

Readings

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

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

Col 3:1-4, *or* 1 Cor 5:6b-8

Jn 20:1-9

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Christ has Risen! Alleluia! We are filled with the joy of this Easter Season. But what is it that brings joy? Is it the beautiful flowers? Is it the sweetness that extra candy brings to our diet? Does the joy come from the warmer temperatures and signs of Spring that accompany this time of the year in the northern hemisphere? Certainly, these external realities can bring us a feeling of contentment and happiness. But when we celebrate the Joy of Easter, we know that there is even something more profound. The Joy of Easter also brings with it the internal reality that with the events of Christ's life, death and resurrection, we have been saved. Our salvation is dependent on these events. And for that reason, we can say that we are filled with Joy. The Lord has done marvelous things for us and we are filled with Joy!

Our reading today from the Acts of the Apostles reminds us that with our vocation as Christians we have a responsibility. The joy of the resurrection compels us to respond in a manner fitting with what we believe. Just as Mary Magdalene and the first disciples were given a mission after they witnessed that Christ had risen from the tomb in which they buried him on Good Friday, so, too, are we called to participate in the same vocation of bearing witness to the Gospel message. We read in the Acts of the Apostles: *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.*

As the Apostles were commissioned to preach to the people and to give testimony, to be witnesses of their faith, we, too, are called to do the same with our lives. When we do so, we preach not simply a miraculous moment in history from 2,000 years ago. We preach a God who is alive and living. We preach the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We preach the same message of love that Jesus preached to his disciples, and that the disciples took up and preached to the early members of the Church. We preach the good news that has been promulgated throughout the centuries with the words and actions of martyrs and saints and with the words and actions of those who in simple ways lived their Christian vocation, giving testimony with their lives. We preach the same good news to our world that hungers and thirsts for peace and justice.

The Pascal Triduum of Thursday, Friday and Saturday of this past week prepares us to be open to receive the joy of our salvation. That joy is meant to be shared, but we need first to reflect on that joy, to make it our own. From the liturgy of Thursday evening, we are reminded above all that the Eucharist is connected to following Christ's example, especially in being of service to our brothers and sisters. The reality of the Cross and the suffering of the body of Christ which still is present in so many realities of our world is emphasized in the liturgy of the Cross from Good Friday. And the story of our salvation history recounted in the Easter Vigil on Saturday evening is a reminder that we are not living at a time that is not connected to our past, nor void of the reality that we have a future. We are in the in-between times of God's promise of Universal Salvation being already ushered into history, and at the same time, not yet fully realized in our present time.

May this Easter joy carry us into our future with hope for the days ahead. May the joy we experience and share these days, bring peace to our lives, our smaller communities and to our

world. May we be witnesses of that peace and joy so that we, in our own small ways, may contribute to the universal message of peace which the Risen Christ shared with Mary Magdalene, the first apostles, and continues to share with us.

This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad! (Psalm 118)

Happy Easter!