

First Week of Easter

WE ARE REDEEMED

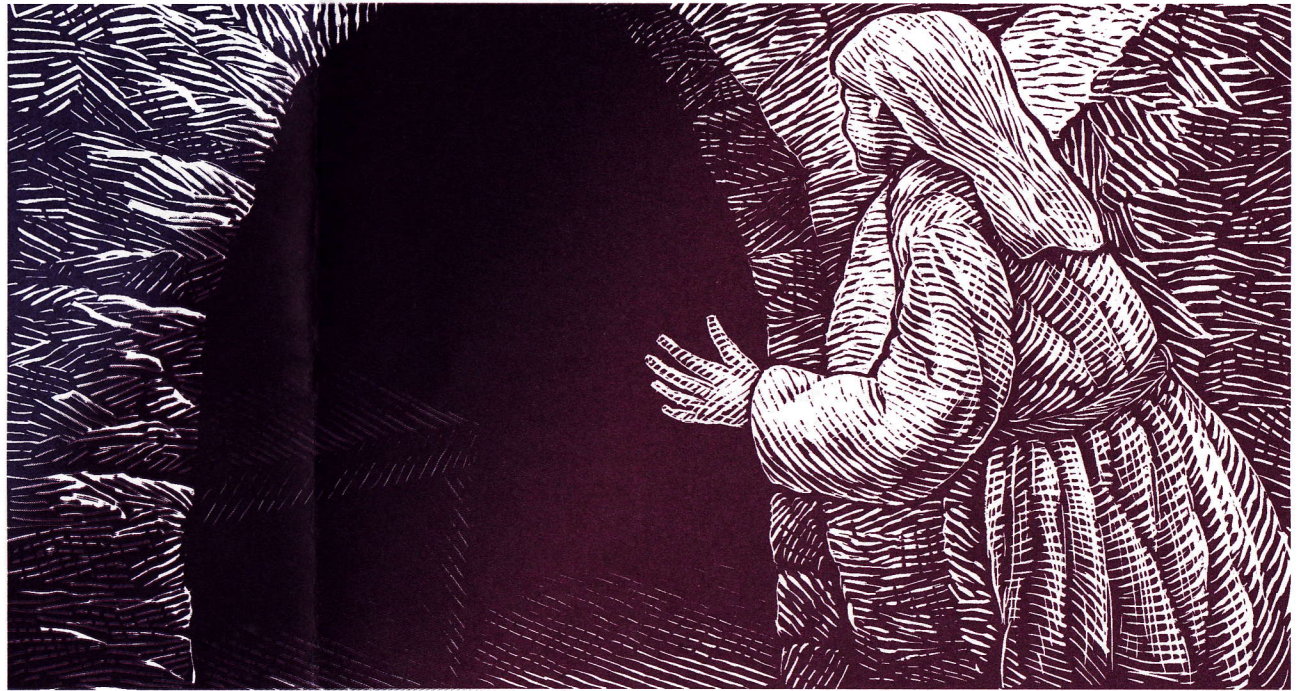
Light's glittering morn bedecks the sky,
Heaven thunders forth its victor cry;
The glad earth shouts its triumph high,
And groaning hell makes wild reply.

While he the King of glorious might
Treads down death's strength in death's despite,
And trampling hell by victor's right,
Brings forth his sleeping saints to light.

Hell's pains are loosed and tears are fled;
Captivity is captive led;
The angel, crowned with light, has said,
"The Lord is risen from the dead!"

We pray thee, King with glory decked,
In this our paschal joy, protect
From all that death would fain affect
Thy ransomed flock, thine own elect.

—Latin Hymn, Fifth century



MARCH 23, 2008 EASTER SUNDAY—THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

He is risen! He is no longer dead! We have heard the Easter news so many times that it is hard to appreciate how shocking it is. On this Easter morning we hear the story from John 20:1–9. Imagine for a moment that you are with Mary Magdalene when she goes to where Jesus' body had been laid and sees that the stone has been moved. Imagine the confusion she felt—and what Peter and the beloved disciple felt when they ran to the tomb and see only the burial cloths. Joy and understanding would slowly overtake them as they realized he had risen from the dead. This is the crowning truth of our faith—the reason we are Christians. The Resurrection can only be understood in the light of our relationship with Jesus Christ.

It is a custom to wear new clothes today just as the newly baptized wear their white Easter robes. Put a white cloth and your best decorations and candles on the table for your Easter feast as a reminder of this newness, this glory. Easter eggs are a customary reminder of the Resurrection, representing the tomb from which Christ came forth.

Easter remains with us the entire year. Each Sunday, the Church teaches, is a "mini-Easter" as we recall Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection. Keep that thought in your heart as you celebrate Sunday Mass through the year. It is Easter now and it is Easter then.

This Week at Home

MONDAY, MARCH 24 PRAYER TO SEE

Today's story of the Resurrection comes from Matthew 28:8–15. Here, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary see the tomb and realize immediately that Jesus has risen. Then suddenly they see him alive and hear his instructions to tell the men what they have seen. *Loving Father of the risen Christ, Mary Magdalene had wide-open eyes to see that you were risen. Help me to open my eyes and joyfully see Christ in all the people I meet today. I ask this through the risen Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

TUESDAY, MARCH 25 THE OCTAVE AND THE SEASON

Easter is not just a day. It is a season. For eight days, called an octave, we extend our joyful prayer with great intensity. Then, during the coming Fifty Days we will continue to celebrate and ponder the deep mystery of the Easter season. Remain in the joyful Easter mystery this week by praying, "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again," as part of your mealtime prayer.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26 KEEP GROWING

During the Easter season, those who were baptized, confirmed, and received Eucharist at the Easter Vigil go through a process called *mystagogia* (a Greek word). They reflect deeply on the mysteries they have experienced in their initiation, coming to understand their faith more fully. Baptism and Confirmation are not graduation ceremonies,

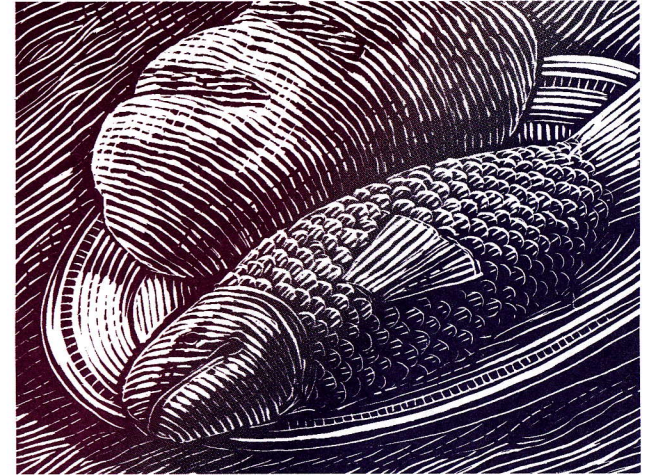
but the beginning of lifelong learning, essential for every baptized Catholic. Find out from your parish staff how you can continue to learn about your faith through a retreat, class, workshop, or discussion group.

THURSDAY, MARCH 27 HE IS PEACE

In today's Gospel reading, Luke 24:35–48, Jesus appeared to the disciples who had not yet seen him since he died. The first words he said were "Peace be with you." He says the same words to us. There are many places where peace is needed: Peace in our hearts and in those places of worry in our lives, peace between family members and friends, peace in the community, in our own country, and among nations. If we stay close to Christ we can have peace in our hearts, even amid problems. If we believe we are to be Christ today, we will do everything we can to bring about peace.

FRIDAY, MARCH 28 A SIMPLE MEAL

Throughout his life on earth, Jesus fed people. Once again, in today's Gospel (John 21:1–14) he feeds his disciples when they come in from a hard night of fishing on the Sea of Tiberias. Plan a meal today that includes fish and bread, which is what Jesus cooked for his friends. Read the Gospel passage before you enjoy the meal. Talk about what this must have been like for Simon Peter and the other disciples and how you think you would react to such an experience.



SATURDAY, MARCH 29 IN GRATITUDE

In the Gospel we hear today (Mark 16:9–15), Jesus says, "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature." The Gospel, or Good News, is that God loves us, that Jesus came to this earth for us, and that Christ rose from the dead and so will we. Who has proclaimed the Good News to you? Some have done it as teachers with words. Others have shown it by their lives, following Christ's teaching in the way they treat people. Write a note to one of the people who has helped you learn about the Good News through his or her teaching example.