



# Celebrate

Second Sunday of Easter

April 16, 2023

*In today's gospel the risen Christ appears to the disciples and offers them the gift of peace. Even amid doubts and questions, we experience the resurrection in our Sunday gathering around word and meal, and in our everyday lives. Throughout the coming Sundays of Easter the first two readings will be from the Acts of the Apostles and the first letter of Peter. Even as the early Christians proclaimed the resurrection, we rejoice in the new birth and living hope we receive in baptism.*

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty and eternal God, the strength of those who believe and the hope of those who doubt, may we, who have not seen, have faith in you and receive the fullness of Christ's blessing, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## Scripture Readings

Acts 2:14a, 22-32

*After the Holy Spirit comes to the apostles on Pentecost, Peter preaches the gospel to the gathered crowd. He tells them that Jesus, who obediently went to his death according to God's plan, was raised from the dead by God. Finally, he appeals to scripture, quoting Psalm 16:8-11, to show that Jesus is the Messiah: though crucified, the risen Jesus is now enthroned.*

Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed [the crowd]:

<sup>22</sup>“You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know—<sup>23</sup>this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law. <sup>24</sup>But God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. <sup>25</sup>For David says concerning him,

‘I saw the Lord always before me,  
for he is at my right hand so that I  
will not be shaken;

<sup>26</sup>therefore my heart was glad, and  
my tongue rejoiced;  
moreover my flesh will live in hope.

<sup>27</sup>For you will not abandon my soul  
to Hades,  
or let your Holy One experience  
corruption.

<sup>28</sup>You have made known to me the  
ways of life;  
you will make me full of gladness  
with your presence.’

<sup>29</sup>“Fellow Israelites, I may say to you  
confidently of our ancestor David that  
he both died and was buried, and his  
tomb is with us to this day. <sup>30</sup>Since he was  
a prophet, he knew that God had sworn  
with an oath to him that he would put  
one of his descendants on his throne.

<sup>31</sup>Foreseeing this, David spoke of the  
resurrection of the Messiah, saying,  
‘He was not abandoned to Hades,  
nor did his flesh experience  
corruption.’

<sup>32</sup>This Jesus God raised up, and of that  
all of us are witnesses.”



In your pres - ence there is full - ness of joy.

Protect me, O God, for I take ref-<sup>l</sup>uge in you;

I have said to the LORD, "You are my Lord, my good a-<sup>l</sup>bove all other."

<sup>2</sup>**All my delight is in the godly that are<sup>l</sup> in the land,  
upon those who are noble a-<sup>l</sup>mong the people.**

<sup>3</sup>But those who run after<sup>l</sup> other gods  
shall have their troubles<sup>l</sup> multiplied.

<sup>4</sup>**I will not pour out drink offerings<sup>l</sup> to such gods,  
never take their names up-<sup>l</sup>on my lips. R**

<sup>5</sup>O LORD, you are my portion<sup>l</sup> and my cup;  
it is you who up-<sup>l</sup>hold my lot.

<sup>6</sup>**My boundaries enclose a<sup>l</sup> pleasant land;  
indeed, I have a<sup>l</sup> rich inheritance.**

<sup>7</sup>I will bless the LORD who<sup>l</sup> gives me counsel;  
my heart teaches me night<sup>l</sup> after night.

<sup>8</sup>**I have set the LORD al-<sup>l</sup>ways before me;  
because God is at my right hand, I shall<sup>l</sup> not be shaken. R**

<sup>9</sup>My heart, therefore, is glad, and my spir-<sup>l</sup>it rejoices;  
my body also shall<sup>l</sup> rest in hope.

<sup>10</sup>**For you will not abandon me<sup>l</sup> to the grave,  
nor let your holy one<sup>l</sup> see the pit.**

<sup>11</sup>You will show me the<sup>l</sup> path of life;  
in your presence there is fullness of joy,  
and in your right hand are pleasures for-<sup>l</sup>evermore. R

*This epistle was written to encourage Christians experiencing hardships and suffering because of their faith in Christ. The letter opens by blessing God for the living hope we have through Christ's resurrection even amid difficult circumstances and surroundings.*

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,<sup>4</sup> and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,<sup>5</sup> who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.<sup>6</sup> In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer

various trials,<sup>7</sup> so that the genuineness of your faith—being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.<sup>8</sup> Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy,<sup>9</sup> for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Gospel

John 20:19-31

*The risen Jesus appears to his disciples, offering them a benediction, a commission, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. But one of their number is missing, and his unbelief prompts another visit from the Lord.*

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."<sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."<sup>22</sup> When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.<sup>23</sup> If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

<sup>24</sup>But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came.<sup>25</sup> So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the

nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

<sup>26</sup>A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."<sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe."<sup>28</sup> Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"<sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

<sup>30</sup>Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.<sup>31</sup> But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

United in the hope and joy of the resurrection, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

*A brief silence.*

God of rebirth, the good news of your resurrection brings refreshment to a weary world. Following the women at the tomb, empower us to boldly share your radical love through our words and our work. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

As you breathed your Spirit into the disciples, breathe your spirit of healing upon all creation. Nourish the earth with sufficient rains. Strengthen us to counter the effects of pollution and destruction. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You prepared the disciples for their ministry by calming their fears and granting them your peace. Equip our communities' leaders (*especially*). Give them a spirit of peace and hearts that burn for justice, that their leadership reflects your love. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You come among us in unexpected ways. Send us to those who hide in fear or question your love. Be a healing presence for any isolated by addiction, incarceration, mental illness, chronic pain, sickness, or grief (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

As you met the disciples on the road to Emmaus, show us your presence along our journeys. Bless our doubts and questions. Provide trusting and safe relationships for all ages, to nurture our connection to you and one another. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Resurrecting God, you bring us to new life every day. Thank you for blessing us with companions on our faith journey, especially those who now rest in your love (*especially*). Strengthen us with the eternal peace of your promises. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Rejoicing in the victory of Christ's resurrection, we lift our prayers and praise to you, almighty and eternal God; through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.

**Amen.**

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**Monday** Psalm 114. **Tuesday** 1 Corinthians 15:19-28. **Wednesday** (commemoration of Olavus Petri, priest, died 1552; Laurentius Petri, Bishop of Uppsala, died 1573; renewers of the church) Matthew 12:38-42. **Thursday** Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19. **Friday** (commemoration of Anselm, Bishop of Canterbury, died 1109) Isaiah 26:1-4. **Saturday** Luke 14:12-14. **Third Sunday of Easter** (commemoration of Toyohiko Kagawa, renewer of society, died 1960) Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19; 1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35.

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