

EASTER SUNDAY

April 20, 2025

By Al Mansfield

Acts 10: 24, 37-43

Psalm 118

Col. 3: 1-4 or 1 Cor. 5:6-8

Sequence

John 20: 1-9

CHRIST MY HOPE IS RISEN!

"You are dupes! I am a liar! Your faith is foolish! And you are still in your sins!" I still remember Easter homilies starting out that way for years at St. Joseph Seminary, before Abbot Columban paused and added, "If Christ is not risen." His reference to St. Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 15:17 usually grabbed everyone's attention! It does get across the point that everything - *absolutely everything* - depends upon the resurrection of Jesus, which is what we celebrate today.

ACTS

The earliest Christian preaching emphasized, obviously, the resurrection of Jesus. Several versions of the early apostolic *kerygma* occur in Acts. Today's reading is taken from St. Peter's sermon in the household of the Roman centurion Cornelius - a Gentile. This event had unexpected and far-reaching effects - eventually opening the door for Gentiles to enter the Church without first undergoing the required Jewish ritual.

The Responsorial, Psalm 118, is the great Easter psalm with the familiar response: "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad."

COLOSSIANS OR 1 CORINTHIANS

There are two options given for the second reading: Colossians 3:1-4 and 1 Corinthians 5:7-8. Colossians brings out the fact that Christ is now seated at the right hand of God and we too have been "raised with Christ."

The Corinthians selection relates to the Jewish Passover, when the Israelites had to get rid of any old yeast or leaven and use unleavened bread. Easter is, of course, the great Christian Passover.

SEQUENCE

There are very few sequences left in the Roman Rite. The one on Easter, *Victimae Paschali Laudes*, is obligatory. (One of my "pet peeves" is that it often gets left out, for some unknown reason.) The *Victimae Paschali Laudes* is as ancient as it is beautiful and inspiring. I can't imagine why it would ever be omitted.

GOSPEL

The account of the resurrection is related with slight variations in each gospel. Easter Sunday always presents the narrative from John's gospel. Mary Magdalen visits the tomb of Jesus, sees that the stone has been rolled away, and hurries off to tell the apostles.

Peter and the beloved disciple (John, we presume), run to the tomb themselves and see the burial cloths. This produces faith in the "other disciple," as it is meant to in us on this resurrection morning.

ALLELUIA IS OUR SONG!

"We are Easter people and Alleluia is our song," St. Augustine preached in the difficult and uncertain times in which he lived.

With certainties and stabilities collapsing all around us, it is certain and stable and comforting that we can still cling to the "old rugged cross" of Jesus. We can rest assured that, because Jesus has been raised up, we who are joined to him will be raised along with him.