paul's meaning of "above"). He says that we should put on heartfelt compassion. What does compassion look like in our immediate world and in the larger one? What cries of the poor "deeply move" you? Of dying children in Ukraine? Of people suffering from effects of global warming, unhoused people and starvation?
3. What is it that allowed John to "see and believe," to have this kind of clarity? Does love give you knowledge about a person, insights into their behavior? In John, Jesus said "Whoever loves me ... I will love him (her) and reveal myself to him (her)" (Jn 14:21). Is there a connection between Jesus' statement and John's "seeing and believing"?

INVITATION TO ACT

Determine a specific action (individual or group) that flows from your sharing. When choosing an individual action, determine what you will do and share it with the group. When choosing a group action, determine who will take responsibility for different aspects of the action. These should be your primary considerations.

CLOSING INVITATION TO PRAY

Give thanks to God (aloud or silently) for new insights, for desires awakened, for directions clarified, for the gift of one another's openness and sensitivity. Conclude with the following:

O God, who on this day, through your Only Begotten Son, have conquered death and unlocked for us the path to eternity, grant we pray, that we who keep the solemnity of the Lord's Resurrection may, through the renewal brought by the Spirit, rise up in the light of life. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

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Prayer to St. Michael

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our defense against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen